

# THE SANKOFA MIGRATION

AN OFFICIAL BLACK PRISONERS CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

## B.P.C.

### Building Positive Communities

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Black Prisoners Caucus Newsletter! This will be the first publication of our Washington State Penitentiary chapter. We look forward to providing you with all the information about what our organization is accomplishing, and what we hope to achieve. There will be updates on all our committees' workings, as well as what our supporters and sponsors are

doing. This will be a monthly newsletter, reporting all updates on the WSP-MSD chapter of the BPC.

The official logo of the BPC is the West African Sankofa bird. This emblem depicts the Sankofa bird looking backwards to bring forth the seed of a new future. This symbolizes acknowledging the past, in order to sow a better future.

## REENTRY COMMITTEE

### The Importance of Reintegration

The reentry committee has been diligently working on

creating a curriculum for the Set-Point Program, a 9-week reentry class, focused on preparing any individuals who are taking their reentry seriously. Our policy is that reentry starts the moment you get arrested, no matter how much

**“REENTRY STARTS THE  
MOMENT YOU GET  
ARRESTED”**

time one has remaining. The class will be open to all people who *want* to participate and prepare themselves for rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. The reentry committee is also in the process of building a “Resource Room” in the Victor unit of WSP-MSD. The

## The BPC Bus!!

The BPC Family Committee is working on acquiring a bus as a means for families on the western side of the state to be able to see their families, free of charge! We all understand the importance of personal connection with family and loved ones, and are working towards strengthening the bonds that are so important.

-More on Pg.5

goal behind the resource room is to provide as many up-to-date resources as possible to people who are approaching release, needing any form of assistance. If there is something we don't have, we will work as hard as we can to get the information for them.

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

We' The People!

Our Legislative Committee is currently building a legal "Crash-Course" intended to assist newly incarcerated individuals in filing their first appeal. This program will explain the appellate process as a whole, in understandable terms. It will cover filing deadlines, rights to acquire discovery (and how to do so), how to obtain evidence, as well as how to use the public records act. This information is vital for many prisoners here at WSP, who often must learn to navigate this process through trial and error. This program could prevent people from serving several years in prison, while waiting for the gears of justice to turn on their own.

The Legislative Committee would also like to highlight the importance of the recently passed senate bill SB5101, which adds to the language of RCW 9.94A.728, the Extraordinary Medical Placement statute. There are many individuals whose circumstances could be severely impacted by this. Our members have taken it upon themselves to identify potential fellow prisoners that may be affected by this.

Lastly, the BPC in its entirety realizes the significance of the technological age we live in. Everyone needs basic computer skills to be successful in the world today. While students at WSP are assigned laptops to complete their course work, our vision is to have every prisoner in the state of Washington, attain their own personal laptop. Understandably it will be some time before we reach this goal, but it is truly a necessity to ensure reintegration into the ever-progressing society around us. In the meantime, the Legislative Committee is preparing an open letter advocating for access to a word processor and printer in the law libraries. As well as a word processor and Wi-Fi printer accessibility with delivery access from our state-issued Securus tablets. This is a short-term solution to a much greater issue, and we will continue to fight to show the importance of providing every inmate with a laptop. It only makes sense given the status quo this electronic era has ushered in.

## GET TO KNOW OUR SPONSORS

Ms. Mary, One of Our Amazing Supporters

Mary Moss is one of the BPC-WSP chapters' most dedicated sponsors. She has been professionally involved in racial equity work since the beginning of her career, and served on the Diversity Advisory Council of the Washington State Penitentiary for over 25 years. Ms. Mary has had an amazing journey with many ups and downs, that has shaped the beautiful person she is today.

Ms. Mary was born and raised in Walla Walla, WA, growing up during the Vietnam era. The influence of the times on her belief-system, was only matched by her own personal experiences. From the beginning of her time with WA DOC, she saw first-hand the racial injustices that fundamentally plagued the institution. Witnessing the regularity of these happenings amongst both inmates and

staff alike, ultimately fueled a desire to get involved in making a change. Of her many accolades, Ms. Mary credits facilitating the Annual In-Service class, teaching Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as being her most rewarding accomplishment. To this day she personifies the important attributes she was entrusted with teaching to others. She walks the walk, *and* talks the talk.

Being tasked with helping people acknowledge and understand their biases has also helped Ms. Mary to confront her own. As part of her training to work in WA DOC, she took part in a class called, "Working with Hispanic Offenders", in which one of the exercises was "every-one has a bias". Through taking this class, she had a revelation about her own personal prejudice, leading to an eye-opening experience that went full-circle when years later, she

used the same exercises to open the eyes of others.

When asked what she was most excited to see happen within the BPC recently, Ms. Mary stated,

"I'm just so happy after seven long years of work, to finally see the BPC grow for you guys." She's been with us from the start, seeing the growth and development of individuals, as well as our organization.

"I've been here a while and known [some of these guys] for years. I really don't care about

their criminal background, because I can see how dedicated they are to the work they do. My mother always told me, 'one person can make a difference', and I really see that here." Ms. Mary reiterated her mothers quote while explaining her reasons for being involved with the BPC.

The amount of positivity and productivity that Ms. Mary brings to us is indispensable. She is a truly committed sponsor and we are blessed to have her support.

Thank you to our sponsors!! We greatly appreciate the time and effort you put into our organization and would like to reserve this space for you to explain your experience in all of our future issues.

## POEMS & ARTWORK

### 2 Poems of Liberation

#### Everlasting

Freedom aint free,  
and it never has been, so if you ask me,  
revolution is the action, I just wanna be,  
coastin without crashin, why can't they let us  
be,  
you won't know until you ask them, but why  
show courtesy,  
when they always pass me,  
in the driver's seat, hoping they don't thrash  
me, how could we ever be,  
any less than everlasting?

-Anonymous member

#### Eye of the Beholder

**What's really important?**  
It all depends on who askin,  
**R u in it for good times? Or a longtime?**  
Is your legacy Amazing? Or will it be Everlasting?  
Is your cup Half-empty or Half-full?  
**Do you even know the difference?**  
Outside looking in, or inside looking out,  
**Who do you think would bear better witness?**  
A rose by any other name is just as sweet,  
**So if you ask me, If I'm the beholder,**  
Everything they always told me was less then,  
Is everything I always wanted to be.

x.C.G.

## FAMILY COMMITTEE

### The B.P.C. Bus

---

A crucial part of making connections is maintaining the ones we already have. We know how hard this can be for individuals hundreds of miles away from their friends and family, for years at a time. The WSP-BPC understands this to be a fundamental impediment to any successful rehabilitation. We are working to remedy this injustice. With the help of our amazing sponsors, we hope to obtain a bus that can be used to shuttle friends and families from the west side of the state, to Walla Walla to visit their loved ones!

Our vision is to have a bus bring families to visits 2-3 times a month, free of charge. This huge task will take a copious amount of networking and planning to organize. We will continue to keep everyone updated on where we are with this pertinent issue.

## GRADUATIONS AND CERTIFICATES

### Success Starts Within

---

Here in the medium security complex of WSP, we have had a numerous amount of people graduate school, or earn a certificate from their respective programs. In this space we would like to take the time to give our successful brothers a congratulatory mention, as well as a chance to share what they have learned.

Gonzolo Amaya - CTAP  
Edgar Alejandro – Principals of Marketing  
Shane Antonio – CTAP  
Stephen Boone – AA Business Management  
Byron Boyd – HS+  
Alek Bridges – GED  
Isiah Cavitt – CTAP  
Matthew Corigliano – CTAP  
Dennis Conner – Reentry Life Skills  
Jacob Coffman – HS+  
Matthew Duran – Reentry Life Skills  
Sankara Etienne – CTAP  
Kenneth Frazier – Thinking for a Change  
Christian Gonzalez – HS+  
Jahleel Harris - CTAP  
Michael Hubbs – HS+  
Roy Jackson Jr. - CTAP  
David Kankam – Principals of Marketing  
Jacob Kennedy – Reentry Life Skills  
Isaiah Lewis – Reentry Life Skills  
Angel Lopez-Rueda - CTAP  
Ma'ne Manaea – Principals of Marketing

"I was excited to start CTAP, but when I realized how hard it was, I wanted to quit. I'm proud of myself for sticking it out to the end. Nobody thought I could hit 30 on the rebar, and I hit 34. Now I know I can do what others thought I couldn't.  
-Roy Jackson Jr.

"Working on getting my diploma was a hard experience, but I'm proud of myself for graduating. I also want to give a special shout-out to my teacher Mrs. Pyke, who helped me reach my goals!"  
-Byron Boyd

Aiden Murray – CTAP  
Kyle Pinney – Principles of Marketing  
Nicolas Searcy – AA Business Administration  
Edward Shafer - CTAP  
Shea Smith – Reentry Life Skills/CTAP  
Joshua Spaulding – Thinking for a Change  
Alijah Williams - CTAP

“In Thinking for a Change, I learned about non-violent communication and how I can use it in the real world. I’m glad I was able to have the opportunity to take this class.”

-Joshua Spaulding

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

### Community Connection

The Social Committee has been working on creating a platform to connect us with the outside world. We plan on having an Instagram and Twitter account managed by one of our sponsors, on which we can promote our programs and the fundraisers we have.

This committee is also organizing future fundraisers, the proceeds of which will be used to support important local causes. While there is an unlimited number of worthy concerns, some of the top issues will include; supporting victims of domestic abuse, providing school supplies for children in need, and maintaining safe public spaces for families. There will be many big things to come from the Social Committee, and we look forward to keeping you updated in future issues.

Finally, the social committee has taken on the task of creating a multi-cultural event to be held for the prisoners and the community. Here at WSP, each culture has one event per year, mainly compromised of one group of people. The multi-cultural event will provide an all access roster with prisoners of every culture and background being celebrated.

## YOUTH COMMITTEE

### The Seeds of Our Future

Coming Soon!!! The newest committee of the BPC!! Look for Youth Committee updates in future issues!!

## JOIN THE CAUSE!!

### Learn More About How to Help

The work done by the BPC at WSP would be impossible without the support and encouragement of our amazing sponsors. There is always more work to be done in the fight against oppression, work that must be done on both sides of the bars. Please stay tuned for future editions of The Sankofa Migration, to find out how you can help support the movement.



---

Editor in Chief

Shawn Cooke #431351  
Washington State Penitentiary  
1313 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Walla Walla, WA, 99362

Chief Advisor

Christopher Gates #360360  
Washington State Penitentiary  
1313 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Walla Walla, WA, 99362

Questions, comments, or concerns. Our goal is to promptly correct any possible errors. Please contact us at the above address to report any mistakes. Describe the error, date, and page the mistake is on, and we will make corrections in our future issues.