

[Freedom Reads sets up 'micro-libraries' at Windham prison](#)

The Times Record (Brunswick, Maine)

March 15, 2023 Wednesday

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Section: LAKES REGION WEEKLY

Length: 527 words

Byline: Mikayla Patel, THE FORECASTER

Body

Freedom Reads, a national nonprofit that places 500-book "micro-libraries" into prisons across the country, last week set up eight of them in Windham.

Six were installed at the Maine Correctional Center's main facility, one at the Women's Center and one at Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center.

Books "(bring) life into a place that can feel emotionless," said Freedom Reads founder Reginald Dwayne Betts, a 2021 MacArthur Fellow and Yale Law School graduate who was sentenced to nine years in prison at age 16. "They were a big part of how I learned to interact with other people and a huge part in what I discovered about myself. I discovered that I was an educator and a thinker, and books played a huge part in that."

The reception to the micro-libraries at the Windham facilities was positive, according to Department of Corrections Deputy Commissioner Anthony Cantillo.

"We had our first shipment of libraries and books, and residents were amazed by the story of the founder and his team," Cantillo said.

"What's at the core is a building of community (and) to have individuals have access to books and converse about books," he said.

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As of February, 324 men and 81 women are incarcerated at Windham, along with another 76 women at the reentry center, according to the Maine DOC.

Providing incarcerated people access to a wider selection of books will be beneficial in bringing people together, said Amanda Woolford, the DOC's director of Women's Services. It is especially true at the Women's Center, which organizes book clubs.

"Women are so relational and book clubs are a place where we all have something in common and can share our perspectives of the book," she said. "Women like to have something to connect with someone else about."

The books were "very well-selected and there's something for everybody," and even the handcrafted shelves that house them support the goal of "adding furniture pieces that look residential and less industrial," Woolford said.

Betts said the 44-inch high shelves, which are open on both sides, were designed specifically to facilitate community, Betts said.

Freedom Reads sets up 'micro-libraries' at Windham prison

"It's like sitting at a table having coffee with somebody," he said, "but instead of partaking in coffee with a peer, you're partaking in books with a peer."

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Betts founded the Connecticut-based Freedom Reads in 2020 after asking himself how he could make the biggest impact on people currently serving time in prison. His answer, he said, was: "We put millions of people in prison. I would counter that by putting millions of books in prison, and I would do it one 500-book micro-library at a time because libraries build community."

Freedom Reads has also been a first employer for many people upon exiting prison, Betts said. "It provides them the opportunity to use the skills they've learned in prison in a real meaningful way."

According to the Vera Institute of Justice, the Maine prison population has increased by 44% since 2000.

"A lot of people have deeply invested in the possibilities that books create," said Betts. "This is a project about giving people the opportunity to deeply and meaningfully transform their lives."

Graphic

A Freedom Reads bookshelf, one of six "micro-libraries" added at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham. The program seeks to encourage inmates to "invest in the possibilities that books create," according to its founder. Contributed / Anthony Cantillo The double-sided bookshelf at the Women's Center in Windham. Several books have already been checked out. Contributed / Amanda Woolford

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Dispatches

Portland Press Herald

May 1, 2021 Saturday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

Length: 522 words

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

YARMOUTH

Officials say driver was trying to help

A man who offered a ride to a student in Yarmouth this week was not trying to lure the child into the car, officials said on Friday.

Yarmouth police and school officials on Thursday warned parents about an incident where a child walking on McCartney Street was approached by a man driving an SUV earlier in the week. The child refused the ride and a parent notified police of the interaction.

Superintendent of Schools Andrew Dolloff said in an update to parents on Friday that police confirmed the driver of the SUV was the caregiver of another student. While transporting their own child home, the driver offered their child's friend a ride on a rainy afternoon, Dolloff said.

The student did not recognize the adult and did not realize their friend was in the back of the vehicle, according to Dolloff.

"It appears this was a simple misunderstanding of a situation that arose not from malicious intent, but from kindness, which is more in line with our local culture," he said.

WINDHAM

24 infected in outbreak at Women's Center

Two dozen inmates in the Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham have contracted COVID, state officials said Friday.

The state said the incarcerated women received confirmed positive results through testing at the facility. The first case was reported 10 days ago and testing for all residents and staff will continue, with the state reporting results on a regular basis.

A recent outbreak at the Maine State Prison in Warren is now considered closed, state officials said, and those that contracted the disease have recovered. At one point, 11 inmates and one staff member had contracted COVID-19.

Dispatches

Officials have been dealing with coronavirus outbreaks at facilities around the state, including one in at the Cumberland County Jail, where 27 inmates and two staff members were reported to have tested positive for the disease on April 13. And there was an outbreak this week at Two Bridges Jail in Wiscasset, with 27 residents and three staff members testing positive on Wednesday.

There was also a larger outbreak at the Windham facility last fall, with 81 people, mostly residents, contracting the disease in November.

AUGUSTA

Cities, towns could get access to federal aid

Cities and towns in Maine would be able to get access to federal coronavirus aid under a pandemic law change.

The Maine Legislature on Wednesday passed a proposal to set up an account for the state to receive and distribute federal funds for the municipalities via the American Rescue Plan. The proposal, which was a governor's bill, is now before Democratic Gov. Janet Mills.

Democratic Senate President Troy Jackson said the money is important for Maine cities and towns to "work to rebuild local communities and economies." The American Rescue Plan allocated funds to Maine municipalities based on their populations, the Maine Legislature Office of the Presiding Officers said.

Every town in the state will receive money, Democratic Rep. Teresa Pierce said. That will result in more than \$600 million going into the communities, she said.

-- Staff and news services

Load-Date: May 10, 2021

End of Document

[Connecting new Mainers with renewable energy jobs A partnership funded by a state grant creates a pre-apprenticeship program for immigrants and refugees. ReVision Energy says 60% of last year's participants found work in the industry.](#)

Portland Press Herald

April 10, 2024 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. A.1; ISSN: 26895900

Length: 786 words

Byline: Stephen Singer

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

SOUTH PORTLAND -- Pierre Dende, an asylum seeker who lives in Portland, hopes to take advantage of industry demand for workers in renewable energy by training for a job in the solar industry.

The 38-year-old electronics engineer arrived in the United States from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2021. He has worked in information technology in the airline industry and was a desktop technician at LL Bean in Freeport. He's currently unemployed, he said.

On Tuesday, Dende was among a group of 10 men being trained by ReVision Energy in an eight-week pre-apprenticeship program that prepares multilingual workers for jobs in renewable energy. The workers on this day were learning to install solar panels, said Astrid Blanco, workforce specialist at ReVision, which installs solar equipment, heat pumps and battery backups.

Dende, whose native language is French, learned of the program as a student at Portland Adult Education. "I'm working on my English," he said.

His ambition is to be a manager at a solar energy company. He'll interview Tuesday for a job and is optimistic. "Maybe after this," he said of the training.

The program, which is funded by a \$679,921 grant from the Maine Department of Labor, supported by the Maine Governor's Office, and offered in partnership with Portland Adult Education, connects immigrants, refugees and other "new Mainers" with classroom instruction on safety involving vehicles, ladders and electrical hazards.

Blanco said with basic safety training and solar certification training, pre-apprenticeships give prospective employees a head start if they want to move on to a four-year program for a journeyman's license. ReVision, which employs 500 people, is "very much" looking to hire more workers, she said.

Upon completion, pre-apprentices will have earned federal safety and health certification and be ready for employment as electrical apprentices. The program also helps participants establish a Maine JobLink account, and receive clothing and transportation support.

Connecting new Mainers with renewable energy jobs A partnership funded by a state grant creates a pre-apprenticeship program for immigrants and refugees. ReVisi....

The program also includes administrative work such as budgeting, inventory and business ownership training to expose participants to the possibility of becoming a business owner, Blanco said.

ReVision Energy, Portland Adult Education and other organizations also help with resumes, interviews and job placement services. Last year, 60% of participants who sought a career in renewable energy found employment, ReVision said.

Employers included ReVision, Maine Solar Solutions and Evergreen Home Performance.

Abbie Yamamoto, executive director of Portland Adult Education, part of Portland's public schools, said the New Mainers Resource Center is working with nearly 1,800 people who have arrived from overseas and other states with significant experience they want to apply instead of settling for a minimum wage job.

Most participants are from overseas, including Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Cambodia, Taiwan and Vietnam, she said.

A February report says investments supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act and a program providing incentives for high-tech manufacturing would generate an average of nearly 3 million jobs a year if investment is sustained at anticipated levels. Job growth will be particularly big among occupations that do not require four-year college degrees as a qualification, it said.

Pre-apprentices earn hours and skills they can apply in a registered apprenticeship. At graduation they have priority for interviews or job placement, the state Department of Labor said.

Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs are open to anyone, across industries, the Department of Labor said. Several pre-apprenticeship programs work with populations that have barriers to employment, including "new Mainers." If needed, English-language learning is included within pre-apprenticeship programs, helping potential workers strengthen their English skills while earning credentials recognized by industry.

Other programs include an eight-week session offered by the Associated General Contractors' Maine Construction Academy in Saco in partnership with Catholic Charities. It includes English, safety, employer tours and hands-on training. One class of 18 individuals, almost all of whom have entered a registered apprenticeship program, recently graduated, the Department of Labor said.

And the Maine AFL/CIO Union Construction Academy has so far had 47 graduates, comprising mostly new Maine residents. It also has included incarcerated women at the Women's Center in Windham and individuals with disabilities. The four-week program includes safety certifications, employer tours and hands-on training.

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End of Document

[Pre-apprenticeship program trains new Mainers for jobs in renewable energy](#)

South Portland-Cape Elizabeth Sentry (Maine)

April 9, 2024

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Section: NEWS

Length: 783 words

Body

SOUTH PORTLAND Pierre Dende, an asylum seeker who lives in Portland, hopes to take advantage of industry demand for workers in renewable energy by training for a job in the solar industry.

The 38-year-old electronics engineer arrived in the United States from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2021. He has worked in information technology in the airline industry and was a desktop technician at LL Bean in Freeport. He's currently unemployed, he said.

On Tuesday, Dende was among a group of 10 men being trained by ReVision Energy in an eight-week pre-apprenticeship program that prepares multilingual workers for jobs in renewable energy. The workers on this day were learning to install solar panels, said Astrid Blanco, workforce specialist at ReVision, which installs solar equipment, heat pumps and battery backups.

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Pre-apprenticeship program trains new Mainers for jobs in renewable energy

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Load-Date: April 10, 2024

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[373 cases as providers expand access to vaccinations The state will offer more walk-in clinics, and it now has the green light to resume J&J doses.](#)

Portland Press Herald

April 25, 2021 Sunday

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Byline: Rob Wolfe

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention on Saturday reported 373 new cases of COVID-19 and one additional death, as the state climbs closer to a 50 percent delivery rate for first doses of a coronavirus vaccine. There were 122 patients with the infectious disease in Maine hospitals on Saturday.

Maine's vaccination program is ahead of many others around the country in its speed at achieving full vaccination, and by Saturday, 44.76 percent of residents had received a first dose. With Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccines back on the table, state officials are making registration easier and MaineHealth is planning to open additional walk-in clinics.

On Saturday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency opened a walk-in clinic at Biddeford High School, offering doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine without appointments needed, spokesman Patrick Boland said. The clinic will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday and from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, and is part of a planned series of federal vaccination sites throughout the state.

People under 30 accounted for 178 of the new cases reported on Saturday, or 47 percent of the daily total.

Maine's cumulative COVID-19 cases rose to 59,612 on Saturday. Of those, 44,532 have been confirmed by testing and 15,080 are considered probable cases of COVID-19. The seven-day average of new daily cases was 381.9 on Saturday, a drop from 456.4 one week ago.

Seven hundred seventy-two people have died with COVID-19 since the pandemic began in Maine. The person reported Saturday to have died was a York County woman in her 60s, the Maine CDC said.

On Friday evening, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lifted the pause on administration of the J&J vaccine, which has caused blood clots in very rare cases in younger women. Officials at those agencies said the risk was "very low" and they "have confidence that this vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19."

As of Friday, 15 people, all women, had developed blood clots, out of 8 million doses given. Three of the women have died, and another seven have been hospitalized.

373 cases as providers expand access to vaccinations The state will offer more walk-in clinics, and it now has the green light to resume J&J doses.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been an important part of Maine's plan to vaccinate homebound, remote, unhoused and otherwise hard-to-reach populations. The state has about 15,000 doses in reserve, officials said Friday.

Meanwhile, the Maine Department of Education last week moved four counties - Androscoggin, Kennebec, Oxford and Somerset - to its "yellow" designation for risk of COVID-19 transmission. The move means that state officials recommend a hybrid of online and in-person instruction for at least two weeks. Contrary to recommendations earlier in the pandemic, it does not affect high school sports, which may continue in all four counties.

On Friday night, the Maine Department of Corrections reported a COVID-19 outbreak in the Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham. Five inmates tested positive for the coronavirus, and they all reside in the same housing unit within the Women's Center, which has 36 residents, according to the department.

By Saturday morning, Maine had given 601,701 people the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 470,519 had received a final dose. Out of the state's population of 1.3 million, 44.76 percent had received a first dose.

County by county as of Saturday, there have been 6,851 coronavirus cases in Androscoggin, 1,620 in Aroostook, 15,814 in Cumberland, 1,193 in Franklin, 1,219 in Hancock, 5,445 in Kennebec, 946 in Knox, 806 in Lincoln, 3,120 in Oxford, 5,246 in Penobscot, 434 in Piscataquis, 1,215 in Sagadahoc, 1,804 in Somerset, 812 in Waldo, 823 in Washington and 12,262 in York.

By age, 17.6 percent of patients were under 20, while 18.6 percent were in their 20s, 14.7 percent were in their 30s, 13.3 percent were in their 40s, 14.9 percent were in their 50s, 10.7 percent were in their 60s, 5.6 percent were in their 70s, and 4.5 percent were 80 or older.

Of the 122 patients with COVID-19 in Maine hospitals on Saturday, 46 were in intensive care and 19 were on ventilators. Hospitals had 86 intensive care unit beds available out of 384, and 197 ventilators available of 319. The state also had 451 alternative ventilators.

Around the world on Saturday evening, there were more than 145.9 million known cases of COVID-19 and over 3 million deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. The United States had 32 million cases and 571,883 deaths.

Rob Wolfe -- 207-791-6363

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[Elevated numbers persist as CDC reports 373 new COVID-19 cases](#)

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

April 25, 2021 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 3.C

Length: 760 words

Byline: Rob Wolfe

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

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On Saturday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency opened a walk-in clinic at Biddeford High School, offering doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine without appointments needed, spokesman Patrick Boland said. There were 25-30 cars in the parking lot at 2 p.m. The clinic will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through Wednesday, and is part of a planned series of federal vaccination sites throughout the state.

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To date, 772 people have died with COVID-19 since the pandemic began in Maine. The person reported Saturday to have died was a York County woman in her 60s, the Maine CDC said.

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Rob Wolfe — 207-791-6363

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[Belfast woman serving 70 years for 1983 murder dies in prison](#)

Portland Press Herald

March 28, 2023 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

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Byline: John Terhune

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

A Belfast woman convicted of hiring someone to kill her husband in 1983 died early Sunday morning while serving a 70-year prison term.

Norma Small, 83, died in the care of medical personnel at 12:17 a.m. Sunday at the Women's Center in Windham, according to the Maine Department of Corrections.

Small made headlines in May 2001 when she was charged in the 1983 murder of her husband, Navy Petty Officer Mervin "Sonny" Grotton.

"This is a murder for hire," Superior Court Justice Nancy Mills said at Small's sentencing hearing that year, according to an AP report. "Mervin Grotton was worth more to her dead than alive, and apparently that proved to be true."

Grotton was shot to death outside the family's Belfast home after returning from his duty station in Newport, Rhode Island, on the evening of Dec. 16, 1983. In several media stories published since her conviction, police have said they immediately suspected Small, who had developed a reputation for infidelity and drug use while her husband worked three states away. But a lack of evidence kept the case on ice for nearly two decades.

That changed after an undercover Naval Criminal Intelligence Service operation broke new leads, culminating in the arrests of Small, who had since moved to Kansas, and two alleged accomplices.

During the trial, prosecutors played tapes of Small's interview with a state police detective and a Navy investigator on the day of her 2001 arrest, on which she said "I asked (Boyd Smith) if he would take care of my husband for me, to take him out."

"I did make a mistake and I couldn't correct it. ... I waited too long to put a stop to it," she said.

But she also told police she had no guilt over her husband's death.

"I'm right at ease," she said. "I have no qualms."

Smith, who had rented a room in the Grottons' home in the months before the murder, turned state's witness and testified that Small had offered him \$10,000 to kill her husband so she could collect his military benefits.

Belfast woman serving 70 years for 1983 murder dies in prison

He considered the deal, but after deciding he didn't have the stomach for the crime, he looked up Joe Fuller at a Belfast bar and explained the situation.

"I gave him Norma's name and address," Smith said, according to an AP report from Aug. 2, 2002. "I told him I didn't want any more to do with it."

Police believed Fuller had fired the fatal shots, as he described committing a similar crime to a friend, according to newspaper accounts from the time. But Fuller, who was already serving two life sentences on drug-related homicides, was ultimately acquitted.

Smith was also acquitted.

After four-and-a-half hours of deliberation, a Sagadahoc County jury found Small guilty on Aug. 2, 2002.

Small was sentenced to 60 years in prison for the murder, and a separate 10-year sentence for theft after collecting more than \$180,000 in life insurance and benefits.

In a 2016 documentary on the case, the victim's daughter Rosalyn Grotton said her father would not have justice as long as Small lived.

"She's watching TV, she's eating food, and my tax dollars are paying for her medicine," she told CBS reporters. "It shouldn't be like that. It's not really over until she's gone."

John Terhune -- 207-877-1538

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Load-Date: October 10, 2023

End of Document

Belfast woman serving murder sentence dies

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

March 28, 2023 Tuesday

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Copyright 2023 Morning Sentinel Mar 28, 2023

Section: Pg. 2.B

Length: 563 words

Byline: John Terhune

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Norma Small, who was convicted in 2002 of hiring a man to murder her husband, died in custody early Sunday morning.

Norma Small dies in custody early Sunday morning

A Belfast woman convicted of hiring someone to kill her husband in 1983 died early Sunday while serving a 70-year prison term.

Norma Small, 83, died in the care of medical personnel at 12:17 a.m. Sunday at the Women's Center in Windham, according to the Maine Department of Corrections.

Small made headlines in May 2001 when she was charged in the 1983 murder of her husband, Navy Petty Officer Mervin "Sonny" Grotton.

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That changed after an undercover Naval Criminal Intelligence Service operation broke new leads, culminating in the arrests of Small, who had since moved to Kansas, and two alleged accomplices.

During the trial, prosecutors played tapes of Small's interview with a state police detective and a Navy investigator on the day of her 2001 arrest, on which she said, "I asked (Boyd Smith) if he would take care of my husband for me, to take him out."

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Small was sentenced to 60 years in prison for the murder, and a separate 10-year sentence for theft, after collecting more than \$180,000 in life insurance and benefits.

In a 2016 documentary on the case, the victim's daughter, Rosalyn Grotton, said her father would not have justice as long as Small lived.

"She's watching TV, she's eating food and my tax dollars are paying for her medicine," she told CBS reporters. "It shouldn't be like that. It's not really over until she's gone."

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End of Document

Ex-guards sued over sex with inmates ; Two women allege assault and battery by the former guards and sue three top-ranking state corrections officials as well.

Portland Press Herald

February 3, 2010 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: LOCAL & STATE; Pg. B1

Length: 767 words

Byline: TREVOR MAXWELL, By TREVOR MAXWELL Staff Writer

Dateline: PORTLAND

Body

Just over a year ago, a former guard at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham was sentenced to four months in jail for having sex with two female inmates.

Another former guard pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges and was fined for failing to report his co-worker's misconduct.

On Tuesday, the two women sued those guards, the Maine Correctional Center, two sergeants and three top-ranking officials in the Maine Department of Corrections.

A lawyer for Nikia Neptune of Indian Island and Leah Estes, who is still incarcerated in the Women's Center in Windham, filed the complaint in Cumberland County Superior Court. They seek unspecified compensatory and punitive damages.

The women allege assault and battery by Bradford Howard of Lyman. Howard pleaded guilty in December 2008 to four counts of gross sexual assault, for having sex twice with Neptune and twice with Estes.

The complaint also accuses Howard and former guard Glen Works of negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress and violations of the Maine Civil Rights Act.

Also named in the lawsuit are Corrections Commissioner Martin Magnusson, Associate Commissioner Denise Lord and Maine Correctional Center Superintendent Scott Burnheimer.

Lord, the spokeswoman for the department, said she would not comment on pending litigation.

Benjamin Gideon of the Berman & Simmons law firm said his clients deserve to be compensated for the wrongdoing of the guards, and for the system that failed to protect them. Prison officials should not have allowed male guards to oversee the night shift at the Women's Center, Gideon argues.

"Having male corrections officers exclusively responsible for the supervision of female inmates is cruel and unusual, a form of torture and violates standards of international law," Gideon wrote in the 12-page complaint.

Ex-guards sued over sex with inmates ; Two women allege assault and battery by the former guards and sue three top-ranking state corrections officials as well.

In a telephone interview Tuesday, Gideon said that if Maine wants to retain its policy allowing men to supervise female inmates, then the Department of Corrections must take appropriate steps to keep the women safe from sexual misconduct.

"It is our position that when you are a woman and you are sentenced to a term of incarceration, your sentence doesn't include being taken advantage of and being raped, and the folks at the prison are responsible for that," Gideon said. "This isn't the first time that this has happened at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham."

In 2002, two former guards at the Women's Center pleaded guilty to unlawful sexual conduct. Both men had sex with inmates. Like Howard and Works, Robert Shepard and Scott Durgin resigned before their criminal cases were resolved.

Under Maine law, it is a crime for anyone in authority at a jail or prison to have sex with a person who is in custody, regardless of the circumstances.

"Guards have control over inmates in their daily lives. They can make their lives miserable, and they can make their lives better," said William Stokes, head of the Criminal Division of the state Attorney General's Office.

Guards dictate which inmates get merits and which ones get punished, Stokes said. They even can influence the amount of time an inmate serves, because inmates get time subtracted from their sentences for good behavior.

"It is the disparity in power. That is what the law is all about," Stokes said.

Similar laws apply to other categories of workers, such as teachers, camp administrators and staffers, social workers and psychologists, he said.

Howard, 38, was hired as a corrections officer in Windham in July 2006. The Army sergeant had recently returned to Maine from an 18-month tour of duty in Iraq.

At Howard's sentencing hearing in January 2009, his lawyer said depression and post-traumatic stress led Howard to make bad decisions as a corrections officer.

According to the lawsuit, Howard and Works were assigned to some overnight shifts at the Women's Center, which housed about 70 female inmates in early 2008.

Howard admitted to having sex with Neptune in a closet on Feb. 8 and 9, 2008, and with Estes in a different room on Feb. 15 and 22, 2008.

Estes was convicted of felony murder in April 1998. She was with her boyfriend, Leslie Lynds, when he kidnapped Virginia Jackson, 59, outside a Shaw's supermarket in Scarborough. Lynds beat the woman to death, and the couple stole her car.

He is serving a 45-year sentence. Estes was sentenced to 17 years for her role in the killing.

Neptune, formerly known as Nikia Brown, was convicted of assault and was incarcerated in Windham from Aug. 8, 2007, until Feb. 26, 2008, Gideon said.

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Ex-guards sued over sex with inmates ; Two women allege assault and battery by the former guards and sue three top-ranking state corrections officials as well.

End of Document

[Award honors Standish teen for her work with inmates](#)

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

April 13, 2006 Thursday

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Section: YOUR NEIGHBORS-LAKES; Pg. F1

Length: 407 words

Byline: PAUL LIVINGSTONE News Assistant

Body

Holidays have little meaning in prison, and that doesn't sit well with Serena Freitas.

The Standish teenager learned six years ago while driving with her mother by the Maine Correctional Center that none of the center's women could visit their families at Christmas.

Although Beth Freitas told her daughter this was a necessary part of justice, "I was really upset," said Serena, now a 14-year-old freshman at Bonny Eagle High School.

She wasn't satisfied until they called prison officials and got permission to send Christmas gifts. They collected books, playing cards, crossword games and angel ornaments for about 40 inmates. They also invited the women to write them, beginning a weekly letter-writing campaign that Beth and Serena continue today.

Serena's commitment led to her selection as one of seven Maine students recognized with a Teens Who Care Award, presented yearly by NBC affiliate stations in Maine. Television crews filmed her most recent visit to the Women's Center as part of a profile about her work - she said she was much more anxious the first time she was allowed to enter the prison.

"I was really nervous at first because I didn't know any of them. (The inmates) were really friendly and had made a big banner for my visit," said Serena. To her, the women did not resemble her idea of a criminal. "If you passed them on the street, you wouldn't think they've done anything wrong."

In reaching out to the women, she confronted their histories - bad decisions, abusive relationships and terrible accidents resulting in death.

"I really don't care what they've done. It's in the past," she said. Changing rules at the Women's Center, however, have made things more difficult for Serena.

"We plan to continue, but we almost got shut off a couple of times. Every year, they come up with revised list of rules." Playing cards and angel ornaments are banned. Books are OK, but hardcovers are off-limits. Crossword puzzles must be censored.

An active member of Gorham's Galilee Baptist Church, Serena loves literature and writes as many as five letters a week. Her mother contributes as many as 30 more. Church members learned of her project and thought it was "awesome," said Serena, but until the award was given, they were in the dark about who was responsible. "They knew someone was doing it, but they thought it was an older person."

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Graphic

Photo courtesy John Freitas

Some of the Christmas gift packs Serena Freitas and her mother, Beth, prepared for the inmates at the Women's Center of the Maine Correctional Facility in Windham last year. For her work, Serena received a Teens Who Care Award from NBC affiliate television stations in Maine.

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

SERENA FREITAS is one of seven Maine students chosen from 57 nominations to be recognized with a Teens Who Care Award by NBC affiliate stations in Maine. She will receive her award at a ceremony April 24 at the Portland Museum of Art.

Load-Date: April 13, 2006

End of Document

[Woman convicted in child's murder seeks reduced sentence Shawna Gatto asks a judge for a post conviction review, which could potentially reduce her 50-year sentence for murder.](#)

Portland Press Herald

October 6, 2021 Wednesday

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Byline: Dennis Hoey

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

The woman convicted of murdering 4-year-old Kendall Chick is seeking a review of her case that could lead to a reduced prison term, her attorney said Tuesday.

Shawna Gatto, then 44, was sentenced to 50 years in prison for depraved indifference murder in the death of the Wiscasset girl.

Justice William Stokes had ruled the girl's death shortly after her fourth birthday in late 2017 was the result of brutal and repeated physical abuse, and the case helped drive a review of Maine's child welfare system intended to improve protections for abused children. The child welfare system remains under scrutiny.

Stokes said at the sentencing hearing that he had considered a life sentence, but imposed the lesser one because he believed Gatto was overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for Kendall - granddaughter of her fiancée - and two of her own grandchildren. Custody of Kendall, who was born drug-affected, had been taken away from the girl's mother and given to the girl's grandfather, Stephen Hood.

Gatto was convicted on April 30, 2019, with Stokes dismissing her contention that the many bruises on the girl's body were the result of accidents.

"The physical abuse suffered by Kendall Chick, when viewed objectively and in the totality of all the circumstances, can only be described as outrageous, revolting, shocking and brutal," Stokes said in announcing his verdict. The charge, depraved indifference murder, indicates that Stokes believed Gatto showed no regard for the value of Chick's life, but that the killing was not intentional.

In June 2020, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court upheld Gatto's conviction, stating that the long-term abuse suffered by Chick was tantamount to torture.

Gatto then filed a petition with the lower court for a post conviction review, alleging that poor communication between her and her defense attorneys resulted in her not fully understanding all of her legal options and the evidence against her, according to her court-appointed attorney Dylan Boyd. Gatto entered a plea of not guilty at trial.

Woman convicted in child's murder seeks reduced sentence Shawna Gatto asks a judge for a post conviction review, which could potentially reduce her 50-year sent....

A virtual evidentiary hearing was held Tuesday morning with Stokes presiding. Gatto, her former trial attorney Jeremy Pratt, and Cynthia D'Ambrosio, a private investigator who worked with Gatto's defense lawyers, testified via Zoom.

"Had her attorneys communicated better about the evidence against her and her options, she would have pleaded no contest," Boyd said Tuesday evening during a telephone interview. "The message (about pleading no contest) just didn't get across to her. She was overwhelmed by her situation and she would shut down."

Boyd said his client is asking Stokes to allow her to re-enter her plea. If Stokes approves, Gatto will plead no contest, meaning she accepts some degree of responsibility for the child's death, but is not admitting guilt. Most no contest pleas are entered with the defendant's understanding that there is enough evidence to convict them, Boyd said.

"Presumably her sentence would be less than 50 years," Boyd said, adding that Gatto's sentence could not be less than 25 years.

The state was represented at Tuesday's hearing by Assistant Attorney General Don Macomber.

Pratt, who was contacted Tuesday night by email, said he wouldn't comment on the case until Wednesday. Phil Cohen, who worked with Pratt in Gatto's trial defense, died in 2020.

At Gatto's sentencing hearing in 2019, Pratt had argued that his client was "not the monster" that prosecutors portrayed and that a life sentence was not called for. Pratt had suggested a sentence of 30 years.

"She is someone worth giving an opportunity to get out before she dies in prison," Pratt said.

Boyd said he has until Oct. 15 to file a brief in support of his client's petition for a post conviction review.

Gatto is serving her sentence at the Women's Center correctional facility in Windham.

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Dispatches

Portland Press Herald

March 3, 2020 Tuesday

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Body

FULL TEXT

SKOWHEGAN

Hartland man indicted in shooting of officer

The Hartland man accused of firing multiple shots at a Waterville police officer and other law enforcement officers who pursued him in December has been indicted on 19 counts, including aggravated attempted murder, aggravated assault and reckless conduct with a firearm.

Richard Murray-Burns, 30, was shot multiple times by police Dec. 22 in Canaan after he shot an officer, police said. The officer, Timothy Hinton, was shot in both arms.

Murray-Burns shot at Hinton on Main Street, between Waterville and Fairfield, and led officers on a chase that ended in Canaan, police say.

Hinton responded to a report of shoplifting at Walmart in Waterville and stopped a vehicle on Main Street, where he was shot while still inside his cruiser. A chase ensued, and Murray-Burns was shot multiple times by police near the intersection of Routes 2 and 23.

Murray-Burns was indicted Feb. 27 by a Somerset County grand jury on 12 counts of aggravated attempted murder, two counts of aggravated assault and one count each of failure to stop for an officer, reckless conduct with a firearm, robbery and theft.

District Attorney Maeghan Maloney of Kennebec and Somerset counties said the case will be treated with "the serious attention that it deserves." Murray-Burns is being held in lieu of \$1 million cash bail and is scheduled to be arraigned March 19.

SACO

Police asking for help locating missing girl

A Saco girl has been reported missing and police are asking for the public's help in locating her.

Elexis Rose, 16, is described as white with reddish/auburn hair and green eyes. She is 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighs about 120 pounds, the Saco Police Department said in a news release posted on Facebook on Monday.

Dispatches

Anyone with information about her whereabouts should contact Detective Chris Hardiman at 282-8216 or the Saco Police Department at 284-4535. The statement did not say how long Rose had been missing.

-- Staff and news service

PERRY

One person dies in house fire

One person died in a house fire in this Washington County town near the border with Canada, the State Fire Marshal's Office said Monday.

The fire marshal's office said the Sunday morning fire in Perry destroyed a home.

The victim is believed to be Bradford Preston Jr., 32, who lived there. Phyllis and Robert Murray also lived at the home, but were not present at the time of the fire, the office said.

It will take an autopsy to make a positive identification of the body found at the site of the fire, the fire marshal's office said. The person died of smoke inhalation, the office said.

WINDHAM

10 female inmates treated after taking Benadryl

Ten female inmates from the Maine Correctional Women's Center in Windham were treated at hospital Monday evening after taking an excessive amount of Benadryl, the Maine Department of Corrections said.

The women were taken to Maine Medical Center in Portland around 5:45 p.m., Corrections Commissioner Randall Liberty said in an email Monday night.

Liberty said that Benadryl, an over-the-counter medicine used primarily for treating colds, is authorized in small amounts to medium-level offenders.

"They can purchase the cold medicine through their commissary purchases," Liberty said. "This was non-life threatening and they are being returned to the facility now."

Liberty told News Center Maine (WCSH-TV) that the inmates took more medicine than what had been prescribed. He said the women confessed to taking the medicine. There was no explanation offered as to why so many prisoners took the medicine at the same time.

Benadryl - its generic name is diphenhydramine - is an antihistamine used to relieve symptoms of allergy, hay fever and the common cold. It can also be used to help someone relax and fall asleep.

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Substance use disorder crosses

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

April 17, 2022 Sunday

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Byline: Emily Bader

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Nikole Powell's father developed an opioid use disorder after a work injury, a dependence that traumatized his family and eventually led to his incarceration and death. His daughter is trying to break the cycle. This is her story.

generations for Rockland woman

It was her own experience visiting her father in prison that made Nikole Powell want to make sure her children never see her there.

A hot, dirty, stuffy van. The doors clicking and locking. The guards all over the place. And then there was the time that she cracked her head on a rock while playing a game of tag with another boy there and walked out crying, blood pouring down her face all over the dress her father liked.

"It was super traumatic," Powell, now 33, said recently from a conference room at the Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center in Windham, where she's serving her third prison sentence.

"I just didn't want my kids to go through that stuff."

Powell grew up in Alaska with her father and four of the seven brothers on her dad's side. When she was born, her father was already using heroin heavily, she said, a theme that would haunt her. A couple of years before she was born, her dad, a carpenter, broke his back when a large A-frame fell on him in a work accident. His doctors put him on fentanyl patches — a transdermal, extended-release form of the opioid pain medication — and soon after he went off them, he started using heroin.

"He was constantly gone. He would leave for weeks at a time and he would come back so strung out that we just didn't even know who he was," Powell said.

Powell's father beat her and her brothers. She didn't go to school much and, when she did, she blamed the bruises on her brothers. Her brothers terrorized her so much, Powell said, that to this day she is afraid of the dark.

Powell's father was in and out of jail most of her life, but he didn't go to prison until she was 12, she said. It followed an incident when six members of her father's rival motorcycle gang kidnapped her as she was walking with some friends, and then brutally raped her.

Substance use disorder crosses

She says she was in the hospital for a few months. Her father and some others from his gang went after the rival gang, killing at least one and putting a few in intensive care, sending her father to prison.

It was only then, to the best of Powell's recollection, that Alaska's Office of Children's Services got involved, setting off a three-year search to find her mother who had gotten married, changed her name and moved to Rockland, Maine.

When Powell was 15, she made the move to be with her mom, stepdad, an older sister and a younger brother. They were practically strangers.

The transition was "pretty rough," she said.

"It was really hard because I had a lot of resentment for my mom at that point in time because I didn't know anything about her and I always thought to myself, 'Well, I have this really shitty childhood and you were never around.'"

Powell said she did not like her new home at first. She wasn't used to having rules, being told what to do or going to school. She would get into fights with her mom and take off. When she was 16, she dropped out of high school and got her GED on her own. When she was 17, her mom kicked her out of the house.

"I was just doing whatever I wanted and they weren't having it. They didn't know how to handle it," Powell said.

She joined the Army, but returned to Rockland after basic training because she got pregnant with her first son, giving birth to him when she was 18. A year later, she married her first husband, her son's father.

SHADES OF HER FATHER: A BACK INJURY, AND A PRESCRIPTION

At first things were OK, Powell said. But when she was 19, Powell sustained a back injury while working construction. She went to her doctor at Waldoboro Family Medicine and after trying ibuprofen and Vicodin, which Powell said "really messed with my stomach," her doctor switched her to taking up to two short-release oxycodone 30 milligram tablets twice a day.

It was 2008, years before Maine lawmakers clamped down on opioid pain medications through a bill strengthening the state's prescription monitoring program. Under that 2016 law, Powell's doctor would have been prohibited from prescribing her such a high daily dose — 180 morphine milligram equivalents — of opioid pain medications without a qualifying exemption such as cancer or palliative care.

After Powell finished the treatment course, "I was really, really sick," she said. She recognized the signs from watching her father go through it — the shaking, flu-like symptoms, mood swings — she was in withdrawal.

Like him, Powell developed an opioid use disorder being prescribed painkillers for a work injury. Unlike him, she didn't need to look beyond her doctor's office for her supply.

When she realized she was going through withdrawal, Powell recalls saying to herself, "Oh, man, I'm not doing this."

For the next two years, she returned to her doctor, making up excuses for why she needed the oxys.

"And my doctor just kept giving them to me," Powell said.

HOW OPIOIDS TRANSFORM THE BRAIN

Substance use disorder is a disease much like any other chronic illness.

Dr. Paul Vinsel, an addiction medicine physician at Tri-County Mental Health Services and Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, likens it to diabetes.

Substance use disorder crosses

With both diseases, something has disrupted a person's normal functioning. For type 2 diabetes, it could be poor eating habits and little exercise, or with type 1, the genetics a person is born with, that affects how the body processes blood sugar.

Substance use disorder develops out of a person's dependence on a substance, like an opioid, to the point where it interferes with their ability to function normally.

When the brain is exposed to an opioid, regardless if it's in the form of a pill that came from the doctor's office or a balloon of heroin from the streets, it stimulates opioid receptors in the body's nervous system.

It decreases pain, slows the body down and, with increasing doses, decreases breathing, Vinsel said. Most people tend to have two different reactions to opioids: For some, even though their pain may decrease, they feel ill; others get that "high" feeling.

Over time, with sustained or growing exposure to opioids, the amount of stimulation the opioid receptors — the body's reward center — get from the drug decreases.

It "transforms the reward system in your brain," Vinsel said. The brain needs more of the drug to get to just a baseline feeling of normal, and without it, the body has a physical reaction — withdrawal — and causes cravings for the drug.

Meanwhile, the typical things that stimulate the reward center and make people feel good — "good food, going out in the beautiful weather, sex," Vinsel said — no longer stimulate the reward center as much as the drugs do.

A person needs higher highs just to feel normal, and the lows without the drug get lower.

When a person becomes dependent on a drug like an opioid, "their reward center is set so low that they don't get the same pleasure out of the normal things that we get pleasure out of," he said.

Still, even with the risk that opioids can shift the brain's reward system, there are people with chronic pain who can reasonably use opioids with a doctor's supervision while maintaining a normal life.

It's when the dependence spills over into a person's social life — having trouble at work or maintaining relationships, giving up hobbies that they enjoyed or using much of their time in pursuit of that drug — that a dependence becomes an addiction, a medical diagnosis more commonly referred to now as substance use disorder, Vinsel said.

DRUGS AS A COPING MECHANISM

Over the next decade, Powell struggled with substance use disorder. At first it was the oxys, but when she was 21, her doctor was fired for his prescribing practices. When her new doctor cut her off cold, she started to buy oxys from other people and then began to drink excessively.

"I think he was just too scared to lose the practice to continue letting people just get whatever they wanted," Powell said. "He lost a lot of clients at that point in time because they were switching to a different doctor that was going to give them what they wanted."

The first time Powell went to prison it was for 10 months on a charge of domestic assault against her second husband. She was 23. Her three boys, who are now 11, 12 and 14 years old, were all younger than 4.

Powell said she missed her kids, but she didn't want them to go through the same experiences she did as a child. To cope, she started using drugs — heroin, crack, oxy — whatever people had on them when they got in "and you would just make it last for as long as you can."

At the time, it was easy to slip drugs into the Maine Correctional Women's Center, she said.

Substance use disorder crosses

During her second prison stint, on another domestic violence conviction, she was in the “pods,” which she described as a secluded section for residents who break prison rules, for 10 out of the 12 months she was there.

After she was released, Powell said she didn’t drink or use any drugs except marijuana for four years. In February 2019, she and an acquaintance were driving back from New Hampshire and stopped at the Kennebunk rest area.

Unbeknownst to Powell, while she was inside, the acquaintance slipped methamphetamine into the joint he was rolling.

Next thing she remembers, she woke up in a booking room at the Knox County Jail. The man she was with admitted on a recorded phone call after she posted bail that he fed her meth, crack, heroin and ecstasy all in one night, and that he had planted drugs on her.

After four years without doing these kinds of drugs, Powell said she had no tolerance for the amount that was in her system. Recordings from the booking room where Powell was detained that were reviewed by her attorney show that she kept passing out and begging the corrections officers to take her to the hospital, according to Powell. The Sun Journal has not independently verified these videos.

She was not taken to the hospital.

After six days in jail, Powell bailed out. She thought she was doing OK but “with meth, and I didn’t even ever in the years that I had used oxys, never have I wanted a drug as bad as I wanted to do meth again.”

Powell said she started to use meth and other drugs, like heroin, heavily. She was living in Mexico, in Oxford County, at the time and also began to sell the drug — multiple pounds a week.

Her kids were with their fathers, “so once again, I was like ‘Well, my kids aren’t with me so this is all OK.’ And I was just justifying it and I started to notice that more and more, I wasn’t going to see my kids as much as I should have been.”

In September 2020, she was sentenced to seven years in prison, with all but four suspended, on charges of drug trafficking, drug possession and violation of bail conditions from an arrest unrelated to the February 2019 incident, as well as on charges from that February incident.

She moved from the women’s center at the Maine Correctional Center to the women’s reentry center down the hill in May 2021.

Unlike the past two times she was incarcerated, Powell said she found a drug-free environment in the reentry center. She also attends Narcotics Anonymous meetings and lives in a medication-assisted treatment-free section so there are no drugs of any kind around.

Last fall, she helped a friend move sections and injured her back so badly that she had to go to the medical unit at the main prison. Instead of a script for a high-dose opioid painkiller, clinicians there gave her cortisone injections, a type of steroid used to treat swelling. Despite pain so bad that Powell said she had to use a walker to get around, she wasn’t going to take a controlled substance.

She’s taking classes through Washington County Community College, she’s involved in a number of peer support groups, she’s a member of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project and she works six days a week at Clynk in South Portland through a work release program.

“I have a really strong support network now,” Powell said.

She’s doing her best to parent her kids from prison and it’s been far from easy, she said.

Substance use disorder crosses

But unlike the last time she was in prison, when she used drugs as a coping mechanism, “I think that using is the last thing on my mind right now,” Powell said.

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SALLY ANN SCHOFIELD Logan Marr killer's bid rejected

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

May 15, 2013 Wednesday

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Body

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- About to start her 12th year in prison and hoping to move to home confinement, Sally Ann Schofield, who was convicted in 2002 of manslaughter in the suffocation death of a 5-year-old girl, lost a bid to change her probation conditions Tuesday.

Justice Michaela Murphy denied the request from Schofield's lawyer, Amanda Doherty, saying it was not timely because Schofield is still in prison. Doherty had asked the judge to modify a probation condition banning Schofield from direct or indirect contact with children under age 12.

Schofield, a former state child caseworker, was convicted in the death of Logan Marr, a foster child in her care. Wrapped in yards of duct tape in a tipped-over high chair, the girl died in the unfinished basement of Schofield's Chelsea home on Jan. 31, 2001.

The high-profile case resulted in an overhaul of the state's child welfare system, a focus on keeping children with relatives rather than in foster care, and more frequent visits by case workers.

Schofield, now 51, was found guilty of manslaughter on June 25, 2002, and is serving a sentence of 20 years in prison with all but 17 years suspended.

Doherty indicated in a written request to the court that Schofield "is eligible to apply for home confinement" at the end of the year even though the Department of Corrections lists her release date as May 2, 2017.

Doherty wrote that Schofield "is committed to following her probation conditions perfectly" and is concerned that she could be charged with violating probation if she had incidental or accidental contact with a young child at a grocery store, at church or elsewhere. "As probation conditions are currently outlined, defendant would not feel comfortable leaving her home for any reason," Doherty said.

Doherty asked the judge to change the conditions to ban Schofield from unsupervised contact with children under 12.

"I was horrified," said Marr's mother, Christy Darling, of Durham, who watched the brief hearing in Kennebec County Superior Court. "She went to prison for a reason. Why should she be allowed to be around children? Why does she deserve it? It's kind of stupid for her to ask this."

Darling said she will continue to object. "I don't want people to forget; I want Logan's voice to be heard."

SALLY ANN SCHOFIELD Logan Marr killer's bid rejected

Deputy Attorney General William Stokes said the request was premature. He also told the judge, "It is unlikely the probation department will violate (Schofield) for accidental or incidental contact with children."

The judge told Doherty she could file the request again later, after a decision about home confinement and an updated risk assessment.

Logan and her younger sister, Bailey, were taken from Darling -- then known as Christy M. Baker -- and placed first in a series of foster homes and then with Schofield, who was a supervisor in the state Department of Health and Human Services. That placement violated the state's own rules. After Logan's death, Bailey was returned to her mother.

Today an inquiry about Bailey brings a wide smile from Darling.

"She's doing great," Darling said.

Schofield, who is imprisoned at Women's Center of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, waived her right to attend the hearing and was not brought to Augusta.

Doherty said Schofield was not surprised when she was told of the judge's decision Tuesday morning.

"We had prepared for all different outcomes," Doherty said.

Outside the court, Stokes said Schofield's eligibility to apply for home confinement under Department of Correction guidelines does not mean her request will be approved.

"That's not a guarantee, by any stretch of the imagination," he said. "Obviously people have the opportunity to object."

Doherty said after the hearing that she intends to refile the motion to change the probation condition later. That change, she said, "would make it an easier standard to understand and not have any gray area."

Court documents show that Schofield has been busy in prison and recently won a judge's permission to count toward her 500 hours of community service the hours she spends knitting caps for the local cancer society and raffle items for her son's school and 4-H activities.

She also serves on the Resident Council, which meets with the prison staff about ongoing concerns, edits the Women's Center newsletter, and teaches mathematics, aerobics and line dancing classes, according to court documents.

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Probation request rejected

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

May 15, 2013 Wednesday

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Byline: ADAMS, BETTY

Body

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- About to start her 12th year in prison and hoping to move to home confinement, Sally Ann Schofield, who was convicted in 2002 of manslaughter in the suffocation death of a 5-year-old girl, lost a bid to change her probation conditions Tuesday.

Justice Michaela Murphy denied the request from Schofield's lawyer, Amanda Doherty, saying it was not timely because Schofield is still in prison. Doherty had asked the judge to modify a probation condition banning Schofield from direct or indirect contact with children under age 12.

Schofield, a former state child caseworker, was convicted in the death of Logan Marr, a foster child in her care. Wrapped in yards of duct tape in a tipped-over high chair, the girl died in the unfinished basement of Schofield's Chelsea home on Jan. 31, 2001.

The high-profile case resulted in an overhaul of the state's child welfare system, a focus on keeping children with relatives rather than in foster care, and more frequent visits by case workers.

Schofield, now 51, was found guilty of manslaughter on June 25, 2002, and is serving a sentence of 20 years in prison with all but 17 years suspended.

Doherty indicated in a written request to the court that Schofield "is eligible to apply for home confinement" at the end of the year even though the Department of Corrections lists her release date as May 2, 2017.

Doherty wrote that Schofield "is committed to following her probation conditions perfectly" and is concerned that she could be charged with violating probation if she had incidental or accidental contact with a young child at a grocery store, at church or elsewhere. "As probation conditions are currently outlined, defendant would not feel comfortable leaving her home for any reason," Doherty said.

Doherty asked the judge to change the conditions to ban Schofield from unsupervised contact with children under 12.

"I was horrified," said Marr's mother, Christy Darling, of Durham, who watched the brief hearing in Kennebec County Superior Court. "She went to prison for a reason. Why should she be allowed to be around children? Why does she deserve it? It's kind of stupid for her to ask this."

Darling said she will continue to object. "I don't want people to forget; I want Logan's voice to be heard."

Probation request rejected

Deputy Attorney General William Stokes said the request was premature. He also told the judge, "It is unlikely the probation department will violate (Schofield) for accidental or incidental contact with children."

The judge told Doherty she could file the request again later, after a decision about home confinement and an updated risk assessment.

Logan and her younger sister, Bailey, were taken from Darling -- then known as Christy M. Baker -- and placed first in a series of foster homes and then with Schofield, who was a supervisor in the state Department of Health and Human Services. That placement violated the state's own rules. After Logan's death, Bailey was returned to her mother.

Today an inquiry about Bailey brings a wide smile from Darling.

"She's doing great," Darling said.

Schofield, who is imprisoned at Women's Center of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, waived her right to attend the hearing and was not brought to Augusta.

Doherty said Schofield was not surprised when she was told of the judge's decision Tuesday morning.

"We had prepared for all different outcomes," Doherty said.

Outside the court, Stokes said Schofield's eligibility to apply for home confinement under Department of Correction guidelines does not mean her request will be approved.

"That's not a guarantee, by any stretch of the imagination," he said. "Obviously people have the opportunity to object."

Doherty said after the hearing that she intends to refile the motion to change the probation condition later. That change, she said, "would make it an easier standard to understand and not have any gray area."

Court documents show that Schofield has been busy in prison and recently won a judge's permission to count toward her 500 hours of community service the hours she spends knitting caps for the local cancer society and raffle items for her son's school and 4-H activities.

She also serves on the Resident Council, which meets with the prison staff about ongoing concerns, edits the Women's Center newsletter, and teaches mathematics, aerobics and line dancing classes, according to court documents.

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Packed prisons

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

October 14, 2007 Sunday

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Byline: Jessica Alaimo, Staff Writer

Body

Maine's overcrowded prisons are not just a problem for inmates. High cost to taxpayers, a lack of anti-recidivism programs and the stress placed on community systems is bringing the problem home to the rest of us.

Four mattresses rest against a wall of the Maine Correctional Center's Multi-Purpose Unit, former office space permanently converted to cells.

Fifteen women are crammed around a lunch table. They are assuming four new cellmates are on their way, and speculate where the mattresses might go since the cells are full.

Jill Polley of Lewiston will be at the Windham facility until 2009, on a probation violation for an original drug charge. She, like all the women in the MPU, is waiting to get into the Women's Center - another unit at the MCC - that was intended to handle all of Maine's imprisoned women but now is too full to hold them.

There, they get psychological, educational and occupational programming. The idea is to help the women while they're in, to be successful when they get out, so they don't come back at a cost of \$103 a day to Maine taxpayers - \$35,000 a year.

Polley has four kids on the outside. She's looking forward to a class on parenting while incarcerated.

Because of prison overcrowding, inmates like Polley are shut out of such programs, instead idling away months in the MPU.

Bitterness and frustration run rampant in Polley's cell block and in many other units at the Maine Correctional Center - both male and female - because of the overcrowding. In the maximum security area, which is the first stop for inmates coming from the courts, cells designed for one hold two. In the minimum security area they house four men to a cell.

Of Maine's two state prisons - the MCC in Windham for minimum- and medium-risk inmates, and the Maine State Prison in Warren for medium- and maximum-risk inmates - the bottleneck is at the MCC. Inmates there are backed up, waiting to be placed in housing for the duration of their sentences.

Once they are placed in one of the facilities, the problem is not quite as severe. But it still has strained resources and increased risk at both facilities.

Packed prisons

In Windham, specialized sex offender and drug treatment programs for men can only hold half the population that need it. At Warren, there is one drug treatment counselor for more than 900 inmates, drastically underserving the population that needs it.

Overall, Maine's prison population has increased 33 percent in the last 10 years - far exceeding predictions - rising to a record 2,155 inmates last month. To care for them, the state's Corrections budget has doubled over that same time period, to \$132 million in 2006, and now to \$153 million in 2007, becoming the fourth-largest state department budget.

Given the state's tight budget, officials say the top priorities are security and to provide the basic needs for the existing population. Programs aimed at reducing recidivism have to take a back seat, which, officials say, ultimately means more pressure on local police, courts and social service agencies when they have to deal with former inmates again.

Legislators and state officials plan to begin meeting this fall to find a long-term solution. Reasons for overcrowding

Corrections officials give varying reasons for the overcrowding. From his perspective as Androscoggin County's district attorney, Norm Croteau said a combination of two forces appear to be at work: More people are going to prison or those going to prison are being sentenced to longer stays.

In the last 10 years, both the number of arrests in Maine and the prison population have increased at different rates. From 1997 to 2006, the average number of inmates per day went from 1,509 to 2,007, an increase of 33 percent. The total number of arrests annually over that same period went from 42,469 to 49,654, an increase of 17 percent.

Denise Lord, associate commissioner of Corrections, said the arrest numbers and prison population numbers don't go hand in hand. Arrest rates are indicators of instances of crime in the community, while prison population numbers represent policy response to crime, signifying a change in sentencing policies and practices.

The department doesn't have any current statistics on whether courts are meting out longer sentences in Maine. The department is now actively compiling data to determine some of the forces behind the problem.

However, the Legislature has approved a number of laws in the last decade that establish minimum sentences for certain crimes, which officials believe has influenced the problem. In addition, at least one prison official believes that after the larger Warren prison opened, more longer sentences were issued and approved by judges that had the effect of sending inmates to Warren instead of crowded county jails.

As for more people going to prison in Maine, Croteau attributes part of that to better law enforcement.

"We've improved in society as time's gone on so law enforcement is probably more efficient, probation is probably more efficient and people are being brought into court more often," Croteau said.

That is particularly true for women. Between 1989 and 2006, arrest rates went up 85 percent for women, 7 percent for men. Officials have said that the increase for females has come from increased drug charges and traffic violations. Sleeping on the floor

Two corrections officers were working in a tower overlooking a cell block at the MCC in Windham last month. The block is where prisoners first come in from the courts, and they are held at a maximum security level until they are classified otherwise, which sometimes can take months, said Jeff Merrill II, deputy superintendent in charge of security at the center.

This is where the worst overcrowding occurs. Each block was designed for 46 - however they have never held so few. Individual 66- square-foot cells within each block that were meant for one inmate have been doubled up, making room for 92.

Packed prisons

Several months ago, before some inmates were boarded out to the county jails, there were an additional 35 inmates sleeping on the floor in the block's common area.

"We tried putting a third guy in each cell, which doesn't really work out," said Merrill.

It jeopardized the safety of the block. Prisoners locked up in cells would shout out to those on the floor - most of them newly arrived and scared - and they weren't able to tell who was threatening them.

"You can't see the cells very well, if you have them all locked up," said Corrections Officer Paul Cummings. "So when the prisoners yell, We're gonna get you, we're gonna get you," the prisoners on the floor don't know who's going to get them. That puts a lot of stress on the prisoners, Cummings said, which puts a lot of anxiety on the officers that have to work around them.

Some areas of the correctional center do have empty beds, such as in the minimum security unit, but they can't be filled on a whim.

"When you get people in, it's really luck of the draw. Are they going to be minimum or are they going to be medium?" Merrill said. "If they turn out medium, you can't put them in minimum." Short- and long-term solutions

Lawmakers managed to put a bandage on the situation last spring by sending low-risk inmates to county jails at a cost of \$85 a day. There's a pre-release center for women opening in Bangor at the end of October and a proposal for a new prison in Washington County is being examined, but "building our way out of it isn't working," said Martin Magnusson, commissioner of Maine's Department of Corrections.

Long-term answers will more likely develop once lawmakers this fall begin looking at the entire court and correctional systems for solutions.

Potential targets:

Determine which services to offer inside prisons to help ensure people don't come back. When such programs are successful, they save money in the long run.

Identify potential changes in Maine's sentencing procedures to use sentencing alternatives and community corrections more, particularly for non-violent offenders. These options cost much less, but there's a stigma to get past.

"I think we rely on incarceration as our predominant form of punishment and we reinforce that as a society," Lord said. "There has to be a consequence for criminal behavior and that consequence is translated into incarceration and longer periods of incarceration."

In a related issue, Gov. John Baldacci has promised cost savings to the Corrections budget with a proposal for the state to take over the county jails.

County officials have frowned on the proposal, and the chairmen of the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee are hesitant to support it. "It doesn't work for my community, it doesn't work for any community in the state," said Rep. Stan Gerzofsky, D-Brunswick, House chairman. A tale of two women

The Women's Center at the MCC has become a nationally renowned program. Two other programs there for men, a drug treatment program and sex offender program, are also promising, officials say.

When the Women's Center opened in 2002, officials anticipated not having to fill its 78 beds for 10 years. They had 52 females at the time, today they have 130, according to the younger Merrill at the MCC.

He doesn't want to crowd the Women's Center too much, or else it will lose its impact.

Packed prisons

"We didn't want it to affect the whole women's population the way it affected the women when they were in the MPU and really breaking down emotionally, and by the time they come here it's like Phew, OK, I'm through the hardest part," Merrill said.

Carella Brooks of Lewiston waited seven months to get into the center. Since then she's been certified to do construction work, which will help her when she is released in 2009.

While the unit is secure, doors don't lock at night, and a variety of programs help the women keep busy.

"It's nice up here because it's more relaxed, you have more freedom. You have windows you can actually open and close, which is a big plus," Brooks said. "It gives women a chance to be more incorporated, to go back out into society."

In contrast, in the MPU, the women bemoan the thought of getting another inmate, since they're already stretched for space.

Back on that August day, four men hauled a bunk bed frame into the unit, their first of two trips. The frames get moved around the center regularly, Merrill said.

The women speculated the new inmates would be placed in a former conference room, slightly larger than a two-person cell.

"Four girls cannot fit in that room! Three can't even fit," one woman said.

The sunnier atmosphere in the women's center shows in Brooks attitude.

"I try to make the best of it," Brooks said. "You have to realize that you put yourself in here and you can't blame anybody else for your mistakes. When you come here you have to learn to accept the consequences of your own actions. They don't call us inmates or prisoners. We're residents, we're not treated like subhumans. We're respected up here by staff as long as we treat them with respect."

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Lawyer of inmate who died in Maine prison knew his client received life sentence

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

November 17, 2011 Thursday

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Byline: Ryan McLaughlin BDN Staff

Body

WARREN, Maine -- Before Mary Hoskins stepped into prison to begin serving two years for arson, her attorney knew it was a life sentence because she had terminal cancer. Mary Hoskins, 50, died Thursday, exactly one week after she entered the Maine Correctional Center's Women's Center in Windham.

Hoskins died of natural causes and her death was reported to the state medical examiner, according to the Maine Department of Corrections.

According to Scott Burnheimer, superintendent of the Maine Correctional Center, Hoskins was sent to his prison on Thursday, Nov. 10. By Wednesday, Nov. 16, she had become ill and Burnheimer's staff sent her to the infirmary at Maine State Prison in Warren. She died early the next morning.

Hoskins had just begun serving two years for arson in connection with a fire that was set in September 2008 at the North Anson mobile home of her son Neal Hoskins, with whom she was living at the time. Police accused the two of setting the fire to collect insurance money. Neal Hoskins pleaded guilty two months ago to the 2008 fire and was sentenced to 10 years in prison with all but two years suspended and four years of probation.

Mary Hoskins, who also had been found guilty of arson for a 1998 fire at her home in Salem, Mass., was convicted for the 2008 fire and sentenced to eight years with all but two years suspended. She started serving her sentence on Nov. 10.

During a hearing on the 2008 arson charge in October in Somerset County Superior, Mary Hoskin's lawyer Andrew Ketterer told the judge that Hoskins was in the terminal stages of ovarian cancer and only had six to 12 months to live. Holding in her in custody would be a life sentence for her, he argued.

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FINAL::>A work injury and a prescription. One Maine woman's story of the cycle of addiction.

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

April 17, 2022 Sunday

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Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Nikole Powell's father developed an opioid use disorder after a work injury, a dependence that traumatized his family and eventually led to his incarceration and death. His daughter is trying to break the cycle. This is her story.

It was her own experience visiting her father in prison that made Nikole Powell want to make sure her children never see her there.

A hot, dirty, stuffy van. The doors clicking and locking. The guards all over the place. And then there was the time that she cracked her head on a rock while playing a game of tag with another boy there and walked out crying, blood pouring down her face all over the dress her father liked.

"It was super traumatic," Powell, now 33, said recently from a conference room at the Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center in Windham, where she's serving her third prison sentence.

"I just didn't want my kids to go through that stuff."

Powell grew up in Alaska with her father and four of the seven brothers on her dad's side. When she was born, her father was already using heroin heavily, she said, a theme that would haunt her. A couple of years before she was born, her dad, a carpenter, broke his back when a large A-frame fell on him in a work accident. His doctors put him on fentanyl patches — a transdermal, extended-release form of the opioid pain medication — and soon after he went off them, he started using heroin.

"He was constantly gone. He would leave for weeks at a time and he would come back so strung out that we just didn't even know who he was," Powell said.

Powell's father beat her and her brothers. She didn't go to school much and, when she did, she blamed the bruises on her brothers. Her brothers terrorized her so much, Powell said, that to this day she is afraid of the dark.

Powell's father was in and out of jail most of her life, but he didn't go to prison until she was 12, she said. It followed an incident when six members of her father's rival motorcycle gang kidnapped her as she was walking with some friends, and then brutally raped her.

FINAL::>A work injury and a prescription. One Maine woman's story of the cycle of addiction.

She says she was in the hospital for a few months. Her father and some others from his gang went after the rival gang, killing at least one and putting a few in intensive care, sending her father to prison.

It was only then, to the best of Powell's recollection, that Alaska's Office of Children's Services got involved, setting off a three-year search to find her mother who had gotten married, changed her name and moved to Rockland, Maine.

When Powell was 15, she made the move to be with her mom, stepdad, an older sister and a younger brother. They were practically strangers.

The transition was "pretty rough," she said.

"It was really hard because I had a lot of resentment for my mom at that point in time because I didn't know anything about her and I always thought to myself, 'Well, I have this really shitty childhood and you were never around.'"

Powell said she did not like her new home at first. She wasn't used to having rules, being told what to do or going to school. She would get into fights with her mom and take off. When she was 16, she dropped out of high school and got her GED on her own. When she was 17, her mom kicked her out of the house.

"I was just doing whatever I wanted and they weren't having it. They didn't know how to handle it," Powell said.

She joined the Army, but returned to Rockland after basic training because she got pregnant with her first son, giving birth to him when she was 18. A year later, she married her first husband, her son's father.

SHADES OF HER FATHER: A BACK INJURY, AND A PRESCRIPTION

At first things were OK, Powell said. But when she was 19, Powell sustained a back injury while working construction. She went to her doctor at Waldoboro Family Medicine and after trying ibuprofen and Vicodin, which Powell said "really messed with my stomach," her doctor switched her to taking up to two short-release oxycodone 30 milligram tablets twice a day.

It was 2008, years before Maine lawmakers clamped down on opioid pain medications through a bill strengthening the state's prescription monitoring program. Under that 2016 law, Powell's doctor would have been prohibited from prescribing her such a high daily dose — 180 morphine milligram equivalents — of opioid pain medications without a qualifying exemption such as cancer or palliative care.

After Powell finished the treatment course, "I was really, really sick," she said. She recognized the signs from watching her father go through it — the shaking, flu-like symptoms, mood swings — she was in withdrawal.

Like him, Powell developed an opioid use disorder being prescribed painkillers for a work injury. Unlike him, she didn't need to look beyond her doctor's office for her supply.

When she realized she was going through withdrawal, Powell recalls saying to herself, "Oh, man, I'm not doing this."

For the next two years, she returned to her doctor, making up excuses for why she needed the oxys.

"And my doctor just kept giving them to me," Powell said.

HOW OPIOIDS TRANSFORM THE BRAIN

Substance use disorder is a disease much like any other chronic illness.

Dr. Paul Vinsel, an addiction medicine physician at Tri-County Mental Health Services and Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, likens it to diabetes.

FINAL::>A work injury and a prescription. One Maine woman's story of the cycle of addiction.

With both diseases, something has disrupted a person's normal functioning. For type 2 diabetes, it could be poor eating habits and little exercise, or with type 1, the genetics a person is born with, that affects how the body processes blood sugar.

Substance use disorder develops out of a person's dependence on a substance, like an opioid, to the point where it interferes with their ability to function normally.

When the brain is exposed to an opioid, regardless if it's in the form of a pill that came from the doctor's office or a balloon of heroin from the streets, it stimulates opioid receptors in the body's nervous system.

It decreases pain, slows the body down and, with increasing doses, decreases breathing, Vinsel said. Most people tend to have two different reactions to opioids: For some, even though their pain may decrease, they feel ill; others get that "high" feeling.

Over time, with sustained or growing exposure to opioids, the amount of stimulation the opioid receptors — the body's reward center — get from the drug decreases.

It "transforms the reward system in your brain," Vinsel said. The brain needs more of the drug to get to just a baseline feeling of normal, and without it, the body has a physical reaction — withdrawal — and causes cravings for the drug.

Meanwhile, the typical things that stimulate the reward center and make people feel good — "good food, going out in the beautiful weather, sex," Vinsel said — no longer stimulate the reward center as much as the drugs do.

A person needs higher highs just to feel normal, and the lows without the drug get lower.

When a person becomes dependent on a drug like an opioid, "their reward center is set so low that they don't get the same pleasure out of the normal things that we get pleasure out of," he said.

Still, even with the risk that opioids can shift the brain's reward system, there are people with chronic pain who can reasonably use opioids with a doctor's supervision while maintaining a normal life.

It's when the dependence spills over into a person's social life — having trouble at work or maintaining relationships, giving up hobbies that they enjoyed or using much of their time in pursuit of that drug — that a dependence becomes an addiction, a medical diagnosis more commonly referred to now as substance use disorder, Vinsel said.

DRUGS AS A COPING MECHANISM

Over the next decade, Powell struggled with substance use disorder. At first it was the oxys, but when she was 21, her doctor was fired for his prescribing practices. When her new doctor cut her off cold, she started to buy oxys from other people and then began to drink excessively.

"I think he was just too scared to lose the practice to continue letting people just get whatever they wanted," Powell said. "He lost a lot of clients at that point in time because they were switching to a different doctor that was going to give them what they wanted."

The first time Powell went to prison it was for 10 months on a charge of domestic assault against her second husband. She was 23. Her three boys, who are now 11, 12 and 14 years old, were all younger than 4.

Powell said she missed her kids, but she didn't want them to go through the same experiences she did as a child. To cope, she started using drugs — heroin, crack, oxy — whatever people had on them when they got in "and you would just make it last for as long as you can."

At the time, it was easy to slip drugs into the Maine Correctional Women's Center, she said.

FINAL::>A work injury and a prescription. One Maine woman's story of the cycle of addiction.

During her second prison stint, on another domestic violence conviction, she was in the "pods," which she described as a secluded section for residents who break prison rules, for 10 out of the 12 months she was there.

After she was released, Powell said she didn't drink or use any drugs except marijuana for four years. In February 2019, she and an acquaintance were driving back from New Hampshire and stopped at the Kennebunk rest area.

Unbeknownst to Powell, while she was inside, the acquaintance slipped methamphetamine into the joint he was rolling.

Next thing she remembers, she woke up in a booking room at the Knox County Jail. The man she was with admitted on a recorded phone call after she posted bail that he fed her meth, crack, heroin and ecstasy all in one night, and that he had planted drugs on her.

After four years without doing these kinds of drugs, Powell said she had no tolerance for the amount that was in her system. Recordings from the booking room where Powell was detained that were reviewed by her attorney show that she kept passing out and begging the corrections officers to take her to the hospital, according to Powell. The Sun Journal has not independently verified these videos.

She was not taken to the hospital.

After six days in jail, Powell bailed out. She thought she was doing OK but "with meth, and I didn't even ever in the years that I had used oxys, never have I wanted a drug as bad as I wanted to do meth again."

Powell said she started to use meth and other drugs, like heroin, heavily. She was living in Mexico, in Oxford County, at the time and also began to sell the drug — multiple pounds a week.

Her kids were with their fathers, "so once again, I was like 'Well, my kids aren't with me so this is all OK.' And I was just justifying it and I started to notice that more and more, I wasn't going to see my kids as much as I should have been."

In September 2020, she was sentenced to seven years in prison, with all but four suspended, on charges of drug trafficking, drug possession and violation of bail conditions from an arrest unrelated to the February 2019 incident, as well as on charges from that February incident.

She moved from the women's center at the Maine Correctional Center to the women's reentry center down the hill in May 2021.

Unlike the past two times she was incarcerated, Powell said she found a drug-free environment in the reentry center. She also attends Narcotics Anonymous meetings and lives in a medication-assisted treatment-free section so there are no drugs of any kind around.

Last fall, she helped a friend move sections and injured her back so badly that she had to go to the medical unit at the main prison. Instead of a script for a high-dose opioid painkiller, clinicians there gave her cortisone injections, a type of steroid used to treat swelling. Despite pain so bad that Powell said she had to use a walker to get around, she wasn't going to take a controlled substance.

She's taking classes through Washington County Community College, she's involved in a number of peer support groups, she's a member of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project and she works six days a week at Clynk in South Portland through a work release program.

"I have a really strong support network now," Powell said.

She's doing her best to parent her kids from prison and it's been far from easy, she said.

FINAL::>A work injury and a prescription. One Maine woman's story of the cycle of addiction.

But unlike the last time she was in prison, when she used drugs as a coping mechanism, "I think that using is the last thing on my mind right now," Powell said.

Coming next week: We look at how the opioid epidemic has put growing pressure on schools and the child welfare system as the state grapples with this multi-generational crisis. And we will look at possible solutions from state officials, lawmakers and recovery advocates.

The project was produced in partnership with the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism through its 2021 Data Fellowship program.

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[Portland conference addresses growing female population in prisons](#)

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

October 9, 2013 Wednesday

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Body

PORTLAND -- The number of women held in the Maine state prison system has grown nearly sixfold since 2002, a stark increase that experts say is sparking new conversations about the best way to rehabilitate female criminals.

Troy R. Bennett/Bangor Daily News

Erica King, a corrections researcher at the University of Southern Maine, said Maine's women's prison population has risen dramatically since 2002. King is co-chair of a women-in-prison conference being held in Portland this week.

Portland's Holiday Inn By the Bay is the setting for the 2013 biennial Adult & Juvenile Female Offenders Conference, which attracted more than 400 corrections officials from multiple states for five days of specialized workshops and presentations.

Erica King, a University of Southern Maine policy analyst who has conducted extensive research into corrections systems and was a co-organizer of the conference, said Maine's population of female prison inmates has grown from 25 in 2002 to 146 today.

And with each woman costing, by some estimates, nearly twice as much as a man to hold in prison, there's a significant financial incentive to adopting programs and services geared toward keeping the women's recidivism rate down, she said.

King said the reason for the explosive increase in Maine female prison inmates is hard to pin down. She said increased capacity for women, through the opening of the Department of Corrections' Women's Center in Windham in 2002, is sometimes pointed to as a catalyst. But she also said changes to sentencing guidelines at the state and federal levels in recent decades -- for those convicted of drug crimes or being accessories to the crimes of others, for instance -- have likely ensnared more women than in the past.

Whatever the legal drivers for the change, King and others who attended the conference on Tuesday said corrections officials must think differently about how they deal with incarcerated women compared to their male counterparts.

"Their pathways into the system are very different than men's pathways into the system," King said.

Piper Kerman, author of the bestselling memoir "Orange is the New Black" about her 13 months in a Connecticut prison, said a majority of women in prison have histories of trauma or being abused.

Portland conference addresses growing female population in prisons

"A huge percentage of women in prison are in there for nonviolent offenses, and the vast majority of the women I was imprisoned with were not frightening at all," Kerman, the conference's keynote speaker, told the Bangor Daily News in a Tuesday interview. "Those women needed changes in their lives, but being a prisoner in a jail cell was not what got the best results."

"Our mission as a justice system is to correct and restore, so (prisoners) leave our system better than they were before. And if we're not addressing those histories of abuse and trauma, they're more likely to go out and fall back into the lifestyles that got them into trouble in the first place," said King.

Amanda Woolford, director of female services for the Maine Department of Corrections, said 78 of the women in state custody are in the longer-term Women's Center in Windham, while another 68 are in the Reentry Center in Bangor, a less-restrictive environment for women with fewer than three years left on their terms.

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Woolford said female inmates are much more likely to be incarcerated for crimes committed out of economic desperation or for "boyfriend crimes," in which they're pressured into serving as a getaway driver, prostitute or drug transporter for a controlling boyfriend or husband.

"The line between us and them is very, very thin," she said. "I don't know what I would do tomorrow if I lost my job and couldn't feed my child, or if my husband was abusive."

King said the cost to society of putting women behind bars is greater than it is for men in part because women are more likely to have children, who are in many cases moved into the foster care system when their mothers are incarcerated.

She agreed with Kerman's sentiment that more effective -- and less expensive -- punishments for women who committed nonviolent crimes could involve in-home monitoring or intensive counseling programs.

While no U.S. data on the subject was immediately available, a Canadian study found that women cost more than \$113,000 per year to incarcerate, while their male counterparts cost just less than \$60,000 annually. According to the Vera Institute of Justice, the average annual incarceration costs in the U.S., making no distinction by gender, is lower than in Canada.

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Load-Date: October 10, 2013

[Experts: Number of women in Maine prisons has grown sixfold since 2002](#)

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

October 8, 2013 Tuesday

Copyright 2013 Bangor Daily News

Length: 837 words

Byline: Seth Koenig BDN Staff

Body

PORTLAND, Maine -- The number of women held in the Maine state prison system has grown nearly sixfold since 2002, a stark increase that experts say is sparking new conversations about the best way to rehabilitate female criminals.

Portland's Holiday Inn By the Bay is the setting for the 2013 biennial Adult & Juvenile Female Offenders Conference, which attracted more than 400 corrections officials from multiple states for five days of specialized workshops and presentations.

Erica King, a University of Southern Maine policy analyst who has conducted extensive research into corrections systems and was a co-organizer of the conference, said Maine's population of female prison inmates has grown from 25 in 2002 to 146 today.

And with each woman costing, by some estimates, nearly twice as much as a man to hold in prison, there's a significant financial incentive to adopting programs and services geared toward keeping the women's recidivism rate down, she said.

King said the reason for the explosive increase in Maine female prison inmates is hard to pin down. She said increased capacity for women, through the opening of the Department of Corrections' Women's Center in Windham in 2002, is sometimes pointed to as a catalyst. But she also said changes to sentencing guidelines at the state and federal levels in recent decades -- for those convicted of drug crimes or being accessories to the crimes of others, for instance -- have likely ensnared more women than in the past.

Whatever the legal drivers for the change, King and others who attended the conference on Tuesday said corrections officials must think differently about how they deal with incarcerated women compared to their male counterparts.

"Their pathways into the system are very different than men's pathways into the system," King said.

Piper Kerman, author of the bestselling memoir "Orange is the New Black" about her 13 months in a Connecticut prison, said a majority of women in prison have histories of trauma or being abused.

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Maine female prison population has skyrocketed since 2002; advocates say different programs, services needed

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Maine continues trend of lower case counts, but hospitalizations remain high

Portland Press Herald

May 1, 2021 Saturday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

Length: 966 words

Byline: Joe Lawlor

Eric Russell

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Maine reported 268 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, continuing a trend of lower case counts as the state closes in on vaccinating 50 percent of its population with at least a first dose.

Two additional deaths also were reported, bringing the total for April to 41.

Friday marked the fifth time in the last six days that cases have been below 275. The seven-day average of daily new cases now stands at 282, down considerably from 442 two weeks ago but higher than a month ago, when the average was 211 cases. At the peak in mid-January, Maine was averaging more than 600 cases per day.

Since the pandemic began, Maine has recorded 61,213 confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 and 784 deaths, according to data tracked by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Although cases have fallen over the last two weeks, hospitalizations - which along with deaths often lag behind case spikes - remain high. As of Friday morning, 121 individuals were in the hospital with COVID-19, including 59 in critical care, an increase of 13 just since Thursday. There haven't been that many people in critical care since Jan. 26.

The seven-day average for hospitalizations is 119, which is up from an average of 77 this time last month but still well below peak in early-to-mid-January, when hospitalizations rose above 200 on several occasions.

Cases and deaths are declining across the country as well, although there are still pockets where transmission remains high. The seven-day case average in the United States dropped to 52,528 this week, the lowest it has been since last October. Cases peaked at nearly 250,000 per day in mid-January, according to the U.S. CDC. The average number of daily deaths has fallen to 628, which is the lowest since last July and down from a peak of 3,400 deaths per day in mid-January.

Some of the decrease is likely linked to increased rates of vaccinations. More than 100 million people, or roughly 44 percent of the U.S. population, have had at least one dose and about 30 percent are fully vaccinated. That's almost

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twice as many as the number that had been fully vaccinated by the end of March, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients said at a briefing Friday.

"That's 100 million Americans with a sense of relief and peace of mind, knowing that after a long and hard year, they're protected from the virus," he said.

But some of the case decline also can be attributed to lower testing volume, especially in some states.

In Maine, meanwhile, 632,703 people, or 47 percent of the state's 1.3 million population, had received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as of Friday morning, while 512,377 individuals, or 38 percent of the population, had gotten their final doses of the vaccine. Maine's vaccination rate still leads the nation, according to Bloomberg, which tracks each state's progress.

In Cumberland County, the state's most populous, 58 percent of the 295,000 residents has received at least one shot. In Oxford County, just 39 percent have gotten one dose.

Among Mainers 60 and older, 78 percent are fully vaccinated. Among those under 50, most of whom have only been eligible for three weeks, the rate is just 21 percent. Maine CDC Director Dr. Nirav Shah urged younger Mainers to get their shots in remarks during Thursday's media briefing.

"If you're on the younger side ... and unsure about getting a vaccine, I'm here to tell you: You should get the shot," Shah said.

In an effort to reach more young people, and in response to sagging demand, vaccine clinics are increasingly offering more walk-in options. MaineHealth announced this week that several of its sites will offer walk-ins, including the mass vaccination clinic at Scarborough Downs. The Sanford location at the former Marshalls store started welcoming walk-ins this week.

Northern Light Health started permitting walk-ins this week at the Portland Expo and the former Pier 1 at the Maine Mall in South Portland.

Also, the mobile clinic run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, after spending most of this week in Biddeford, opened Friday at the Fryeburg Fairgrounds in Oxford County, which has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the state. The FEMA site allows walk-ins, and about half of the 2,277 given in Biddeford this week were to Mainers who did not make an appointment.

Progress could stall somewhat next week, as Maine is expected to see a nearly 40 percent drop in vaccine doses coming into the state, although that total doesn't include doses that will go directly to retail pharmacies and federally qualified health centers. Those allotments won't be finalized until the weekend.

Although Maine's cases are trending downward, there are still areas of concern. Jails and prisons, for instance, have seen recent outbreaks. At Two Bridges Regional Jail in Wiscasset, there were at least 30 cases as of Friday. None of the residents there have been vaccinated and only a quarter of staff have been vaccinated thus far.

And on Friday, the Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham reported that 24 inmates had contracted COVID.

There are also big disparities in where cases are spiking the most in Maine. Over the last 28 days, Androscoggin County is averaging 167 cases per 10,000 residents and has been one of the hardest-hit areas in the entire country. Oxford and Kennebec counties also have seen in excess of 100 cases per 10,000 in that time.

On the other side, Washington County saw just 20 cases per 10,000 people, followed by Hancock at 30 per 10,000 and Waldo at 31 per 10,000.

In general, the counties where case counts are high counts have lower rates of vaccination.

Maine continues trend of lower case counts, but hospitalizations remain high

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End of Document

Imprisoned Maine foster mother loses bid to ease probation ; Sally Ann Schofield, a former state child caseworker, was convicted in 2002 of manslaughter in the suffocation death of 5-year-old Logan Marr.

Portland Press Herald

May 14, 2013 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 827 words

Byline: BETTY ADAMS, By BETTY ADAMS Kennebec Journal

Body

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By BETTY ADAMS Kennebec Journal

AUGUSTA -- About to start her 12th year in prison and hoping to move to home confinement, Sally Ann Schofield, who was convicted in 2002 of manslaughter in the suffocation death of a 5-year-old girl, lost a bid to change her probation conditions Tuesday.

Sally Ann Schofield

Contributed photo

Logan Marr, 5, shown in a 2001 photo before she was found dead.

Contributed photo

[sidebar]

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Christy Darling

Logan Marr's mother

Justice Michaela Murphy denied the request from Schofield's lawyer, Amanda Doherty, saying it was not timely because Schofield is still in prison. Doherty had asked the judge to modify a probation condition banning Schofield from direct or indirect contact with children under age 12.

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Schofield, a former state child caseworker, was convicted in the death of Logan Marr, a foster child in her care. Wrapped in yards of duct tape in a tipped-over high chair, the girl died in the unfinished basement of Schofield's Chelsea home on Jan. 31, 2001.

The high-profile case resulted in an overhaul of the state's child welfare system, a focus on keeping children with relatives rather than in foster care, and more frequent visits by case workers.

Schofield, now 51, was found guilty of manslaughter on June 25, 2002, and is serving a sentence of 20 years in prison with all but 17 years suspended.

Doherty indicated in a written request to the court that Schofield "is eligible to apply for home confinement" at the year even though the Department of Corrections lists her release date as May 2, 2017.

Doherty wrote that Schofield "is committed to following her probation conditions perfectly" and is concerned that she could be charged with violating probation if she had incidental or accidental contact with a young child at a grocery store, at church or elsewhere. "As probation conditions are currently outlined, defendant would not feel comfortable leaving her home for any reason," Doherty said.

Doherty asked the judge to change the conditions to ban Schofield from unsupervised contact with children under 12.

"I was horrified," said Marr's mother, Christy Darling, of Durham, who watched the brief hearing in Kennebec County Superior Court. "She went to prison for a reason. Why should she be allowed to be around children? Why does she deserve it? It's kind of stupid for her to ask this."

Darling said she will continue to object. "I don't want people to forget; I want Logan's voice to be heard."

Deputy Attorney General William Stokes said the request was premature. He also told the judge, "It is unlikely the probation department will violate (Schofield) for accidental or incidental contact with children."

The judge told Doherty she could file the request again later, after a decision about home confinement and an updated risk assessment.

Logan and her younger sister, Bailey, were taken from Darling -- then known as Christy M. Baker -- and placed first in a series of foster homes and then with Schofield, who was a supervisor in the state Department of Health and Human Services. That placement violated the state's own rules. After Logan's death, Bailey was returned to her mother.

Today an inquiry about Bailey brings a wide smile from Darling.

"She's doing great," Darling said.

Schofield, who is imprisoned at Women's Center of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, waived her right to attend the hearing and was not brought to Augusta.

Doherty said Schofield was not surprised when she was told of the judge's decision Tuesday morning.

"We had prepared for all different outcomes," Doherty said.

Outside the court, Stokes said Schofield's eligibility to apply for home confinement under Department of Correction guidelines does not mean her request will be approved.

"That's not a guarantee, by any stretch of the imagination," he said. "Obviously people have the opportunity to object."

Imprisoned Maine foster mother loses bid to ease probation ; Sally Ann Schofield, a former state child caseworker, was convicted in 2002 of manslaughter in the

Doherty said after the hearing that she intends to refile the motion to change the probation condition later. That change, she said, "would make it an easier standard to understand and not have any gray area."

Court documents show that Schofield has been busy in prison and recently won a judge's permission to count toward her 500 hours of community service the hours she spends knitting caps for the local cancer society and raffle items for her son's school and 4-H activities.

She also serves on the Resident Council, which meets with the prison staff about ongoing concerns, edits the Women's Center newsletter, and teaches mathematics, aerobics and line dancing classes, according to court documents.

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End of Document

Posters of domestic abuse survivors featured in South Portland storefronts

Portland Press Herald

March 27, 2021 Saturday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

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Byline: Catherine Bart Mainely Media

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

SOUTH PORTLAND -- A peer-to-peer organization breaking the silence on domestic abuse is displaying about 20 banners in the windows of local businesses to shed light on what is often seen as an uncomfortable subject.

Finding Our Voices, a Camden nonprofit that supports domestic abuse survivors and educates the public, doesn't want the discussion of domestic violence to stay hidden in the dark, where no one learns about the issue, said Patrisha McLean, the organization's founder and president.

McLean and Finding Our Voices members Linda Leonard and Mary Lou Smith of Scarborough were in South Portland this month to hang the 4-foot-by-2-foot posters as part of the group's window banner project.

Each banner features a woman who has experienced domestic abuse; the national hotline number for domestic violence, 800-799-7233; and Finding Our Voices' website information, findingourvoices.net, where people can read about the women on the banners and hear them tell their stories.

This was the third time the organization's members have gone to a community to ask business owners to put up the banners, McLean said.

By showing real women's experiences in storefront windows, the banners shed light on the issue, McLean said. Each has a different person and their quote in the hopes that the banners will resonate with a variety of people.

"So, basically we're up to 33 women now from all over Maine, 18 to 81," she said. "The more banners we can get up in one area, the better because they're all different, and people will start noticing them and they'll see this happens to everyone, young, old, all kinds of backgrounds.

"We have a journalist, a teacher, a nurse, a prisoner, a prison guard, a pharmacist. On and on, it's just every kind of woman imaginable, and this is just to say it happens to everybody."

The women visited Nonesuch Books & More in South Portland, their first destination of the day, to pick up copies of the book "Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men," by Lundy Bancroft. Smith, a domestic abuse survivor of 43 years, inscribed the book, McLean said. Finding Our Voices then distributes the copies to people reaching out to the organization.

Posters of domestic abuse survivors featured in South Portland storefronts

"So I order these from local bookstores, and our survivors write an inscription in them, and we give those to women who need to understand what they're going through," McLean said. "We ordered 12 books. Mary Lou wrote an inscription in each one."

Smith's banner, hanging in the window of the bookstore, contains her quote, "It's never too late to leave."

"Because I left when I was 65," she said.

Now 81, Smith is working with McLean on various projects, including a survivors' support chat and book club at the Maine Correctional Women's Center in Windham.

"I want people's love and compassion, not their pity and judgment," Smith said. "When they give me love and compassion, I stand beside them. When they give me pity and judgment, they make me a victim, and I'll never be a victim again. That's ingrained in my soul."

McLean and Smith met in 2019, and even though there is an age difference of 20 years, they saw strong similarities in the way they were treated by their husbands, Smith said.

A domestic abuse survivor of 29 years, McLean had never realized how many women in her Camden-Rockport community experienced the same situation until after she left her former husband in 2016, she said.

When her ex-husband, Don McLean, the singer-songwriter most famous for "American Pie," was arrested on domestic violence charges and made headlines, McLean said women began approaching her with their stories.

"I had lived there for 29 years, and it was women coming up to me and saying, 'It has happened to me, too,'" she said. "And these were women, many of whom I have known for 30 years. They never knew about me, and I never knew about them."

This made McLean realize that domestic abuse is an issue that needs to be discussed in the public, and she launched Finding Our Voices in February 2019, three years after Don McLean was convicted of domestic abuse.

With the banners, Finding Our Voices hopes to move away from stereotypes such as a "woman with a black eye" that may present a false image of domestic abuse and violence in people's minds, McLean said.

At first, the women were contacting municipalities and local chambers of commerce for permission to put up banners, but Leonard had the idea to start driving to different communities and cold-calling on businesses, McLean said.

There has been a great deal of support from business owners, Leonard said.

Legion Square Market in South Portland immediately agreed to put up a banner when approached, manager Mike Cardinal said. The store is happy to support the organization and the work the members are doing.

"I hope to be a part of raising voices that deserve to be heard, and I hope us showing that we're comfortable making space for that will help encourage other businesses that might be more hesitant to consider doing that as well," Cardinal said.

With half of all homicides each year in the state caused by domestic violence, Finding Our Voices plans to continue spreading women's stories throughout Maine, McLean said.

"The fact that these women can now stand proud and speak loud is a beautiful thing," she said. "We're getting these banners big because people can't look away from these banners, and they've got to stop looking away from it. People have got to start looking it square in the eye. Until they do, the shame continues. The public doesn't realize how big of a problem this is until they start seeing it with their own eyes."

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Posters of domestic abuse survivors featured in South Portland storefronts

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CDC: COVID-19 cases keep trending lower

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

May 1, 2021 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

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Byline: Joe Lawlor

Eric Russell

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Vaccinations continue to increase, with Maine approaching a 50% rate statewide for first doses, but a rising number of critical care hospitalizations shows the virus is still a threat.

Maine reported 268 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, continuing a trend of lower case counts as the state closes in on vaccinating 50% of its population with at least a first dose.

Two additional deaths also were reported, bringing the total for April to 41.

Friday marked the fifth time in the last six days that cases have been below 275. The seven-day average of daily new cases now stands at 282, down considerably from 442 two weeks ago but higher than a month ago, when the average was 211 cases. At the peak in mid-January, Maine was averaging more than 600 cases per day.

Since the pandemic began, Maine has recorded 61,213 confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 and 784 deaths, according to data tracked by the Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention.

Although cases have fallen over the last two weeks, hospitalizations — which along with deaths often lag behind case spikes — remain high. As of Friday morning, 121 individuals were in the hospital with COVID-19, including 59 in critical care, an increase of 13 just since Thursday. There haven't been that many people in critical care since Jan. 26.

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Cases and deaths are declining across the country as well, although there are still pockets where transmission remains high. The seven-day case average in the United States dropped to 52,528 this week, the lowest it has been since last October. Cases peaked at nearly 250,000 per day in mid-January, according to the U.S. CDC. The average number of daily deaths has fallen to 628, which is the lowest since last July and down from a peak of 3,400 deaths per day in mid-January.

CDC: COVID-19 cases keep trending lower

Some of the decrease is likely linked to increased rates of vaccinations. More than 100 million people, or roughly 44% of the U.S. population, have had at least one dose and about 30% are fully vaccinated. That's almost twice as many as the number that had been fully vaccinated by the end of March, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients said at a briefing Friday.

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But some of the case decline also can be attributed to lower testing volume, especially in some states.

In Maine, meanwhile, 632,703 people, or 47% of the state's 1.3 million population, had received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as of Friday morning, while 512,377 individuals, or 38% of the population, had gotten their final doses of the vaccine. Maine's vaccination rate still leads the nation, according to Bloomberg, which tracks each state's progress.

In Cumberland County, the state's most populous, 58% of the 295,000 residents has received at least one shot. In Oxford County, just 39% have gotten one dose.

Among Mainers 60 and older, 78% are fully vaccinated. Among those under 50, most of whom have only been eligible for three weeks, the rate is just 21%. Maine CDC Director Dr. Nirav Shah urged younger Mainers to get their shots in remarks during Thursday's media briefing.

"If you're on the younger side ... and unsure about getting a vaccine, I'm here to tell you: You should get the shot," Shah said.

In an effort to reach more young people, and in response to sagging demand, vaccine clinics are increasingly offering more walk-in options. MaineHealth announced this week that several of its sites will offer walk-ins, including the mass vaccination clinic at Scarborough Downs. The Sanford location at the former Marshalls store started welcoming walk-ins this week.

Northern Light Health started permitting walk-ins this week at the Portland Expo and the former Pier 1 at the Maine Mall in South Portland.

Also, the mobile clinic run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, after spending most of this week in Biddeford, opened Friday at the Fryeburg Fairgrounds in Oxford County, which has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the state. The FEMA site allows walk-ins, and about half of the 2,277 given in Biddeford this week were to Mainers who did not make an appointment.

Progress could stall somewhat next week, as Maine is expected to see a nearly 40% drop in vaccine doses coming into the state, although that total doesn't include doses that will go directly to retail pharmacies and federally qualified health centers. Those allotments won't be finalized until the weekend.

Although Maine's cases are trending downward, there are still areas of concern. Jails and prisons, for instance, have seen recent outbreaks. At Two Bridges Regional Jail in Wiscasset, there were at least 30 cases as of Friday. None of the residents there have been vaccinated and only a quarter of staff have been vaccinated thus far.

And on Friday, the Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham reported that 24 inmates had contracted COVID

There are also big disparities in where cases are spiking the most in Maine. Over the last 28 days, Androscoggin County is averaging 167 cases per 10,000 residents and has been one of the hardest-hit areas in the entire country. Oxford and Kennebec counties also have seen in excess of 100 cases per 10,000 in that time.

On the other side, Washington County saw just 20 cases per 10,000 people, followed by Hancock at 30 per 10,000 and Waldo at 31 per 10,000.

CDC: COVID-19 cases keep trending lower

In general, the counties where case counts are highest have lower rates of vaccination.

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End of Document

[Does Maine need to double capacity at the Windham prison?](#)

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

March 22, 2013 Friday

Copyright 2013 Bangor Daily News

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Byline: Matthew Stone BDN Staff

Body

Part of Gov. Paul LePage's equation for a \$700 million injection of funds into Maine's economy this year involves a \$100 million bond to pay for construction that would almost double capacity at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

The LePage administration is proposing to overhaul and expand the Windham prison into a facility that's easier to supervise and better suited to Maine's aging and increasingly female prison population. The project would set the facility up for vocational training programs that start early during inmate sentences and prime prisoners for re-entry into their communities.

Whether to devote some of the state's capacity for new debt to prison construction is among the dozens of decisions lawmakers will make in the coming months as they consider LePage's proposal for a new two-year budget.

A prison plan

The Department of Corrections is pitching a construction plan that strays from the traditional prison setup in which corrections officers patrol long hallways lined with cells.

The department plans to replace all but three buildings on the 260-acre Windham campus, said Associate Corrections Commissioner Jody Breton. The facilities slated for eventual closure, she said, have been added to the prison over the years in piecemeal fashion.

"It's very unlike what today's modern facilities look like," she said. "It's not efficient on sight lines. It's very security-intensive just because of the way it's broken up."

The state Legislature established the Windham prison as a men's facility in 1919, originally calling it the Reformatory Center for Men. As it expanded, it was renamed the Men's Correctional Center.

That name changed to the current one, the Maine Correctional Center, in 1976 when women were moved to the property. Development at the site continued in 1989, when new housing units for men and women opened. And in 2002, a new women's unit opened its doors.

The Department of Corrections plans to preserve the women's center and those newest dorm facilities and replace everything else with buildings that resemble the newer structures, Breton said.

"It's more of a therapeutic, rehabilitation-type program instead of punitive," she said. "Most of our inmates are coming back into society. It does all of us good to get them into the best possible position, so they can re-enter successfully."

Does Maine need to double capacity at the Windham prison?

The women's center, she said, is largely built around a central area where inmates can interact during the day and participate in a variety of activities. It's also easier to supervise.

"It's not as staff-intensive. Your sight lines are good. You can depend more on technology," Breton said.

If corrections officials are given the go-ahead, the new facility could be operating in three to four years, Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte told lawmakers earlier this month. A more efficient design, he said, could save the state \$8 million a year.

That design would require fewer staff members to supervise inmates, Breton said, so the bulk of savings would come from a need for fewer employees. The Maine Correctional Center currently has 252 employees, she said. Corrections officials haven't determined how many they would need in Windham or system-wide or how they would go about reducing staff.

"We're looking toward, from a citizen's point of view, the most efficient way to do this," Breton said.

Breton said the new facility also would help the Maine Correctional Center adapt to the prison population it's serving. The prison needs more space for women, she said, and more geriatric services for an aging population.

The facility needs more infirmary beds, too, so fewer inmates are sent offsite for medical treatment at greater expense. "We only have seven infirmary beds in Windham, and they're almost always full," Breton said.

Growth in capacity, not prisoners

The number of inmates in Maine's state prison system grew through much of the 1990s and 2000s, following national trends, as states -- including Maine -- passed stricter sentencing laws that instituted minimum sentences and required offenders to serve greater portions of their sentences behind bars.

Maine's state prisons house offenders convicted of Class A, B and C crimes that range from aggravated operating under the influence to murder. That population grew 51 percent between 1993 and 2009, according to Department of Corrections statistics. The average sentence length in 2007 was 7.2 years, according to the Maine Justice Policy Center at the University of Southern Maine.

Still, Maine has retained its distinction as the state with the lowest incarceration rate in the nation. In 2011, Maine had 147 state prison inmates for every 100,000 residents, compared to a national average of 430. Louisiana had the highest rate, imprisoning 865 inmates for every 100,000 residents, according to the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Maine's average daily prison population peaked at 2,246 in 2009, according to department statistics. Since then, the number of inmates has fallen nearly 9 percent in tandem with a majority of states. The population fell to 2,174 in 2010, 2,080 in 2011 and 2,050 in 2012.

Since the inmate population has leveled off, the state prison system is no longer running into the capacity problems it encountered during much of the past decade. The Department of Corrections' prisoner count this week showed 2,077 inmates in the prison system's six facilities, which have a total capacity of 2,395. Breton said corrections officials aren't forecasting much population change in the coming years.

Still, the Department of Corrections is planning a construction project that will nearly double the Windham prison's capacity, from 650 to 1,200. The prison currently houses 577 inmates in the general population.

The added capacity at Windham could free up space elsewhere in the prison system, which Breton said would allow corrections officials to move prisoners to the most appropriate facility based on security level and available programs and services.

Does Maine need to double capacity at the Windham prison?

The department hasn't made any decisions on whether more capacity in Windham will lead to the closure of other facilities. Ponte in 2011 proposed closing the 150-bed Downeast Correctional Facility in Machiasport, though he took the proposal off the table after Washington County lawmakers protested.

There is a danger in introducing more prison capacity, Breton said, citing the new Maine State Prison in Warren and the Women's Center in Windham, which both opened in 2002.

"They both went to capacity quickly," Breton said. "If you build, they shall come, so we would have to look at that."

Some of the additional capacity will allow the Windham prison to house more women.

While the state's overall prison population has started to shrink, the number of women in Maine prisons is growing. Between 2000 and 2011, the number grew 129 percent, from 62 to 142, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. During the same period, the male population grew 15 percent. Females make up 7.2 percent of Maine's prison population.

Are prisons a priority?

In terms of mission, Breton said the Department of Corrections imagines a Windham prison that starts preparing inmates for their release the moment they're committed to the prison.

But Jim Mackie of AFSCME Council 93, which represents corrections officers throughout the state prison system, doesn't buy it, citing the department's recent decision to close the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell, which Mackie called "one of the most productive programs in the Maine correctional system.

"That's always his line, 'We can make it better for the prisoners,'" Mackie said of Ponte. "The only thing that guy is interested in is the bottom line, the dollar."

Mackie is concerned that means major staff reductions that could make Maine's prisons unsafe for the employees who remain.

In Windham, the proposal for a new prison facility came as a surprise to most residents, and there hasn't been community outreach to explain the proposal, said Bill Diamond, a former Democratic senator from the Cumberland County town.

"It would probably be nice to have a new prison, but not at the expense of the \$100 million plus that goes with that and the current budget situation where all the high priorities are being cut," he said. "It just doesn't add up."

The LePage administration is proposing to sell the bond through the Maine Governmental Facilities Authority, which wouldn't require voter approval. Ponte has said the bond could be paid back in installments over a 15- to 20-year period.

The Maine Correctional Center is in need of upgrades, especially if its mission is to prepare prisoners to re-enter society, said Rep. Mark Dion, D-Portland, who chairs the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

"If we're telling them that we want them not only to house but to rehabilitate individuals and prepare them for re-entry, then they need the kind of spaces to facilitate that activity," he said.

Before he takes a position on the \$100 million bond proposal, however, Dion said he wants to know if the construction can take place in smaller phases rather than all at once.

Sen. Gary Plummer, a Windham Republican who serves on the Criminal Justice panel, said the project could mean a major economic boost for his area. But before he lends his support, he wants proof that a new prison can help the state save in the long run.

Does Maine need to double capacity at the Windham prison?

"The only way it would be the right time to float a bond would be if the governor's numbers work," he said.

Matthew Stone is a reporter in the BDN's State House bureau.

Load-Date: March 24, 2013

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Woman arrested in connection with Glenburn, Levant break-ins

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

September 13, 2013 Friday

Copyright 2013 Bangor Daily News

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Byline: Dawn Gagnon BDN Staff

Body

HERMON, Maine -- A Carmel woman was arrested Friday afternoon after she allegedly burglarized two homes, one in Glenburn and the other in Levant, a Maine State Police trooper said.

Trooper Darren Vittum said that Samantha White, 29, whose most recent address was in Carmel, initially was charged with two counts of Class B felony burglary and two counts of Class D theft.

The first break-in was reported about noon at 23 Largay Lane in Glenburn after a homeowner returned from work and found a strange vehicle -- a white Suzuki Aero with 14-day plates -- idling in her driveway.

"[The homeowner] didn't dare go into the house so she hollered at the person and a female subject came out of the house and said that she was looking for her friend. Then she jumped in the car and left," the trooper said.

The homeowner was able to get the vehicle's license plate number as it left her driveway, Vittum said.

"When the homeowner went into the house she noticed that all of her belongings were gathered up in bags piled in the kitchen," Vittum said, adding that the haul included jewelry, cash and computers worth a couple of thousand of dollars.

The suspicious vehicle also was seen by a neighbor, who noted the car's make and model and was able to supply that information to police, Vittum said.

Vittum said that it appears that White then broke into a residence at 506 Mudgett Road in Levant, where she stole a laptop computer.

"All of the property was recovered and returned to the owners," he said.

Vittum said that White was arrested after a Penobscot County sheriff's deputy assigned to Hermon heard a bulletin asked area police to be on the lookout for the Aero, spotted it on Billings Road and pulled it over. The deputy's name was not immediately available.

At the time of her arrest on Friday, White was out on postconviction bail for Class B burglary. She was supposed to have reported to jail in March to begin serving an 18-month sentence and never turned herself in, Vittum said.

On Friday, White was being held without bail at Penobscot County Jail, Vittum said. He said arrangements likely will be made to take her to the Maine Correctional Center's Women's Center in Windham to begin her sentence for her burglary conviction.

Vittum reminded homeowners to keep their doors locked while they are out. He said the public should contact police when they see unusual activity in their neighborhoods.

Woman arrested in connection with Glenburn, Levant break-ins

Load-Date: September 14, 2013

End of Document

[Judge won't change probation conditions for Maine woman who killed foster child](#)

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

May 15, 2013 Wednesday

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Byline: Judy Harrison BDN Staff

Body

AUGUSTA, Maine -- A Superior Court judge on Tuesday denied a motion to modify probation conditions for the woman who is still serving a 17-year sentence for manslaughter in the the asphyxiation death of her 5-year-old foster child in 2001.

Sally Ann Schofield , now 51, of Chelsea was convicted in 2002 in connection with the death of Logan Marr, according to previously published reports. The girl died in January 2001 after the former Maine Department of Health and Human Services caseworker disciplined the child for misbehavior.

The girl was found in a high chair in Schofield's basement bound with 42 feet of duct tape, according to previously published reports. The tape partially covered her nostrils.

Schofield, who is due to be released in May 2017, was sentenced to 20 years in prison with all but 17 suspended and four years of probation. Under the state's community confinement statute, Schofield could qualify at the end of this year to serve the remainder of her sentence outside prison because she will have served two-thirds of the unsuspended portion. It is up to the Department of Corrections commissioner to determine who qualifies for the program, the law states.

If Schofield were released to community or home confinement, she would be required to be at home or in a group home except for work, school, medical appointments, shopping and other necessary activities. She would be subject to the conditions of her probation, which include Schofield having no contact, direct or indirect, with children under 12.

Justice Michaela Murphy ruled from the bench Tuesday that it was too early to consider a modification of Schofield's probation conditions, Deputy Attorney General William Stokes said Wednesday. The judge also said that the motion could be refiled closer to the time of Schofield's release from the Women's Center of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

Schofield's attorney, Amanda Doherty of Portland, expressed concern in her motion that if released to home confinement Schofield would be considered in violation of her probation for incidental contact with children in a grocery store, doctor's office or other location, Stokes said.

"It's inconceivable to me that someone would be violated for that type contact," he said. "In my opinion, it would be highly unusual for someone to be accused of violating their probation for that kind of incidental contact."

Doherty said Wednesday that she filed her motion out of an abundance of caution.

"Just because people think that is not usual, given the nature of my client's conviction and the publicity around it, she wants to make sure that she is not the first. She want to follow the conditions of her probation to a T."

Judge won't change probation conditions for Maine woman who killed foster child

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Overcrowding plagues Maine's prison system ; With a 21 percent surge in inmates predicted by 2011, lawmakers say the time to act is now.

Portland Press Herald

February 16, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

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Byline: KEVIN WACK Staff Writer

Dateline: WINDHAM

Body

Maine has the lowest incarceration rate in the nation, but don't tell that to the 56 women of Cell Block B.

When these women were sentenced, they might have expected to participate in a wide array of rehabilitation programs at the Maine Correctional Center. The Windham prison offers treatment for trauma and substance abuse, in addition to basic education and vocational courses.

But enrollment at the women's center is capped at 78, and because of chronic overcrowding, officials say, dozens of female inmates spend as much as five months in the dim confines of B block. Their daytime hours, which might be spent in the classroom, are instead spent watching soap operas.

"It's really been disappointing," said Christine Kelley, who manages the prison's five-year-old unit for women. "The judges think that they're getting all this programming, but we can't do it."

Despite Maine's low rates of crime and incarceration, the six prisons operated by the Maine Department of Corrections are about 15 percent over the capacity allowed under national accrediting standards. The problem has been growing slowly, but it burst into public view this week.

On Wednesday, the Pew Charitable Trusts released a report that projects a 21 percent increase in Maine's prison population between 2006 and 2011.

And on Thursday, in a move unrelated to the Pew report, Democrats and Republicans on the Legislature's Criminal Justice Committee held a news conference in Augusta to call public attention to prison overcrowding.

Sen. William Diamond, D-Windham, the committee chairman, said the committee hopes at least to prevent cuts in the Corrections Department's budget by shining a light on the issue.

"We can't just keep tuning it out because it's not convenient," he said.

Gov. John Baldacci has proposed a \$145 million corrections budget for next year. That would be an increase of about \$9 million - enough money to cover rising costs, according to the Corrections Department, but probably not enough to correct the problem.

Overcrowding plagues Maine 's prison system ; With a 21 percent surge in inmates predicted by 2011, lawmakers say the time to act is now.

Lawmakers haven't made any decisions about what action to take. In interviews, they suggested the possibility of building a new prison, releasing more nonviolent offenders on strict probation conditions, or sending inmates either to out-of-state prisons or to county jails with excess space.

The issue is most apparent at the Windham prison, which was built to hold 522 prisoners but had 689 inmates this week.

In Cell Block B, six female inmates share a cell that was intended to be used as education space. Elsewhere, closets have been converted into cells to find room for a few more inmates. Officials say some female prisoners are being released before they even get access to the rehabilitation programs in the women's center.

"They may spend their entire sentence warehoused," said Rep. Richard Sykes, R-Harrison.

The overcrowding problem in Windham isn't confined to the female population.

The intake area for male prisoners has cells for 92 inmates, but more often than not, that capacity is exceeded, said Superintendent Scott Burnheimer. When that happens, new arrivals are required to sleep on mattresses on a concrete floor in a common area outside the cells. Five mattresses were used Thursday, but recently that number has been as high as 20.

Prison officials say these stopgap accommodations are worrisome because personal space is nonexistent and because the newly arriving inmates haven't been screened fully to determine whether they pose a safety risk. Additionally, first-time inmates, some of whom are being held for nonviolent offenses, are in close quarters with hardened veterans of the prison system.

"Tensions are heightened," Burnheimer said, "and it does lead to extra fights."

Criminal Justice Committee members said what they saw during a January visit to the intake area alarmed them.

Lawmakers said if a tragedy occurs, they don't want to be blamed for failing to notify the public. They also expressed concern that the overcrowding could expose the state to legal liability.

"We can't sit back and wait until there's a catastrophe," Sykes said.

Maine has six prisons for adults - two in Warren, plus facilities in Windham, Charleston, Machiasport and Hallowell. Five are above the capacity allowed under accrediting standards. The one exception is the Maine State Prison in Warren, which is built for 922 prisoners and has 875. As of Wednesday, the entire system had 2,080 inmates, or 265 more than capacity.

"It's been a steady and continuing increase," said Denise Lord, assistant corrections commissioner. "We're really at a place where we can't process people fast enough."

One of the causes of the prison population boom is tougher sentencing laws, defense lawyers say. Walter McKee, president of the Maine Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, said the Legislature bears responsibility for the overcrowding problem.

"It's always an issue because of what happens each year, which is proposals for longer sentences, higher mandatory minimums and more punishment," McKee said.

He cited Tina's Law, which imposes a mandatory six-month sentence on certain drivers who are caught driving with a suspended license, in addition to two proposals that the Legislature is considering. One would set a minimum sentence of 25 years in prison for manufacturing and trafficking methamphetamines. The other would require a 25-year sentence for gross sexual assault against a child under age 12.

Overcrowding plagues Maine 's prison system ; With a 21 percent surge in inmates predicted by 2011, lawmakers say the time to act is now.

Whatever the causes of the overcrowding problem, corrections officials say now is the time to take action.

"We're no longer at the point where we see any relief," Lord said. "And I think that's what's concerning us."

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Graphic

Caption: Staff photo by John Patriquin Excess inmates are forced to use mattresses on the floor at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham. The prison's capacity is 522 inmates, but it's population is 689. Staff photo by John Patriquin This space in Cell Block B of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham was supposed to be used for education programs. But overcrowding has forced the prison to use the area to house six women inmates.

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End of Document

Women settle with state in prison guard sex case; The two will receive a total of \$125,000 after they sued two men who were guards in Windham.

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FINAL Edition

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Byline: ANN S. KIM Staff Writer

Dateline: PORTLAND

Body

Two women who sued the Maine Department of Corrections after a prison guard had sex with them during their incarceration have settled the case with state officials.

Nikia Neptune and Leah Estes will receive a total of \$125,000 from the state, said their attorney, Benjamin Gideon. The women sued two men who were guards at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, the guards' supervisors and high-ranking department officials last year in Cumberland County Superior Court.

Neptune, of Indian Island, and Estes, who remains in prison, alleged assault and battery by Bradford Howard. They also claimed negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress and violations of the Maine Civil Rights Act by Howard and Glen Works.

Howard pleaded guilty to four counts of gross sexual assault in 2008 and was sentenced to four months in jail the next year. He admitted to having sex with Neptune in a closet and with Estes in a room in February 2008.

Works was fined after pleading guilty to misdemeanor charges of failure to report sexual abuse of a person in custody.

The claims against the guards' supervisors included failure to train and supervise the guards and retaliation against Estes for making grievances about them.

"We think it's significant that the state has agreed to pay money to these women. It reflects an understanding that these are serious events and this shouldn't happen to someone in state custody," Gideon said.

The two sides reached an agreement after mediation late last month.

The case will be dismissed in 30 days if no other filings are made.

Brenda Kielty, a spokeswoman for the state Attorney General's Office, declined to comment, saying the matter hasn't been finalized.

The plaintiffs argued that the guards' supervisors should have known it was perilous to assign male corrections officers to supervise female inmates.

Neptune and Estes were among 70 inmates in the Women's Center in Windham.

Women settle with state in prison guard sex case The two will receive a total of \$125,000 after they sued two men who were guards in Windham.

Howard and Works were assigned to overnight shifts when no female officers were present.

Associate Corrections Commissioner Jody Breton said Friday that she couldn't comment on the lawsuit or the plaintiffs' assertions.

She said the department does not discriminate based on gender in making job assignments.

Estes is serving a 17-year sentence for felony murder.

She and her boyfriend, Leslie Lynds, stole the car of a woman whom Lynds kidnapped outside a supermarket in Scarborough and beat to death.

Neptune, who had used the last name Brown, was convicted of assault.

She was incarcerated in Windham from August 2007 to February 2008.

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Familiar faces Crowded prisons must deal with inmates who keep coming back.

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Length: 1172 words

Byline: Jessica Alaimo, Staff Writer

Body

For more than a year, someone has given you three meals a day, a bed and a daily routine. It wasn't the Ritz, or even the Super 8, but you were getting basic needs met.

Then the day you've been counting down to arrives. Freedom.

You're on your own with \$50, no place to live, no job leads and no family who wants you back.

No wonder there's a good chance you'll fall back into old routines and end up back in the slammer, said Becky Boober, executive director of the Maine Re-Entry Network.

The number of repeat offenders is a large factor in Maine's prison overcrowding problem, officials say. It's hard to estimate what the rate is, said Denise Lord, associate commissioner of corrections. Numbers given by officials range from 25 to 40 percent of the prison population are chronic offenders.

Rep. Stan Gerzofsky, D-Brunswick, House chairman of the Legislature's Criminal Justice Committee, calls it "life on the installment plan." Gerzofsky's committee will examine the issue of repeat offenders, or recidivism, when members look for long-term answers to Maine's prison overcrowding problem this fall.

Several programs - inside Maine prisons and out - aim at reducing those numbers. Resources are limited and funding is tight, but program advocates say spending a few thousand on a prisoner before being released may save \$35,000 a year in prison costs down the road.

"We talked about what the treatment programs are, and we've been told they do the best they can," said Sen. Bill Diamond, D-Windham, Senate chairman of the Criminal Justice Committee. "When you get a response 'the best they can,' you know there's a lot of improvements to be made."

However, Diamond said, "How do you get funding? No one wants to fund criminals." "Who are they?"

Sometimes, Maine State Prison Warden Jeffrey D. Merrill said, he will cringe while signing inmate release papers, knowing it's just a matter of time before they're back.

"We have people who criticize us, say, 'Oh I can't believe you let this guy out,' " Merrill said. "Well, we didn't have a choice."

Familiar faces Crowded prisons must deal with inmates who keep coming back.

Repeat offenders are usually "those who think it's a way of life to commit burglaries and robberies," said Martin Magnusson, commissioner of the Department of Corrections.

The University of Southern Maine's Law School did a study on the rate of repeat offenders among 1,200 people, or 25 percent of the probation population. The study was completed in November 2005.

Of the sample, 22.8 percent, or 273, were re-arrested, and 67.8 percent committed a crime in the first six months of release.

At the Maine State Prison in Warren, most of the repeat offenders come from the Special Management Unit - the highest level of custody there is.

"These are people who have been in our system that have total disrespect for staff, the rules, are not interested in making any changes, blame everybody else for the reasons they're here," Merrill said. "In cases where they don't have probation, there's a higher probability that when they're released they're negative, they're sour, they're going to reoffend."

In the last few years, the state has tried to develop a case plan for each individual person coming in, Merrill said, but it is not effective when the prisoner has no desire to better themselves.

Norm Croteau, district attorney for Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin counties, said most cases of repeat offenders he sees come from drug-related crimes.

"You'll see people reoffend probably pretty much as long as they have the drug problem," he said. "That's the engine that pulls the train."Lack of programming on the inside

Officials say programs that break a prisoner's criminal patterns are the best hope for reducing the number of repeat offenders for all but the most hardened. But in many cases, existing programs can't handle the demand.

There are three programs at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham that target specific populations in order to reduce the number of career criminals, but officials say that for each program there are more people needing services than there is space available.

A three-year, 60-bed sex offender treatment program for men provides intensive treatment.

A 14-month drug treatment program allows 40 men designated as high-risk for reoffending to spend the first nine months at Windham and the rest of their time at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell. Last time Maine Correctional Center Superintendent Scott Burnheimer looked at eligibility, 87 men met the criteria. "We miss as many people as the ones we can actually take in there," he said.

The Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center offers programming geared toward females. Built only five years ago, the center currently has more than 50 women waiting for a bed.

In addition, the Maine State Prison in Warren, where higher risk inmates are sent, struggles to provide services. There is one drug counselor for more than 900 inmates.

Merrill noted that the first priority is always finding beds for the prisoners.

"We're dealing with a public that says if we've got a choice between spending money on prisoners versus educators or any other programs," other programs have to be a priority, Merrill said.Re- entry

The first Maine prerelease center for women is being built in Bangor, expected to open at the of the month.

Women will serve the last six months of their sentences at Bangor. They will be connected with jobs they can keep upon release, and staff will help them find housing.

Familiar faces Crowded prisons must deal with inmates who keep coming back.

The center has similar goals to existing prerelease centers in Charleston, Machiasport, Warren and Hallowell, said Boober, with the Maine Re-Entry Network. Only at the new women's facility, programming will work in a gender-responsive way to help reunite them with their family, as well as get a decent job and lower their risk of returning to prison.

It then "frees up beds at the Women's Center so we can bring up some of the women who are in the pods (in overcrowded units at the Maine Correctional Center)," Boober said.

Outside the prerelease centers, Maine Re-Entry Network staff works with a limited population to ease the transition to the outside.

Right now, prisoners ages 16 to 25 going back to Androscoggin, Penobscot, Cumberland, Kennebec, Washington and Knox counties qualify for the program. With a recent federal grant, Boober said they will be able to expand to age 30 and include Hancock County.

"We're like a shadow with them for the first few weeks they're out," Boober said. "We continue to work with them for the first six months after release. We found that the quality of the relationship that they build with the re-entry specialist is very key to how compliant they are to adhering to their re-entry plan."

It costs \$1,500 to put one person through the program - compare that to the \$35,000 a year it costs to incarcerate them, Boober said.

Such programs are important to taxpayers because most offenders do move back to the community.

"I want to know that we've been working with them to reduce their risk of reoffending while they are in an institution so they can get the help," Boober said.

Load-Date: October 16, 2007

End of Document

Poet laureate visits Lewiston Public Library

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

November 1, 2018 Thursday

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Length: 656 words

Byline: Jon Bolduc

Dateline: Lewiston, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

LEWISTON — What makes a poem a poem?

“You ever wonder how dogs know that a dachshund and a Great Dane are both dogs? How are these poems?” U.S. poet laureate Tracy K. Smith asked a packed crowd at the Lewiston Public Library on Thursday night.

Peg Hoffman of Lewiston was handed a microphone by a library employee.

“Poems feel like testimonials,” Hoffman said. “They go beyond telling a story to sharing deep experience with another human being about what happened, and what it meant.”

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Smith visited the Lewiston library as part of her project “American Conversations: Celebrating Poems in Rural Communities.” She read personal poems from her newest book, “Wade in the Water,” and several poems that she selected from her new poetry anthology titled “American Journal: Fifty Poems for our Time.”

During the reading, Smith opened the floor for participants to reread the selections in their own voices, highlighting the differences in each reader’s interpretation of the work.

Smith continued to ask questions about the meaning and intent of each poem, asking the audience to delve deep between the lines and understand the text.

Lizz Sinclair, director of programs for the Maine Humanities Council, helped organize the event with the Library of Congress.

“They asked us if we wanted to host Tracey, and we said we would be honored to,” Sinclair said. “We reached out to libraries, and then to the 21st Century Youth Leadership Program, and other groups.”

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According to previous reporting, the six 21st Century programs throughout Lewiston schools serve more than 450 students and are sought by parents looking for a safe place for children to be engaged after school.

Poet laureate visits Lewiston Public Library

For seven weeks, high school students participating in the after-school program at Lewiston High School have been reading poems from the anthology, analyzing them, and writing their own work, culminating in a few students reading poems from the anthology at Thursday night's reading.

LaLa Drew has been facilitating the poetry class. The class, centered on Smith's work, has been introducing students to the power of poetry.

"Poetry is not this lofty thing," she said. "It's a great tool to deal with our day to day life. There are really intense things going on, and there are a lot of things (students) need to work through," she said. "It's also good to have something fun and exciting for them to look forward to and to explore what poetry can be."

Drew says she has noticed her students grow since they began the poetry unit.

Advertisement

"We've been focusing on lifting up each others' work and pulling up the strength of it," she said. "I've seen kids become more open, and more daring with what they've been willing to put down on paper," Drew said.

The students had dinner with Smith at Mother India restaurant in Lewiston before the reading, and had a chance to talk with Smith. Milly Simbandushe, a student in the 21st Century program at Lewiston High School, worked on the poetry unit.

Simbandushe said her group read the poems, and shared their views of the poems with the group. Afterward, the group wrote their own original poems and shared them with each other.

"There were moments when everyone opened who they really were," she said.

"Before this program, I would read poems without having so much interest in them," she said.

Advertisement

"But after this, I felt like it was really magical," Simbandushe said. "They gave us the opportunity to learn about poetry. I felt like that was a special key, a key to reveal your feelings,"

"I really love to write," she said. "Before this program, I didn't."

Smith teaches at Princeton University and lives in New Jersey. Earlier Thursday, she read, and had a conversation with audience members at the Norway Memorial Library.

Next, Smith will visit women at the Maine Correctional Women's Center in Windham to continue her "American Conversations: Celebrating Poems in Rural Communities" project.

Load-Date: November 2, 2018

End of Document

[LePage's push for new prison still quite alive](#)

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

May 6, 2013 Monday

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. A.1

Length: 568 words

Byline: ADAMS, GLENN

Body

Associated Press

AUGUSTA -- Gov. Paul LePage's push for a new prison to replace the aging, hodge-podge Maine Correctional Center in Windham has been overshadowed lately by other issues swirling about the State House, such as the Medicaid debt to hospitals, a new school grading system and a proposed tax code overhaul.

But the proposal to issue \$100 million in bonds from the Governmental Facilities Authority is very much alive. The plan is part of the governor's proposed budget for the upcoming two-year cycle that's under review in the Appropriations Committee.

Lawmakers on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee have asked that the prison project be delayed until July 2015 to allow time for the Corrections Department to conduct a feasibility study. The plan has faced little opposition, although committee co-chairman Sen. Stan Gerzofsky, D-Brunswick, said the project's cost has to be balanced against other needs such as schools.

Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte has said the present compound is inefficient after decades of piecemeal expansion. In a podcast on the Corrections Department's website, Ponte said housing all of the inmates now sent to other jails across the state in one new central location would result in huge, permanent savings -- reducing the costs associated with each inmate from about \$102 per day to \$62.

The department envisions preserving the women's center and the newest dorm facilities at the site but replacing the remaining buildings, changes Ponte said would save \$8 million in staffing costs.

First known as the Reformatory Center for Men when it was established by the Legislature in 1919, the site has been enlarged and modified over the decades. It was renamed Maine Correctional Center in 1976 when women were moved to the compound. With the growth, the lines of sight for officers became diminished by the uneven walls while the passing decades took a toll on prison infrastructure.

"New facilities allow us much better vision, much better electronics, much better door security, much better perimeter security that we don't have at the current MCC. Those are really safety-security issues," Ponte said. He also said a new prison would address concerns of an aging prison population, which requires heightened medical care and geriatric-needs units.

"We don't have units to house the mentally ill and we have more of those coming in the door. This new design will allow us to, from the ground up, set up specialty kinds of units to deal with the types of populations the Maine Department of Corrections is seeing more of," the commissioner said.

LePage's push for new prison still quite alive

For the same number of staff employees in a new efficient prison, the facility could house 500 to 600 more inmates in MCC, which had 660 inmates as of mid-2010, Ponte said. He sees long-term savings of around \$10 million per year that would allow the state to repay the bonds within 15 years with existing funding to the department.

Ponte, whose resume includes prison administration for private firms, tried to put to rest suggestions by critics that the new prison is a step toward a privately run prison system.

"If we were to attempt to privatize corrections in Maine, I would first have to get the governor to agree. And he's publicly said we would not do that. Then I would have to approach the legislators to agree to that proposal. We haven't done that. I have no intentions of doing that," Ponte said.

Load-Date: May 7, 2013

End of Document

[Committee gives tepid support to LePage prison construction proposal](#)

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

April 16, 2013 Tuesday

Copyright 2013 Bangor Daily News

Length: 600 words

Byline: Matthew Stone BDN Staff

Body

AUGUSTA, Maine -- A legislative committee has given qualified approval to Gov. Paul LePage's plan to issue a \$100 million bond to fund prison construction that would nearly double the capacity of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

In a 5-4 vote last week, the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee OK'd the bond, but only on the condition it be delayed until July 1, 2015, and the state Department of Corrections first conduct a feasibility study of the project.

The committee took the vote as part of its package of budget recommendations that will next be considered by the Legislature's budget-writing Appropriations Committee.

Committee members who supported the plan to delay the bond and first study the project's feasibility cited a need for more information on the project and needs within the state prison system before embracing the LePage administration's \$100 million bond proposal. They also wanted to evaluate claims from the state Department of Corrections that reconstructing the Windham prison would lower operating costs by \$8 million annually.

Rep. Timothy Marks, who serves on the Criminal Justice Committee, said he was interested in seeing a strategic plan from the Department of Corrections addressing facilities, prison populations and potential cooperation with Maine's county jails over the next decade.

"Before we spend that kind of money, we should look a little further down the road," said Marks, D-Pittston.

"It is an aging facility. I'm sure something needs to be done," he said of the prison in Windham, which he and other committee members toured earlier this year. "I don't know if we need to put all our eggs in one basket there or spread it out."

The LePage administration unveiled its \$100 million prison construction bond proposal in January as part of its plan for a new, two-year state budget. The bond would be issued by the Maine Governmental Facility Authority and wouldn't require voter approval.

The Department of Corrections is proposing to replace all but three buildings on the 260-acre Windham campus. The new facilities, along with the existing buildings that will remain, would stray from the traditional prison setup in which corrections officers patrol long hallways lined with cells. Instead, they would be constructed like the women's center in Windham, which is built around a central area where inmates can interact during the day and participate in a variety of activities.

Corrections officials say the improved design would help them provide more effective rehabilitation and vocational training programs for prisoners. The design also would make the prison easier to supervise, according to the corrections department. The \$8 million in annual savings would come largely from staff reductions, as fewer corrections officers would be needed to patrol the facility.

Committee gives tepid support to LePage prison construction proposal

The construction project would boost the Maine Correctional Center's capacity to 1,200 from its current 650. The Windham prison housed 603 inmates in its general population at the beginning of April, according to the most recent inmate census from the Department of Corrections.

The prison construction proposal comes as Maine's prison population has begun to shrink. Maine's average daily prison population peaked at 2,246 in 2009 after growing 51 percent since 1993, according to Department of Corrections statistics. Since then, the number of inmates has fallen nearly 9 percent in tandem with a majority of states. The population fell to 2,174 in 2010, 2,080 in 2011 and 2,050 in 2012.

The state prison system housed 2,108 inmates at the start of April.

Load-Date: April 17, 2013

End of Document

[Take advantage of free Pap test, mammogram](#)

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

July 3, 1998 Friday

Copyright 1998 Bangor Daily News

Length: 1344 words

Byline: Joni Averill

Body

WINDHAM -- The owners of the Christy's station that shut down its pumps after high levels of contaminants were found in nearby ground water are seeking authorization to resume gasoline sales.

Southland Corp. submitted a plan to the state Department of Environmental Protection that calls for routine monitoring of ground water around the North Windham station's underground fuel tanks and strict oversight when the tanks are being refilled.

Commissioner Edward O. Sullivan of the Department of Environmental Protection said Christy's will not be allowed to sell gasoline until the department is satisfied that the water supply will be protected.

Investigators have not located the source of the gasoline additive MTBE, a possible carcinogen that turned up earlier this year in Portland Water District wells serving 3,000 Windham residents.

"We are now operating on the assumption it was not a system failure or a leak in the system," said Steve Eufemia of the DEP.

"It was perhaps a surface spillage or an overfill situation. "

With tests ruling out any problems in the station's underground tanks and distribution system, Southland said there is no reason for the pumps to remain closed.

"Southland's Christy's site has demonstrated through testing and investigation that its facility has not been the source of any leak," said Garry Blair, an environmental manager for Southland operations.

Windham officials want to know the extent of contamination and what can be done to clean it up before they support a resumption of

Take advantage of free Pap test, mammogram

gasoline sales.

Town Manager Tony Plante said residents need to be informed or they will assume the worst and be skeptical of proposed safeguards.

"There's no smoking gun. We shouldn't use that to prevent Christy's from reopening, but having them resume sales before we have those answers could lead to real public concern," he said.

Maine women between the ages of 50 and 64 who have little or no insurance, or a large insurance deductible, and who meet generous income guidelines, no longer need be concerned that they are unable to obtain mammograms and Pap tests.

The Breast and Cervical Health Program sponsored by the Penobscot Breast and Cervical Health Coalition is offering no-cost tests and mammograms for women who meet certain guidelines. All it takes is calling 1-800-350-5180 to find the location nearest your home where this free service is available.

Barbara Parker is the coordinator of PBCHC in Penobscot and Piscataquis counties. "It's a coalition of health service providers who recognize the need to come together for this cause," she said of a statewide effort to screen and treat 1,500 women by the end of September.

PBCHC is one of seven such coalitions in Maine. Already this program, which is made possible through a partnership with the Center for Disease Control and the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Coalition, has provided 2,500 women with this no-cost service.

But Parker and coalition members know there are many more women who need to be tested.

"We just need to break down the barriers that are preventing them from seeking these services," she said.

PBCHC coalition members include St. Joseph Women's Center, the Bangor-Brewer YWCA, Penobscot Valley Hospital in Lincoln, Eastern

Maine Medical Center Women's Center, Mable Wadsworth Women's Health Center, Eastern Area Agency on Aging, Acadia Radiology and Diagnostic Services and Penquis Health Services.

Recently, the Penobscot Nation and Community Health and Counseling Services joined the coalition.

Women between the ages of 50 and 64 who qualify are single individuals with an annual income of \$ 20,125; part of a family of

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two with an income of \$ 27,125; a family of three with an income of \$ 34,125; a family of four with an income of \$ 41,125; or a family of five with an income of \$ 48,125. Additional family size and income information is available by calling the above number.

Parker said while many people have heard about the program through other coalition efforts such as Mother's Day promotions, brochures and advertisements, many more who qualify are unaware that they do.

PBCHC believes Maine should not lose 250 women each year to breast and cervical cancer. By helping to educate women in matters of their health, lives will be saved.

"This is an ongoing program," Parker said. "A woman who is eligible this year and has had the screening can still have it next year as long as she meets the guidelines. It is a yearly program and we want to reach all women who fit the guidelines. "

To that end, the coalition has been "dealing with senior groups, going to church groups, meeting with the gay and lesbian population and reaching out to the Native American population," she said. And although these are target groups, she said, "this does not in any way prohibit any person from being tested. "

To save a life -- perhaps your own or that of a loved one -- check the guidelines, and make that call. The service is there.

It's free. You can't afford not to use it.

We join all who are associated with the Good Shepherd Food Bank of Auburn in congratulating Hannaford Bros. Co. on being named as the Grocery Distributor of the Year by Second Harvest National Foodbank Network at its national convention the end of June in San Antonio, Tex.

Hannaford Bros. Co. has been working with Good Shepherd, donating food for those in need, since 1983.

After more than a year of study, the company initiated its program with a Recovery Center in North Windham and began its large-scale donations in '83. Besides making donations to Good Shepherd, Hannaford was recognized for helping and encouraging national companies to contribute products; had its employees serve on Good Shepherd's board of directors; made major financial donations; used the expertise of its employees to help Good Shepherd deal with issues of refrigeration and alarm systems;

Take advantage of free Pap test, mammogram

donated equipment and provided transportation of food to agencies far from Auburn.

When Hannaford moved into the Southeast, former Good Shepherd board member Rick Anicetti contacted a food bank there with the offer to do for them as Hannaford had done in Maine. Anicetti's generosity was greatly appreciated.

Congratulations, Hannaford, for helping to feed Maine people in more ways than one.

We've heard again from Heidi Switter of Oakfield that the volunteer team from Louisiana-Pacific in New Limerick will be back in action this weekend.

Switter reports the employees working to raise money for Make-A-Wish Foundation of Maine now have \$ 1,400 in their treasury and they're planning to staff a booth at the Fourth of July Fair in Houlton.

Their booth will have raffle tickets for items ranging from a canoe to a playhouse made by Louisiana-Pacific employees.

Their next event is a fishing derby, rain or shine, beginning just after sunrise, at the boat landing on Mattawamkeag Lake in Island Falls.

The entry fee is a \$ 15 donation per boat including the captain, plus a \$ 10 donation for each person in the boat. Children 10-years-old and under are admitted at no cost. Registration, the day of the derby, will be at the camp of Ralph Shaffer on the lower lake.

Weigh-in time is 5 p.m. You must be in line at that time to qualify, as well as having a Maine fishing license. You may use live or artificial bait and should know your boat may be inspected for illegal fish.

There will be door prizes and food, but the main lure is the prizes: an electric trolling motor for first place; a spin cast outfit for second; and a Wal-Mart gift certificate for third.

Switter hopes lots of fishermen and fisherwomen join the fun and help raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an organization that grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses. For information on the derby, call Switter at 532-7361.

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Joni Averill, Bangor Daily News, P.O. Box 1329, Bangor 04402;
990-8288.

Graphic

WHAT IS IT George Hall of Millinocket, John Palmer of Washburn, Cedric Shaw of Houlton, Dody Orenstein of Baileyville, Armand Gravel of Kingman, Burdette Miller of Bangor, Paulene Smith of Burlington, Ed Colburn of Bangor, Dewey Maker of Cutler and Edward Pendexter of Easton correctly identified the What Is It (left) as a whiffletree center iron. Send answers for this week's What Is It (right) to: Robert Croul; 1095 North Road, Newburgh, Maine 04444.

Load-Date: July 3, 1998

End of Document

Criminal justice students help incarcerated women

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

June 23, 2016 Thursday

Copyright 2016 Bangor Daily News

Length: 746 words

Dateline: PRESQUE ISLE

Body

- Criminal Justice students at the University of Maine at Presque Isle devoted their spring semester to a service learning project aiding the women incarcerated at the Aroostook County Jail in Houlton. With help from Hope and Justice Project, students in the class fundraised and collected items for the women to receive upon their release.

Dr. Lisa Leduc's "Women and Crime" class is a service learning course, meaning that students are expected to dedicate 20 to 30 volunteer hours to the chosen project.

"In the past, our class has worked with the incarcerated women's center in Windham and the Women's Re-Entry Center which is now in Alfred," said Leduc, UMPI associate professor of criminal justice. "But when I found out that one of my former students was co-facilitating a support group in the Aroostook County Jail in Houlton, I saw an opportunity for our students to have a positive effect locally."

Leduc was referring to Chelsie Higgins, who graduated from UMPI with a bachelor's of arts in criminal justice in 2011.

"Many women who commit crimes have experienced abuse in their family or dating relationships," said Higgins, who is now employed as the outreach coordinator at Hope and Justice Project, the non-profit organization that provides services to anyone affected by abuse and violence in Aroostook County.

Higgins co-facilitates a support group for women in the Aroostook County Jail who have experienced abuse. "A lot of the women in the jail have very few resources and little to no support on the outside -- which becomes problematic when they try to move forward after being released."

As a part of the course, Higgins visited the 11 students for one of their classes and shared her experiences. The students then got to work brainstorming ideas of how they could be helpful to the women in the Aroostook County Jail. It was decided that the students would create "exit packets" for the women to receive upon release. The packets would include a resource list with information on anything from transportation to mental health and substance abuse services, tips on how to apply for jobs with a criminal record, and gift certificates for local area restaurants.

Students also set out to collect used books to contribute to the jail's library and researched activities and curricula for Hope and Justice Project advocates to use in their support group in the jail. The students created a Go Fund Me page, sold Scentsy products, and organized weekly bake sales. The funds raised went toward the purchasing of gift certificates for the exit packets.

Several of the students accompanied Hope and Justice Project advocates to the jail to observe the support group. "Visiting the Aroostook County Jail was a crucial part of this college course for me, because it put faces to the situations we had discussed in class time and time again," said then senior criminal justice and psychology student, Erica Hemphill.

Criminal justice students help incarcerated women

A sophomore criminal justice and psychology student with a pre-law minor, Valentina Annunziata, said, "At first our project seemed to me to be a bit superficial, until I saw in person the emotions of the females at the jail when they heard what we were doing. To hear their stories and how happy they were that someone cared was truly eye opening."

In the end, the students collected five boxes of used books and completed 85 exit packets, each with restaurant gift certificates for \$15 to \$20 for the women in the Aroostook County Jail.

"They were beyond thankful that strangers were considering helping them," said Hemphill.

"It is unfortunate that some community members are unwilling to help those in jail; it is even more unfortunate that some are unable to recognize the possible payback in the future that will come with helping those who are incarcerated in the present."

Annunziata, Hemphill and their classmates recently presented the donated books and exit packets to the Aroostook County Jail. They also shared their findings from their service learning project at University Day at UMPI, a daylong event where students showcase their academic research, scholarly work, and community service.

Hope and Justice Project works with anyone who has experienced or been affected by abuse or violence in Aroostook County, Maine. For more information, visit our website at www.hopeandjusticeproject.org or email us at info@hopeandjusticeproject.org To speak with an advocate, call the 24-hour hotline at 1-800- 439-2323. Services are free and confidential.

Load-Date: June 23, 2016

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Mother, son not allowed to say goodbye before she died in prison

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

November 22, 2011 Tuesday

Copyright 2011 Bangor Daily News

Length: 650 words

Byline: Abigail Curtis BDN Staff

Body

BELFAST, Maine -- The woman who died of cancer in prison just one week after she began serving a two-year sentence for arson was not allowed to say goodbye to her son.

Mary Hoskins, 50, and Neal Hoskins, 28, both of North Anson, were co-defendants in the arson case and so were prohibited by the court from communicating.

Although attorneys were working to get the prohibition overturned in order to allow Mary Hoskins, who was terminally ill with ovarian cancer, to contact her son, they simply ran out of time, according to her attorney, Andrew Ketterer.

"It's just sad. Some things in life are sad. This is one of them," he said Tuesday. "The timing was unfortunate. It resulted in a woman going to her death without being able to talk to her son."

He said that he didn't feel that the state was to blame for the fact that the communication prohibition wasn't lifted quickly enough to allow the Hoskins to say their goodbyes.

Mary Hoskins died Nov. 17 at the infirmary of Maine State Prison in Warren. She originally was incarcerated at the Maine Correctional Center's Women's Center in Windham but when she grew acutely ill she was moved to the infirmary in Warren.

"It's not anybody's fault. I'm not criticizing the prosecutor or the judge in any way. It was a very fair sentence," Ketterer said. "I just felt badly that her son did not talk to her and she did not talk to her son."

Both mother and son pleaded guilty this fall in connection with a fire that was set in September 2008 at the North Anson mobile home of Neal Hoskins. At the time, Mary Hoskins was living with her son. Police accused the two of setting the fire to collect insurance money.

Mary Hoskins, who previously had been convicted of setting fire to her home in Salem, Mass., in 1998, was sentenced to eight years in prison with all but two years suspended. Her son was sentenced to 10 years in prison with all but two years suspended.

During one of the criminal hearings on Mary Hoskins' case, Ketterer told the judge that holding her in custody would be a life sentence because she was already so sick.

Efforts on Tuesday to reach Peter Barnett, Neal Hoskins' attorney, and Somerset County District Attorney Evert Fowle were unsuccessful.

Ketterer said that he understands that the state has a "compelling interest" in making sure co-defendants in a criminal case are not allowed to talk to each other and compare notes.

Mother, son not allowed to say goodbye before she died in prison

"I just felt that once Neal had entered a guilty plea in September through his lawyer, and was sentenced, and once Mary entered her guilty plea on Tuesday, Nov. 8, it seemed to me that there was not such a compelling state interest in making sure that the two cannot speak," Ketterer said.

Brent Davis, the prosecutor with Somerset Superior Court, said after Mary Hoskins' sentencing that the communications ban could be lifted if both parties consented in writing. Ketterer wrote to Neal Hoskins in prison to ask for his agreement.

"He must have signed it the same day he received it," Ketterer said.

But before the two defense attorneys could file a motion with the court to amend the order, Mary Hoskins died.

Ketterer said that his client had sent letters to her son when he was in jail before she was arrested for the same crime. Neal Hoskins never was allowed to receive those letters, he said.

It was difficult for his client, who was close to the son she had lived with for several years.

"She has two other children but was very close to Neal," Ketterer said. "She was a woman who cared about her children. She tried to educate them and provide for them as best she could."

She had a lot of sorrow in her life, the attorney said, but did not make excuses for her choice to commit a crime.

"A lot of people have adversity and don't resort to committing arson," he said. "I saw the side of the woman wearing handcuffs and leg irons without much time to live."

BDN reporter Heather Steeves contributed to this report.

Load-Date: November 24, 2011

End of Document

Report: 8 percent of Maine children have parent in prison

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

April 25, 2016 Monday

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Section: STATE

Length: 819 words

Byline: KATHRYN SKELTON, KATHRYN SKELTON, Staff Writer

Body

Sun Journal file photo

Nationally, an average 7 percent of children have a parent who is serving time or has in the past. In Maine, it's 8 percent, or 20,000 kids, according to a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Nearly 1 in 12 Maine children have a parent who has served time in prison or jail. That is above the national average and the highest rate in New England, according to a report out Monday by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"A Shared Sentence: The devastating toll of parental incarceration on kids, families and communities" ticks off the harsh side effects: the remaining parent having a hard time covering basic needs, frequent moves and, when it's a mother in jail, children who are more likely to live with grandparents or enter foster care.

Nationally, an average 7 percent of children have a parent who is serving time or has in the past. In Maine, it's 8 percent, or 20,000 children.

"That was surprising for a small state like Maine," said Claire Berkowitz, executive director of the Maine Children's Alliance. "It's something to pay attention to."

Amanda Woolford, director of women's programs for the Maine Correctional Center Women's Center in Windham, the only state prison for women, and the Southern Maine Re-Entry Center in Alfred, said progress has been made in just the past year in better connecting incarcerated moms with their children.

There are about 130 women in the prison, 68 in pre-release.

Through a peer-parenting program developed by Family Crisis Counseling in 2015 with a yearlong grant, women have started recording story books in a "Read to me, Mommy" program, sharing experiences and learning how to navigate the basics.

"Even help with, 'How do I make a phone call to my son's teacher to ask how he's doing in school, or 'Can I write a letter, is that appropriate?'" Woolford said. "One of the biggest (things) that comes out, (is) 'I feel like such a hypocrite when I tell my children to behave and be good while Mommy's gone, while Mommy's here because she wasn't so good.'

"It's kind of like AA for parenting," she said. "I was a crappy mom, or I'm a recovering crappy mom."

A year ago, they also started letting moms and children Skype.

Report: 8 percent of Maine children have parent in prison

"They can sit in real time (and discuss) 'This is what I did in school today,' 'Oh, let me see your homework.' 'What does the Christmas tree look like?' -- that type of stuff we take for granted," Woolford said. "We knew that it would be a good thing, but I don't think we understood the impact it was going to have on them when we started doing it."

Jody Breton, deputy commissioner at the Maine Department of Corrections, said the state also offers classes in parenting, healthy relationships and InsideOut Dad, a national program for incarcerated fathers.

The Annie E. Casey report ends with several suggestions for change. Berkowitz said she'd like adequate drug treatment programming in Maine to keep people, in some cases, from landing in jail in the first place.

She'd also like to see Maine join the "ban the box" movement with 23 other states, eliminating the initial question about criminal history on job applications.

"That background check happens later in the process of hiring so that someone is not just left off of being considered because they once had an incarceration," Berkowitz said. "It opens up opportunity for people who are trying to change their lives" and give their children a more stable home once they're out of prison.

Crisis & Counseling Centers, based in Augusta, four years ago created a "Parenting and Caregiving After Prison" series for women in the York County Jail.

Next Monday, the agency will screen the Sesame Street program "Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration" at the Children's Discovery Museum in Augusta. Laurie Cavanaugh, regional parent support coordinator, said she's shown the Sesame Street video to the women in her after-prison series and has gotten eye-opening reactions.

"In the video, some of the children are teased from other kids and they have serious emotions around their parent being in jail," Cavanaugh said. "There (have) been some instances where parents haven't told their children where they are and after watching the video, they wanted to be totally open and honest with their kids.

"It's like they had a way to communicate with their kids what happened," she said. "They were in jail and, 'We're going to make the best of this, and we can still have a relationship, and I'm going to do better.'"

kskelton@sunjournal.com

Children, parents and prison

The numbers and rates of children in the U.S. and in New England who have or have had a parent in prison or jail, according to a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

United States: 5,113,000 (7 percent of the population)

Connecticut: 36,000 (5 percent)

Maine: 20,000 (8 percent)

Massachusetts: 69,000 (5 percent)

New Hampshire: 15,000 (5 percent)

Rhode Island: 5,000 (5 percent)

Vermont: 7,000 (6 percent)

Load-Date: April 26, 2016

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When parents go to jail, kids are stuck in prison

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

May 1, 2016 Sunday

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Section: OUR VIEW

Length: 862 words

Byline: ,

Body

The average Maine high school student-to-teacher ratio is 1:12.

So, too, is the rate of Maine children who have a parent who served time in jail. One in a dozen.

That's shocking, and terribly sad.

Early this week, the Annie E. Casey Foundation released its report on the emotional and financial toll children pay when a parent is incarcerated. In Maine, nearly 1 in 12 children face that reality, which is the highest rate in New England.

In real numbers, for example, that rate equals 437 children currently in the Lewiston School District who have or have had a parent in jail. That is more than the entire kindergarten population in Lewiston. In Auburn, there are fewer students in school, but statistically 298 have watched a parent go to jail.

In Farmington schools, the number is 146, and in schools across Oxford County the number is 700 children.

Statewide, the number is a whopping 20,000.

For context, that's just over the population of Scarborough.

And, for shock value, Maine's percent of children who have experienced a parent's incarceration matches the numbers in Washington, D.C.

When a parent goes to jail, the children suddenly find themselves in homes with less income, less supervision and less support. When mom goes to jail, the children are often placed with extended family or moved to foster care, causing further disruption.

Amanda Woolford, director of women's programs for the Maine Correctional Center's Women's Center in Windham, told the Sun Journal the state has made some strides in better connecting incarcerated moms with their children, allowing inmates to Skype with children and encouraging them to be in touch with a child's teacher, which is terrific. The same level of programming is not yet available to dads, and it should be.

What would be better, though, would be to more aggressively address what is driving most of these parents to commit crimes that put them behind bars: addiction.

When parents go to jail, kids are stuck in prison

An overwhelming percent of all adults currently serving time in Maine's jails and prisons are there in connection with drug- or alcohol-fueled behavior.

According to the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence, 80 percent of offenders abuse drugs or alcohol. Nearly 50 percent of inmates are clinically addicted, and about 60 percent of people arrested for most types of crimes test positive for illegal drugs at the time of arrest.

The number of addicted inmates in Maine is a crisis, according to jail administrators across the state.

Addicts rob to pay for drugs. Alcoholics drive drunk. Stoked by addiction and anger, domestic and sexual violence assault is widespread. Traffickers sell lethal products. The list goes on.

And, according to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, about 95 percent of former drug-using inmates return to drug use after release from prison, and 60 to 80 percent of them commit new drug-fueled crimes. And, go back to jail.

If that isn't damaging enough to children, think about this: These parents didn't become addicted and instantly scoot out to commit a crime, get arrested and go to jail.

These addicted parents are most often raising their children in undesirable homes and neighborhoods where poverty and crime reign. In homes where achievement has either lost value or it never existed in the first place, and where children are often unfed and neglected. And who knows how many crimes some parents commit before being detected by the legal system.

So, while a parent may spend a 30-day sentence in the county jail to pay for their crime, the children have long suffered in their own prisons at home with no where to go and no way out.

And, of course, many of these same children turn to a life of addiction and crime because they know no other.

Maine's drug courts have offered some eligible inmates alternatives to jail time, where judges supervise their treatment and employment progress, but it's a fraction of all defendants. Among that fraction, though, with the right motivation and supervision, many offenders get clean and stay straight. And, the cost to move a defendant through drug court is significantly less than the cost of incarceration with no treatment.

Maine made some progress this year with a new two-year \$3.9 million spending plan to combat opioid use across the state, with \$50,000 designated for treatment programs in each county jail. That should help ensure some people avoid jail altogether and some inmates leave jail in better condition to re-enter their homes and the workplace.

It's not enough. And it isn't entirely about money. And this can't be a debate about whether addiction is a disease or a choice.

The solution to what is a very real and hyper-destructive crisis is to make treatment more accessible and more socially acceptable.

According to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, if this country were to expand drugs courts to treat all arrestees who are at risk for drug or alcohol abuse or dependence, we could save \$32.4 billion -- with a "b" -- annually on corrections. And millions of crimes would be averted. Millions.

And, then, there's the children. More than five million -- and counting -- who will benefit the most.

jmeyer@sunjournal.com

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When parents go to jail, kids are stuck in prison

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DISPATCHES

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

August 28, 2001 Tuesday, Final Edition

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Section: LOCAL & STATE; DISPATCHES; Pg. 2B

Length: 806 words

Body

SOUTH BERWICK

Hospice of York to train new volunteers

Hospice of York will train new volunteers beginning Sept. 10 at the Senior Center.

Sessions will meet from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays for 13 weeks. Pre-registration is necessary. There is a \$25 registration fee, and scholarships are available. For information call 363-7000.

SACO

Thornton seeks service award nominees

Thornton Academy's Alumni Association is seeking nominations for this year's Public Service Award.

The award is given to Thornton alumni who have made outstanding contributions through public service and volunteerism, whether at the school or in the community.

To be eligible, nominees must have graduated from Thornton at least 10 years ago and may not be current employees or board members at the school.

Nominations must be received by Oct. 1. The award will be presented at the school's holiday concert in December.

Nominations must be written and include reasons; supplemental information such as newspaper clippings; and the name, class year, address and telephone number of both the nominee and the nominator. Anonymous nominations will not be considered.

Mail nominations to: Public Service Awards, c/o Thornton Academy Alumni Office, 438 Main St., Saco 04072.

BIDDEFORD

Free breast cancer tests, exams offered

Southern Maine Medical Center will offer free screening tests and medical exams in October in conjunction with National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

To be eligible for the free screenings, women must be between the ages of 50 and 64, have no insurance coverage or a high insurance deductible, and meet certain income guidelines.

Screenings are by appointment only from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Oct. 3 at Saco Health Care Center; 8 a.m. to noon on Oct. 6 at the Women's Center, Southern Maine Medical Center, Biddeford; and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Oct. 10 at the SMMC branch at Park Square, Main Street, Kennebunk.

Screenings are made possible with funding from the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program. For information call 283-7685.

DISPATCHES

WINDHAM

Group plans apartments for seniors

A nonprofit housing group is making plans to buy a 10-acre parcel behind Wal-Mart and build 24 apartments for low-income seniors.

The facility is designed for independent living; there will only be a part-time services coordinator on site. There will be a community room and some computers.

"Windham is one of the fastest-growing areas in southern Maine," said Jay Waterman, development director for York-Cumberland Housing Development Corp. He said the property owners, Manchester Properties, is planning to develop other property it owns to make a service center for the elderly.

The 24 units will all have one bedroom.

The housing agency also manages New Marblehead Manor, another senior independent living apartment complex in Windham, but does not own it.

The new \$2.5 million complex still must go before the Planning Board. Waterman said the complex has already received federal rural development funds and money from the Maine State Housing Authority. York-Cumberland Housing is seeking additional subsidies to make the project affordable.

CAPE ELIZABETH

Fort Williams to host annual art show

Artists are preparing for the 34th annual Labor Day Weekend Art Show, to be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at Fort Williams Park.

Rain date is Labor Day, Sept. 3.

More than 100 artists will exhibit work for judging, prizes and sales to the public. Admission and parking will be free.

The show is sponsored by the Fire Department's Engine Company Number 1. For more information call 799-1662.

PORTLAND

Metro gets aid for natural-gas fueling

Greater Portland Metro will receive a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy for the development of a compressed-natural-gas fueling facility.

The facility will fuel Metro buses and also will be available for members of the public who want to refuel their natural gas-powered vehicles. The funds were awarded as part of the department's Clean Cities/Alternative Fuels State Energy Program.

CUMBERLAND

Island to dedicate renovated ball field

Chebeague Island will hold a dedication and naming ceremony for its new ball field from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

The facility will be called Volunteer Field, in recognition of the many people who worked to rejuvenate the field. Competitive baseball and other sports can now return to the island, thanks to the efforts of SAD 51 (which owns the field), the town of Cumberland, and the year-round and seasonal residents of Chebeague Island.

On Saturday, a special guest will speak, and adults and children will play in a ball game. Organizers will be giving out free hot dogs and Frisbees. A raffle drawing will feature several prizes, including a \$3,000 vacation gift certificate at the AAA Travel Agency.

DISPATCHES

There will also be a Kids' Triathlon before the event, starting at 9:30. Awards will be presented at 11 a.m.

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She lived a lie for decades - until she set herself free

Portland Press Herald

September 8, 2019 Sunday

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Body

FULL TEXT

The cover story appeared in Church World, then the newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, in September 1977.

It showed Dr. Charles Smith - college professor, transoceanic sailor, Navy veteran - surrounded by his beaming wife, Mary Lou, and their four children. It announced his "new challenge" would be to save a floundering religious education program at the family's parish in South Portland.

What the article didn't say, what no one outside the picture- perfect family knew, was that Charles Smith also beat his wife.

"I protected his good name," Mary Lou, now 79, said Tuesday as a candle sputtered quietly in the living room of her Scarborough home. "I kept protecting his good name."

Until, one day, she could no longer.

Mary Lou is one of 20 women whose stories of surviving domestic abuse will be presented for all of Maine to see starting Sept. 17 at the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine in Augusta.

The multimedia exhibit, titled "Finding Our Voices: Breaking the Silence of Domestic Abuse," will run through Dec. 13. It's the brainchild of Patrisha McLean, whose ex-husband, singer Don McLean of "American Pie" fame, pleaded guilty three years ago to charges of domestic violence criminal threatening, criminal mischief and criminal restraint - all stemming from a highly publicized disturbance at the couple's Camden home in early 2016.

Mary Lou and Patrisha first crossed paths last winter, when Mary Lou read about "Finding Our Voices" - specifically, Don McLean's futile efforts to impede news coverage of the traveling exhibit - and traveled to Castine to see the exhibit and meet Patrisha. The two women bonded instantly.

"I was thunderstruck by how similar her and my stories are," Patrisha said in a telephone interview Friday. "It's uncanny."

It's also more commonplace than many want to believe.

Mary Lou had just graduated from the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, Massachusetts, when she married Charlie in 1962. Six years her senior, he'd served in the military, gone on to become vice principal of a nearby school and, wherever he went, exuded a confidence that filled up whatever room he entered.

She lived a lie for decades - until she set herself free

"I was enamored by his experience," recalled Mary Lou, the product of an all-girl, Roman Catholic education from elementary school through college. "He swept me off my feet."

But Charlie, who retired in 1994 after a long career as a widely respected graduate professor of education at the University of Southern Maine, also had a dark side. One that grew darker with each passing decade of a marriage that spanned 43 years.

He dictated Mary Lou's every move, often to the point of absurdity. Over time, she filled three pages with "absolutes" to which she had to adhere.

When they drove on the turnpike, Charlie would demand that she hand him the toll money with her right hand, never her left.

Why?

"He said it was too difficult with my left hand," Mary Lou said. "And so I just did it."

Per order of Charlie, Mary Lou could never wear sneakers without socks. Nor could she ever buy a white coat because, according to Charlie, "only floozies from the VFW wore white coats."

Then there was the shower mat. Whenever Mary Lou hung it over the shower-curtain rod to dry, Charlie would insist that she center it perfectly with three curtain rings - no more, no fewer - on each side.

And God help her if she said or did anything to upset him in front of others. When friends came over, Mary Lou joined in the conversation until, without warning, Charlie shot her "the glare."

"I could just feel myself shut down, but keep the smile on so no one knew," she said. "And I knew when everyone left that there was going to be hell to pay, that there was something I'd said or done that offended him. He'd say that I enjoyed emasculating him - that was the word that he used quite a bit."

Worse yet, just beyond the constant mental and emotional abuse, violence lurked.

One day, on their way through Scarborough to go clothes shopping, one of their three sons asked if he could get a short jacket. Charlie didn't like the idea, but Mary Lou, sitting next to her husband in the front seat, urged him, "C'mon, let the kid get a short jacket."

"His face turned red and he got fumingly angry and he stopped the car and he punched me in the eye," Mary Lou recalled. "And he said, 'We're not getting any short jackets.' He gave me a black eye."

And how did the world not notice that?

"Maybelline Erase."

Theirs became, as time went by, a household under siege, interrupted only by Charlie's adventures sailing his 45-foot sloop across the Atlantic or grabbing his rifles - he kept several guns in the house - to go hunting in the Maine woods.

His absences were like holidays. Mary Lou and the kids would break out the Cap'n Crunch cereal, watch TV until all hours and not worry if the house became less than immaculate.

But then, a few hours before his return, they'd shift into top-to-bottom cleaning mode. Mary Lou would anxiously prepare one of Charlie's favorite meals. And when the sound of tires in the gravel driveway signaled his arrival, the kids would flee for their bedrooms.

She lived a lie for decades - until she set herself free

As each child grew up and left home, Mary Lou never suffered from empty-nest syndrome. Rather, she'd quietly say a prayer of thanks that they were now free, that from now on they would be safe from the man who, one night, held a gun to his own son's head.

Finally, on Aug. 20, 2005, a Saturday, Mary Lou reached her breaking point. Closing herself in the bathroom of their Scarborough home with a handful of pain pills, she raised them to her mouth and, in that life-or-death moment, tearfully realized she still wanted to live.

She flushed the pills down the toilet. Then, hoping to impress upon Charlie how miserable she was, she told him what she had just done.

His response?

"He took out a gun - I can still hear the cylinder spinning. He told me, 'I'll show you how to put a gun to your head and be successful committing suicide.'"

Then, as if nothing had happened, they went to a movie, followed by Mass at St. Maximilian Kolbe Church in Scarborough.

The next day, Charlie appeared with a suitcase. "I'm leaving, and you'll never see me again," he told his wife.

Something deep inside Mary Lou shifted in that moment. Years of fear gave way to anger. Out of that, a newfound strength suddenly emerged.

"No," Mary Lou said, turning to face her tormentor. "I'm leaving, and you'll never see me again."

And with that, at age 65, she left.

She spent a year with a son in California, where she decided the marriage was indeed over.

Upon returning to Maine, Mary Lou soon became a leader in the "Divorce and Beyond" programs at various Roman Catholic churches throughout Greater Portland.

She told her story publicly for the first time in 2007 during a domestic violence conference at the State Street Church in Portland. The title of her talk: "No One Knew."

She served for two years on the board of the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine.

Then in 2014, working with Maine filmmaker Jennifer Widor Smith, Mary Lou made a film called "Leaving Charlie." It's just under 15 minutes long, but its message is timeless.

"I learned it's never too late to escape the horror of domestic violence," Mary Lou says in the film. "I found peace, I found contentment and I found that I love myself very much. It's a gift I give myself every day."

Charlie, who died in 2017, was never charged with a crime - the only time police got involved, he avoided arrest by agreeing to a short stay for a psychiatric evaluation at Maine Medical Center. Yet even as Mary Lou shared her story via the film, the speaking engagements and a steady stream of letters to the editor, Charlie never protested, never told her to shut up or else.

"I think he went to his grave truly believing that I was coming back and that he did nothing wrong," she said.

When she learned of Charlie's death two years ago, Mary Lou cried - out of catharsis, not grief. That beguiling photo on the cover of Church World, the close friends who were stunned to hear what went on for so long behind those closed doors, the life that in so many ways was a lie - it was all over.

But it will never be forgotten.

She lived a lie for decades - until she set herself free

These days, Mary Lou basks in the tranquility of her home - a sign by the door reads "Enter in Peace" and the walls teem with photos of her ancestors, her children and grandchildren. Many of the pictures include her daughter Cathy, who took her own life four years ago.

She will turn 80 in January. But slowing down is not an option, not when she's still handing out business cards that proclaim: "It's never too late."

She'll appear with Patrisha McLean and other survivors at an opening reception for the "Finding Our Voices" exhibit at the Holocaust and Human Rights Center on Sept. 19 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. She'll be on a panel titled "What Trapped Me, What Freed Me" at the same location on Oct. 10.

And sometime in the coming weeks, she'll join Patrisha to discuss domestic violence with soon-to-be-released women at the Maine Correctional Center's Women's Center in Windham.

At each appearance, Mary Lou will begin as she always does - by asking her audiences for their love and compassion, not their judgment or pity.

"When you give me your love and compassion, I stand beside you," she'll explain. "When you give me your judgment and pity, you make me a victim. And I'll never be a victim again."

She's on a new path now; the path to survival. And she prays others like her will follow.

Contact Bill Nemitz at: bnemitz@pressherald.com

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[Woman gets 2 years for driving getaway car used in robbery](#)

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

November 18, 2016 Friday

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Byline: BETTY ADAMS

BETTY ADAMS

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

[...]a customer heard me." Goudreau said her Social Security check had just been deposited into her account, and she had planned to use it for rent, her car payment and other living expenses.

FULL TEXT

Augusta woman admits role in strongarm robbery and a series of thefts

AUGUSTA -- For being the getaway driver in a strong-arm robbery that left an 82-year-old woman crawling to her car, and for cashing checks found in the stolen purse, Star Marie Black will spend an initial two years behind bars.

Black, 24, of Augusta, pleaded guilty Thursday at the Capital Judicial Center to a host of charges that occurred March 12 through April 18, 2016, in Augusta.

The charges included hindering apprehension or prosecution of Tyler Reece, who is accused of robbing Bessie Goudreau, of Augusta, in the parking lot of the Hannaford supermarket on Cony Street.

Justice Joyce Wheeler sentenced Black to five years in prison, with all but the first two suspended, followed by three years of probation. That sentence follows a seven-month sentence for a series of theft, forgery and misuse of identification charges. Black has spent the last seven months in jail.

Goudreau, now 83, spoke to the judge during the hearing Thursday, telling her what happened when her purse was grabbed and she was shoved to the ground on April 18, 2016.

"I was struck down at Hannaford," Goudreau said. "And I couldn't walk because of my left leg. I had to crawl to my car. Finally a customer heard me."

The customer ran into Hannaford to get help for her.

"I was dazed for a while," Goudreau said. "I had to shake my head a couple of times."

She was left with a gash on her head that bled heavily and a fractured pelvis.

Woman gets 2 years for driving getaway car used in robbery

Goudreau spent four days in the hospital, and then her sister moved in with Goudreau to help care for her while she recovered. Her sister accompanied her to the court hearing as well.

"When I go out at night, I look everywhere to make sure that no one's lurking around," Goudreau said. "I don't feel safe."

Goudreau said she learned that just hours after the attack, Black had gone to Kmart and made out one of Goudreau's check to herself for \$300 and cashed it.

More checks were cashed around the region -- with Black saying they were from her grandmother and producing Goudreau's identification cards -- until Goudreau's sister went to the bank and canceled all of Goudreau's checks.

Goudreau said her Social Security check had just been deposited into her account, and she had planned to use it for rent, her car payment and other living expenses.

After this incident, she said she was harassed by bill collectors demanding money until she could get letters from her bank and the police explaining the circumstances.

Black apologized to Goudreau, to the family and to the court, saying that her drug addiction made her do it.

She said she had been addicted to heroin since age 20 and now has been sober for past seven months.

"Now I must deal with reality without a crutch," Black said. She told the judge that she is no longer Reece's girlfriend.

"I've given him up," she said.

She said she had been through two out-patient treatment programs for substance abuse.

Black said she had overdosed about 10 times on heroin, and her attorney, Lisa Whittier, said Black had been taken by ambulance to the hospital more than once for overdose treatment.

The attorney also said Black did not know that Reece had knocked down Goudreau and stolen her purse until he got into the vehicle Black was driving, told her to drive off and threatened to punch her.

"I'm just asking the court to take mercy on Ms. Black because of her young age and her acceptance of responsibility," Whittier said. "The time hanging over her head is considerable, as well as time on probation."

Whittier recommended the sentence that the judge imposed. Black used a tissue to wipe her eyes as Whittier spoke.

Charges remain pending against Reece, and Whittier told the judge he is in an in-patient substance abuse program.

The prosecutor, Assistant District Attorney Tyler LeClair, argued for a sentence of seven years on the hindering of apprehension charge, with Black to serve an initial four years and the remaining three suspended, followed by three years of probation. He asked for a year for the other theft-related crimes.

He outlined an offense by Black on March 19, 2016, saying she and Reece knocked on the door of a neighbor, Priscilla Stevens, 85, saying they were locked out of their apartment and were waiting for the landlord to arrive to let them in.

LeClair said that when they left, Stevens learned her checkbook and gift cards were missing, as well as credit cards.

The cards and checks were used later by Black and Reece at Wal-Mart, with their images caught on camera, LeClair said.

Woman gets 2 years for driving getaway car used in robbery

He also said Black stole five checks from her great-uncle on March 12, 2016, and wrote them to herself, to Reece and to a roommate for a total of \$1,050, and bank surveillance footage showed the couple cashing the checks.

Wheeler said she was rejecting the sentence recommended by the prosecutor "because I weigh more heavily toward treatment when drug addiction is involved. We don't want any more Ms. Groudreaus or Ms. Stevenses becoming victims of your addiction."

Betty Adams -- 621-5631 badams@centralmaine.com Twitter: @betadams

Wheeler said she believed the sentence imposed will allow Black to receive inpatient treatment in the Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

"I encourage you to make the best out of what I see as an opportunity," Wheeler told her. "Your 4-year-old child deserves to have you get clean and sober."

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Credit: By BETTY ADAMS Staff Writer

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Robbery lands woman in jail

Kennebec Journal

November 18, 2016 Friday

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BETTY ADAMS

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

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Star Black gets 2 years for her role in grabbing purse

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Credit: By BETTY ADAMS Staff Writer

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Addicted Maine inmates have no choice but to go off drugs 'cold turkey'

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

May 27, 2012 Sunday

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Byline: Leslie H Dixon, Leslie H. Dixon, Staff Writer

Body

WINDHAM -- In prison, there is no methadone, no Suboxone, no one to give an opiate addict going through withdrawal symptoms words of comfort or even a warm blanket.

It's cold, so cold that an addict's skin erupts into goose bumps like those on a plucked turkey.

It's the jail plan. You get through opiate withdrawal cold turkey.

"It's bad; you get cramped legs," said 26-year-old Tanya Cahill of Lewiston.

Cahill is serving time in the Maine Correctional Center in Windham for burglary and aggravated assault in a 2008 home invasion in Lewiston.

"You can't stop moving," she said. "You can't sleep."

She shares the facility with 115 female prisoners. Of those, 79 are there for substance-abuse-related offenses, said Amanda Woolford, manager of the women's unit.

Cahill has served time in state prison and county jail, on and off for more than 10 years. She knows what it's like to go through withdrawal behind bars.

Her criminal convictions range from a misdemeanor driving without a license charge to felony aggravated assault, when she repeatedly hit a man over the head with a baseball bat in retaliation for stolen items.

Most opiate-addicted inmates in Maine go through withdrawal in county jail, where they are held for court dates, before they reach prison, Cahill said.

"Me, personally? I cried a lot. It took almost three weeks for the withdrawing," Cahill said, recalling how she was forced to withdraw from an addiction to oxycodone with nothing but medication to keep her blood pressure from skyrocketing.

Exceptions to cold turkey withdrawal are sometimes made, such as for women who enter the prison system pregnant, Woolford said.

"Sometimes we do get women who are still detoxing because of the extent of their use," she said. "Medical would make a determination on the fetus' health and whether continued opiate treatment was in the best interest of the child."

Addicted Maine inmates have no choice but to go off drugs 'cold turkey'

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, an estimated 200,000 addicts pass through the nation's criminal justice system each year, but as few as 2,000 receive opiate replacement therapy while imprisoned.

A 2011 NIDA nationwide survey of prison medical directors showed they do not offer opiate replacement therapy for a number of reasons, including doubt about the benefits of the medications, cost, concerns about the security of supplies and longstanding institutional policies.

The Maine Department of Corrections, which operates six adult prisons and two youth facilities, provides substance-abuse treatment before inmates leave the system.

"We offer (Differential Substance Abuse Treatment), an intense, 18-week treatment program that meets for three hours, three times a week," said Woolford, who took over the Women's Center last August.

"We also have Seeking Safety, which connects substance abuse with past trauma," she said. "We also offer Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous programs, and one-on-one treatment when needed."

Beginning stages

Tanya was 11 or 12 years old, a student at Lewiston Middle School, when she began smoking marijuana and experimenting with pain pills. She was prescribed opiates for a back injury when she was 12, after falling and suffering three slipped discs.

By the age of 14, she was addicted to opiates. By the time she was 15, she had left school and was buying any opiate she could find, including Percocet and Valium. "Anything that was out there," she said.

It was easy to score, she said. "You just walk outside, really."

For Tanya, the high felt good.

"It was something new," she said. "It took away not only my pain, but my stress, my anger. It took away all my feelings. I didn't feel for anything and I liked it. I didn't have to feel for anything."

It was at that time that she first entered "the system," after assaulting someone for no particular reason.

"I felt like hitting somebody at the time," she said. She was sentenced to the Maine Youth Center for a weekend.

Tanya has had anger problems for years.

"I would just lash out," she said. "I started drinking and I lashed out a lot. It was a combination of drugs and drinking."

"There were times when I wish someone was just there I could talk to, and there never was," she said.

By the time she was 22, she had been involved in several crimes.

Now she lives in a tiny, two-bed cement cell right off the large day room where many inmates spend their time talking, reading or just hanging out under the watchful eyes of guards.

Her metal-frame bed is covered by a pretty red and white crocheted blanket with her name on it that was stitched by another inmate. A small shelf is filled with books and pictures of friends and siblings on the white-painted cement walls. Her view from the one small window is rolls of barbed wire.

She is allowed to buy a television and PlayStation but has no access to the Internet. Most of her days are spent working long hours in the kitchen, cooking for other female inmates.

Looking forward

Addicted Maine inmates have no choice but to go off drugs 'cold turkey'

An articulate woman, Cahill is adamant that a methadone maintenance-based drug treatment program provided by clinics, or a doctor's prescription to Suboxone, is not the answer to getting clean from an opiate addiction.

"If your mind, body and soul are actually into getting clean, then there is no reason that you should be on methadone or Suboxone for two years," she said.

"Me, personally, it took me a little over a month to get clean," she said. "That's not saying I didn't relapse or I still don't have cravings. I do. That's something I'll always have -- that craving."

Her case worker, Melissa Meymaris, said Cahill, like many others, will probably have to undergo substance-abuse treatment before she leaves prison, as part of her release program.

"As it gets closer to her release date, everybody in the facility is screened for whether or not they need substance abuse treatment, and if it's deemed appropriate, then they have to before they get released," Meymaris said.

Cahill hopes for a better future. This summer, once released, she wants to go to Connecticut where she will live with her father and help her uncle in his construction business. Long term, she hopes to volunteer at a teen center to act as a support for other young women who might be heading down the wrong road.

"I want something better for myself," Cahill said. "I used to be a strong woman and I lost that somewhere and I need to find it. It's there somewhere and I need to find it."

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New \$100 million prison in Windham proposed

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Body

WINDHAM -- Inside this fenced-in, fortress-like prison building, guards never stop watching from behind tinted windows.

While officers walk through the crowded holding area where the Maine Correctional Center confines all incoming male inmates, guards in the control room survey the scene: New arrivals are watching TV, playing cards and sleeping away their first days there.

From inside their capsule, the guards remotely control all traffic in and out of the area, toggling keyless electric locks that snap inside steel doors.

The state pays \$1 million a year for every 16 corrections officers, according to Maine Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte. Five officers -- \$312,500 a year by his math -- are needed to staff just one around-the-clock post.

"We think we can be more efficient," Ponte said recently as he walked through the sprawling Windham complex. From the holding area, he stepped into a long corridor and walked past another around-the-clock control center and another \$312,500 post.

This 23-year-old building, which is officially called the Multi-Purpose Unit and is one of a host of buildings on the site, has four control centers in all.

It's too many, says Ponte. And he has a plan to get rid of them.

He wants to tear down the 40,450-square-foot MPU and most of the other locked-down buildings at the Maine Correctional Center. In their place, he would erect a new, more efficient prison.

It would cost \$100 million.

Proving his projections

The project, including a plan to borrow the money to build it, drew support from Gov. Paul LePage when it was first introduced to the Maine Legislature last spring. However, lawmakers balked at the scale of the project. They recoiled at giving the Department of Corrections permission to borrow that much money without a voter referendum, and they said Ponte's plan lacked detail.

New \$100 million prison in Windham proposed

"Usually, these things build up over years," said state Sen. Stan Gerzofsky, D-Brunswick, co-chairman of the Legislature's Criminal Justice Committee. "This just started this year. All of a sudden, somebody said they wanted 100 million bucks to rebuild the prison and I said, 'What? Are you nuts? Justify it.'"

Ponte believes he will.

This fall, he plans to commission a feasibility study to examine his plan. He will return to the committee next spring with documents and data, he said.

"I'll guarantee you we'll meet our projections," the commissioner said. "I'll guarantee you that what we're saying is factual."

The Ponte plan would close or reduce operations at smaller Maine prisons -- the Downeast Correctional Facility in Machiasport, the Women's Center in Alfred and the Charleston Correctional Center outside Bangor -- eliminating more than 100 staff positions.

The inmates from those prisons would be moved to the bigger, better Windham prison, where the same staff of 300 who work there now would oversee a 50 percent increase in inmates, from about 600 to 900.

"It's a big deal and I understand that," said Ponte, who was one of LePage's first appointees in 2011. "I'm trying to put good correctional practice in place in the state of Maine with a design that's going to make us efficient. We can deliver a better quality of program and do it for a lot less money."

One key to the plan is an overall reduction in staff, Ponte said.

The savings in personnel would cover the cost of the \$100 million bond in 15 years or less, he said.

"We're really asking for no additional funds to do this," Ponte said. "We'll pay for this with current funding levels."

Another key to Ponte's plan is the design of the new prison.

"It's not the age of this facility," said Ponte. "It's the design. What was a good design 10, 15 or 20 years ago is no longer a good design."

Building a better jail

The new prison would need fewer staff, which now account for about 75 percent of the Windham facility's \$23 million annual budget, he said.

Rather than old-fashioned design aimed at locking people in an area and watching them from outside, he said, the new prison would be designed to have corrections officers locked into a common space with inmates and give those officers the sight lines to see everything happening in the space -- something called "direct supervision" in corrections jargon. It's the principal behind the design of Maine's newest jails in Somerset, Cumberland and York counties, and at Two Bridges Regional Jail in Wiscasset.

Movement between areas would be better engineered and one control room would watch it all.

Such changes would be impossible in the current complex at Windham, which resembles a collection of jails rather than a unified prison.

Buildings date back to 1923, and they look it.

The oldest section of the prison, which also contains the administrative offices, houses inmates in prohibition-era cells with rolling, boxcar-like doors. Another section, dating to 1958, features floor-to-ceiling bars on two levels and a steel catwalk. The setting resembles the fictional prison in Elvis Presley's movie "Jailhouse Rock."

New \$100 million prison in Windham proposed

There are 1980s-built dorms housing sexual offenders, which would be razed under Ponte's plan, and a pair of 1990s dorms housing medium-security inmates, which would stay.

The current showpiece in the complex is the women's center. Built in 2003, it looks like a university student center. It has a large common area with couches and classrooms and lots of natural light. The cafeteria, with restaurant-style tables, looks like a hospital lunchroom.

It would stay, Ponte said.

Scott Landry, who began work as the prison's superintendent on Aug. 5, agrees much needs to go at the Maine Correctional Center.

"It's been put together kind of like a New England home," Landry said. "It's been added on and added on. The result is a space that's difficult to work with from both the security and programming point of view.

Both Ponte and Landry believe that a new facility would allow the prison to create a first-in-Maine section for elderly prisoners, offer more rehabilitation programs for inmates and give more minimum-security inmates a chance to get jobs.

"There's a long-lasting impact," Landry said. "A new facility would increase our ability to do certain things, like separating low-risk from high-risk offenders and maximizing the capacity of the good programs we already have. The number of people we allow into those programs is limited by space."

The prison currently holds medium- and minimum-security inmates. However, a new Windham prison would accept some maximum security or "close supervision" inmates, Ponte said.

Expert: Plan is 'in the ballpark'

It sounds like a reasonable plan, said Rod Miller, an analyst who travels the country examining jails and prisons.

Miller's company, Community Resources Inc. based in Gettysburg, Pa., often works with the U.S. Department of Justice. This spring, he analyzed Maine's network of county jails.

The current Maine Correctional Center in Windham, which he has visited several times, is an example of an inefficient prison, Miller said.

"The decentralized buildings are brutal," he said. "You wouldn't design it that way if you were building it all at once. You keep adding on, ad hoc, and you end up with this rambling, poorly connected, bad circulation kind of place."

Design can cost governments millions of staff dollars, he said. Typically, personnel costs about 75 percent of a corrections budget.

Miller declined to guess how much money might be saved with Ponte's plan.

"I just finished a project last year in Toledo, Ohio, and their jail was so poorly designed (that) the federal judge that ordered it built said, 'Congratulations, you built a new jail that's worse than the old one.'"

In that case, the Lucas County Jail's 450 inmates cost almost \$3 million a year more to house than a similarly sized jail in nearby Indiana, he said.

Plenty of U.S. jails, which tend to have a busier, more transient population than prisons, operate with a staff of 300 and a larger capacity than the proposed 900-inmate Windham prison, Miller said.

The scale of the Windham facility better compares to jails, nationally.

"Nine hundred beds is a small prison in the world of prisons," he said.

New \$100 million prison in Windham proposed

He said the new prison might compare well with the Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Boyds, Md., which he described as a "gold-plated" facility for both its efficiency and its programs offered to inmates.

That place has a capacity of just over 1,000 inmates and runs with a staff of about 300, Miller said.

That jail, located near Rockville, has the standard rehab and medical care services, mental health services that include a crisis intervention unit and an employment center.

The 3-1 ratio of prisoners to staff is possible in Windham, Miller said.

"It's definitely in the ballpark," he said. (But) it's going to demand a well-designed building."

Dion: He's heard it before

Ponte's plan sounds great, said state Rep. Mark Dion, D- Portland, a co-chairman of the Legislature's Criminal Justice Committee. But he is skeptical.

And he says he's heard it before.

Dion listened to similar predictions of cost savings when he was elected as the Cumberland County sheriff and a new county jail was being built.

"All of the things (Ponte) says are exactly part of the commercial," Dion said. "They said, 'Hey look, when we have this done, we're going to architecturally have lines of sight and we're going to have the physical plant that's going to allow for the free movement of prisoners through the institution and the officers can just stay on post. And it'll be just nifty and it'll save us a ton of money.'"

"Result: None of that happened," Dion said. "Why? Lots of reasons. Officer safety. Managing the population."

He thought about it when Ponte and his staff appeared before his committee.

He wanted to see numbers and data.

"I managed a direct supervision facility," he said. "I want to see the staff plan. I want to see exactly how you're going to populate this prison.

"I basically said, 'Look. Fellas. You don't have enough here,'" he said. "I wouldn't have gone forward to my county commissioners with that thin a jacket."

However, Dion said he hasn't made up his mind.

Maine's prison system has been faulted before for its high inmate- to-officer ratio, he said.

"I think there's some merit to the commissioner saying, 'Look, if we can consolidate this in terms of buildings, it does make sense.'" Dion said. "But I'm not jumping up and clapping at the staff plan idea just yet."

Ponte stands by his forecasts.

The veteran corrections administrator pointed to the last place he worked -- the Nevada Southern Detention Center in Pahrump, Nev. - - as an example of an efficient prison. Run by the private firm CAA, it houses about 1,000 inmates with just 232 staff.

There are few special programs, but it's efficient, according to a Department of Corrections employee assigned to answer questions about the facility.

Maine: Prisoner costs high

New \$100 million prison in Windham proposed

Maine already spends a lot on its inmates.

In 2009, the Maine Department of Corrections spent \$159 million, according to the state's Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA). That number fell to \$142 million by 2011. Over the same period, the cost per inmate declined from \$54,000 in 2009 to \$51,825 in 2011.

The cost is higher than similar states. A 2011 comparison found Maine's cost per inmate to be the seventh highest in the country.

In 2011, the price of housing an adult prisoner in Maine was about \$118 per day. OPEGA compared the cost to several other states: Iowa spent \$85 per day. North Dakota spent \$90. South Dakota spent \$46. Wyoming spent \$126; Rhode Island \$148.

Per-day costs would drop with the kind of capital investment he's proposing, Ponte said.

Maine is behind most other states in spending on its prison facilities.

In the 1980s, the state spent about 9 percent of its corrections budget on new prisons, renovations and maintenance. In the 1990s, it fell to 3.3 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice statistics.

Between 2002 and 2010, capital costs accounted for only 0.4 percent of corrections spending in Maine, tying with Vermont for last place in the country, the bureau reported.

Better uses for the money?

It's the cost of the Ponte plan, at a time when funds for capital spending in the state are so scarce, that upsets Gerzofsky, who has visited the Windham prison several times.

The Brunswick legislator believes the \$100 million would be better spent on rundown schools or other dilapidated public buildings in Maine.

"The commissioner talked about efficiencies," Gerzofsky said. "I think if you take any school or any government building in the state of Maine, even if it was built last year, and rebuild it, you'll find efficiencies."

He said he also opposes allowing the money to be borrowed without a referendum. Ponte presented it as a bond needing only the governor's approval.

"I find that very troubling," Gerzofsky said. "I think it should go to the people to decide, not just the administration."

If the Legislature wants to take it to voters, they will, Ponte said. He'll just continue making his case, he said, noting, "I think it's going to be very difficult."

Advocates for Maine's prisoners also oppose Ponte's \$100 million plan.

"Our priority should be to decrease the number of people who needlessly come in contact with the criminal justice system in the first place," said Shenna Bellows, executive director of the ALCU of Maine.

"There is a growing consensus in Maine and across the country that we are locking up too many people for low-level crimes with devastating consequences for individuals, families and our communities. Overincarceration is the root cause of overcrowding and strains our state and local corrections budgets. The best investment the state can make is in alternatives to incarceration," she said.

The Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition opposes the construction at a time when talks are underway to change sentencing guidelines that ought to ease the prison population.

New \$100 million prison in Windham proposed

"We don't think Maine has the money," said Jane Garvey, the coalition's co-chairwoman. The Windham prison needs renovations to tackle such issues as leaky roofs and mold. More money ought to be spent on programs to rehabilitate prisoners, she said.

The state needs to find "creative solutions for renovations and program growth rather than building a new prison," she said.

Ponte: It makes business sense

To Ponte, the new jail is a practical answer.

"I look at this from a business sense of providing good correctional services to the state of Maine. We can do that more efficiently with a new facility," Ponte said.

Besides the price, he also expects to get criticism for the job cuts at the prisons that would close or shrink under the plan, particularly in economically depressed Washington County.

As much as possible, cuts will be made through attrition and people will be offered the chance to relocate, he said.

Members of the corrections officers' union at the prison declined to comment.

Ponte said the alternative to his plan is to keep going and do nothing.

"It's not going to get better. The (prison population) is probably not going to drop. The design (of the Windham prison) is not going to get better," he said. "There's noto that."

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[How LePage plans to double Windham prison without more staff](#)

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Body

As lawmakers work to firm up a state budget that's out of balance and debate an expansion of Medicaid, a proposal to nearly double the capacity of the Maine Correctional Center in Windham will resurface in coming weeks.

Gov. Paul LePage included the expansion project and a \$100 million bond for it last year in his proposal for a two-year state budget. Lawmakers didn't reject the idea, but they opted to move more slowly, asking first for a feasibility study with prison population projections, detailed cost breakdowns and an analysis of the prison construction's impact on Windham.

The Maine Department of Corrections is finishing that study and expects to present it soon to lawmakers.

The construction would replace all but three buildings on the 260-acre Windham site, according to plans Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte presented to lawmakers last year. The result would be a prison with just fewer than 1,200 beds -- up from 670 -- that can better accommodate two demographics accounting for a growing portion of Maine's prison population: women and aging inmates who require geriatric services.

"While you're going to pay a big deal of cost to build the facility, staffing it will cost less money down the road," said Ponte. "If you build something that's going to be more staff-efficient and safer, you're going to save money long-term."

More beds, same staff

The new facilities would be constructed much like Windham's 12-year-old women's center, one of three Windham buildings that would be preserved. That facility is built around a central area where inmates can interact during the day and participate in a variety of activities.

Some Maine Correctional Center buildings date to the 1930s, and others have been added over the years in piecemeal fashion.

"If we consolidated these facilities and made MCC more efficient, we could do the same job with substantially fewer staff," Ponte said.

Ponte expects the 1,200-bed prison could be run with the same size staff that runs the 670-bed prison today -- about 250 employees.

That's what concerns Jim Mackie of AFSCME Council 93, which represents corrections officers. He has said major staff reductions could make Maine's prisons unsafe for the employees who remain.

How LePage plans to double Windham prison without more staff

Ponte told lawmakers last year the improved design could save the state \$8 million annually in operational costs.

The savings, of course, would come after the initial construction costs. LePage last year proposed a \$100 million construction bond to cover the costs, but Ponte said he expects construction to cost more. The final estimate is a moving target, he said. Working with an architect, corrections officials are making minor adjustments to rein in construction costs.

Inmate transfers

The expansion, which would nearly double capacity in Windham, would have effects across Maine's prison system, which currently has space for 2,233 inmates.

"We're not trying to add beds to the system," Ponte said. "It's a really minor increase in beds. We're really trying to make the beds we have more efficient.

"The concept would be shutting some of the small facilities down completely," and transferring inmates to the Maine Correctional Center, Ponte said.

The 150-inmate Downeast Correctional Facility in Machiasport, for example, is "an old facility that was never designed as a prison, and it's very expensive to operate," Ponte said.

The 220-inmate Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren didn't start as a prison either.

"At this point, the consideration is on the drawing board," Ponte said. "I wouldn't even venture a guess right now as to who is going to be impacted in the design. There will be an impact."

Consolidating prison facilities is easier said than done. Ponte in 2011 proposed closing the 150-bed Downeast Correctional Facility in Machiasport. Washington County lawmakers protested, however, and he took the proposal off the table.

Maine's prison population

Maine's state prisons house offenders convicted of Class A, B and C crimes that range from aggravated operating under the influence to murder. The prison population grew 51 percent between 1993 and 2009, according to Department of Corrections statistics. The average sentence length in 2007 was 7.2 years, according to the Maine Justice Policy Center at the University of Southern Maine.

However, Maine's prison population has been on a slight decline or relatively flat in recent years. The average daily population peaked in 2009 at 2,246, according to the Department of Corrections. In 2012, it had fallen to 2,050 before inching up to 2,059 last year.

Females in 2012 made up 6.9 percent of Maine's prisoners, up from 3.4 percent in 2000, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The age of Maine's prisoners has also crept up: In 2012, about 8 percent were older than 55, and nationwide, the number of prisoners older than 55 grew 282 percent between 1995 and 2010, compared with 42 percent overall growth, according to Human Rights Watch.

Maine and the nation

It's difficult to nail down a precise figure, but it's clear Maine has among the highest per-inmate spending in the nation.

A 2010 paper by University of Maine economics professor Philip Trostel found Maine had the second highest per-inmate spending in the nation in 2007, at \$64,155, compared with \$29,872 nationally. In 2010, the Vera Institute for Justice calculated Maine's per-prisoner spending at \$46,404, compared with a U.S. average of \$31,286. (New York

How LePage plans to double Windham prison without more staff

came out on top in that survey, spending \$60,076 per inmate.) And a 2010 paper commissioned by GrowSmart Maine reported Maine spent \$98,500 per inmate, compared with a national average of \$46,400.

Maine's state budget this year sets aside \$160.7 million for corrections spending.

Although Maine's prison population grew throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, the Pine Tree State has retained one of the nation's lowest incarceration rates in the U.S. Since 2007, it's had the lowest, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

In 2012, Maine's imprisonment rate was 145 inmates for every 100,000 residents; in 1978, Maine had 52 inmates for every 100,000 people. The nation's highest incarceration rates in 2012 were in Louisiana (893), Mississippi (717) and Alabama (650).

Despite Maine's low incarceration rate, the state's inmate population generally has followed national trends.

The national prison population also peaked in 2009, at 1.62 million, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. At the of 2012, that number had dropped to 1.57 million. And that slight decline came after decades of consistent growth: Between 1978 and 2009, the total population in state and federal prisons grew more than 425 percent.

Prison construction expanded accordingly -- and relatively evenly across the country. According to the Urban Institute, the number of state prisons grew from about 600 in the mid-1970s to more than 1,000 by 2000.

Today, a number of states are investing in a range of tactics aimed at shrinking their prison populations. Some 17 states participating in a federal program called the Justice Reinvestment Initiative have taken steps to improve substance abuse treatment options available outside prisons, shorten sentences for technical parole and probation violations, and institute "good behavior" credit systems that allow inmates to shave time off their sentences.

An Urban Institute study released Monday found that the participating states, which included New Hampshire, expect to save \$4.6 billion in their corrections budgets over an 11-year period from reduced operational costs and averted prison construction costs -- the result of prison populations that are starting to shrink and are projected to continue decreasing.

In Maine, Ponte said, the prison system is taking steps to better match inmates with the services they need when their sentences start, such as improved in-prison substance abuse addiction counseling, rehabilitation for sex offenders and educational offerings.

"We've got a flattening population, which is good news," Ponte said. "How do we get these guys, once they're out, to stay out?"

Matthew Stone is BDN opinion page editor.

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Women's center budget-cut victim

'Crossroads' had unique role

WINDHAM (AP) — The state's only live-in substance abuse treatment program exclusively for women is closing Saturday, another victim of Maine's budget crisis.

The 17-year-old program "Crossroads for Women" in Windham is scheduled to lose \$118,000 in state funding in the latest round of budget cuts. That's about a third of the center's budget and officials say it cannot operate without that money.

Experts involved in treating women for substance abuse say the program's closing will hurt because "Crossroads" filled a unique role in Maine's alcohol- and drug-abuse treatment system.

Although other programs will have space for the women "Crossroads" once helped, state officials say many women are best treated in all-female programs, particularly the victims of incest or rape.

"It's a disaster," said Lawrence Haimes, director of the Arnie Hanson Treatment Center in Portland. "There are no other treatment beds (solely) for women, and there are very few publicly funded residential beds in Maine. ... These folks have no access to changing their lives."

Cathy Levendusky, administrator of the Recovery Center at Mercy Hospital, said the Crossroads program was the best environment for some women battling substance-abuse problems.

"I think there are some women who won't come into treatment" now that it's closing, she said.

Dianne Stetson, contract manager in the state's Office of Substance Abuse, said her office had to cut \$400,000 from its \$4.3 million budget and Crossroads was targeted because it was underutilized. The program filled only 33 percent of its beds in fiscal year 1991.

"This was a tough one personally," Stetson said. "It definitely is a loss."

Susan O'Donnell, director of Crossroads, said 95 percent of her program's clients were survivors of sexual or physical abuse. She said many of those women cannot deal with those issues in a group with males.

If these women do not begin to deal with their abuse, she said, their chances of recovering from chemical dependency are slim.

At Crossroads, O'Donnell said, "They are in a community of women where they feel safe. The trust level isn't there in a coed program."

Cuts take human toll at center

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD

Women

DEC 6 1991

By JOANNE LANNIN

Staff Writer

WINDHAM – The front door to Crossroads for Women will be bolted and the lights turned out Saturday for the first time in 17 years.

The state's only live-in substance abuse treatment program exclusively for women is shutting down, the victim of the latest round of proposed state budget cuts.

Crossroads filled a unique niche in the alcohol and drug abuse treatment system.

Although other programs will have space for the women Crossroads once helped, state officials concede that some women may be losing their best chance at recovery. Many women fare best in all-female programs, particularly survivors of incest or rape.

The resulting upheaval – in women's lives and in the substance abuse treatment network – shows

Please see WOMEN, Page 12A

WOMEN

Continued from Page 1A

on a small scale what is likely to happen statewide when wider cuts come next month.

"It's a disaster," said Lawrence Haines, director of the Arnie Hanson treatment Center in Portland. "There are no other treatment beds for women, and there are very few publicly funded residential beds in Maine ... These folks have no access to changing their lives."

"Crossroads was the best environment for some women," agreed Cathy Levendusky, administrator of the Recovery Center at Mercy Hospital. "I think there are some women who won't come into treatment."

Crossroads is slated to lose \$118,000 in state funding in this latest round of budget cuts, about one-fourth of its annual budget. Dianne Stetson, contract manager of the office of substance abuse, said her office had to cut \$400,000 from its \$4.3 million budget. The office of substance abuse had already cut \$600,000 this year.

Stetson said Crossroads was targeted this time because it was underutilized, filling only 33 percent of its beds in fiscal year 1991. The use rates of other facilities across the state ranged from 44 to 84 percent, she said.

"This was a tough one for me personally," Stetson said of the decision to close Crossroads. "It definitely is a loss."

Stetson said it is possible the Legislature will restore some funding for women's programs. If that happens, Stetson said, "we'll work closely with the people from Crossroads and others in the region who provide services to women" to redesign services in southern Maine.

But legislating the money and redesigning the services could take months. Until then, the only residential treatment available to women will be in coed settings. And experts in the field say that will leave the women who need an all-female environment without a place to go.

Susan O'Donnell, director of Crossroads, said 95 percent of her program's clients were survivors of sexual or physical abuse. She said many of those women can not deal with those issues in a coed group. And if they do not begin to deal with the abuse, she said, their chances of recovering from their chemical

dependencies are slim.

At Crossroads, O'Donnell said, "they are in a community of women where they feel safe. The trust level isn't there in a coed program."

Darcy Boulton of Portland, 41, is a recent graduate of Crossroads. She entered the \$6,200 program last April after her parents and sister urged her to seek help for her alcohol problems.

"I'd sit in a chair and drink all day," she says. "I couldn't get up."

Boulton says she was one of the "lucky two" in her group of nine women who had not been sexually abused as children. Boulton became Crossroads' office manager after she graduated from the program.

"It still gives me the chills to watch a woman who's been sexually abused by her father ... literally wretch while she gets that out," she says. "There's no way those things could have come out with men in the room."

While Boulton says her problems did not relate to men specifically, she believes she would have had trouble discussing her life in a coed group.

"I don't think, honestly, that I could have opened up in the same way I did," she says. "It's like a family here. I truly believe I would not be sober without this place."

Without Crossroads, Levendusky says, the Mercy Hospital Recovery Center may begin offering some special women's groups. But the women will still get the bulk of their services in a coed setting.

Haines, of the Arnie Hanson Center, says he isn't sure where he will send women who would have been recommended for treatment there. He said such women may go straight from the center's 10-day detoxification program to the Evodia House, a halfway house for women. At present, women usually enter the Evodia House for up to six months after a stay at a residential treatment facility such as Crossroads.

However, other state budget cuts may make it impossible for Evodia House to broaden its services to accommodate such women. Typically, he says, such women do not have insurance or can not get their treatment covered through managed care.

"It's going to be a real gap," Haines says. "Publicly funded slots for men and women substance abusers continue to shrink. Our feeling is the state is not committed to taking care of them."