



COLLEGE GUILD

Summer 2020 | "RESPECT REDUCES RECIDIVISM" | BRUNSWICK, MAINE

Pandemic in Prison

Hello, I hope you and your families are safe during this crisis. Wow! This Covid-19 got real serious real fast. I was a lot upset that everything has been shut down especially the offices of CG. (Smile) Stay safe and inside when possible. Also keep those hands clean! Take care!
James Martin

The governor should realize CG is "essential" for psychological reasons. Hope all of CG staff and their families are well. My prayers are with you.
Bruce Young

This Covid-19 is affecting us all, and here in Washington state and the prison here it is not good, I just want to thank you for what you're doing from home! We have gone through quarantine and many have died in the state and in here. Your support and what you all believe in is the utmost and it touches me deep. Please take care of each other.
John Steiner

Church programs have been canceled. Yet these wonderful people send cards filled with words of encouragement and hope. It still amazes me, though, that people use the restroom and walk right out the door without washing their hands. Our dining room is so filthy that gnats and flies brazenly land on our trays and must be swatted during meals. Chew, swat, swallow. People still sneeze and cough without covering their mouths; share cigarettes and drinks; refused to clean out the sink. My prayers are that weakened immune systems are strengthened and that the worst is over. Then I turn on the news and watch how bodies are being kept in refrigerated trucks. Knowing I will not be allowed to go out and find a job leaves me numb. This morning I woke up at 4:30 to do laundry. My clothes were folded slowly as I tried to practice mindfulness and being present. More waiting, more patience, more concern. In time this will end. The hardest part is the weeping healthcare workers. I want to do so much more.
Carla Walker

I am so honor and please that this wonderful program continue to operate under the current condition of this Covid-19 virus. I would like to send my love and best wishes to the whole College Guild community.
Winston McIntyre

Continued on page 6

CADUCEUS

UFO sightings
reported,
government cover-ups
alleged

they came instead as
invisible invaders
one person infected
who infected 100
their war strategy brilliant
weaponizing our breath

our conventional armament
useless
those draped in unblemished
fatigues
rendered a vigilant
susceptible throng

a new soldier catapults
to the front line
fighting with
face masks
too few ventilators
and stale coffee

warriors not with
rucksacks
but nations
upon their
backs

by Trayzon Gilbert

College Guild's mission is to provide free correspondence courses that connect incarcerated people with a community beyond prison walls, fostering a mutual respect through a shared passion for learning.

From Our Executive Director: College Guild in Times of COVID-19

College Guild staff are doing what many other organizations around the world are now doing – working differently. We are on staggered shifts – one person at a time in the office. I’m writing this piece from home, while sitting on my back deck on a beautiful Friday morning. We arranged for Julie to have internet access at home so she can continue to work safely and make her unique contributions to College Guild. And our amazing staff continue to figure out new and better ways to get units out to students!

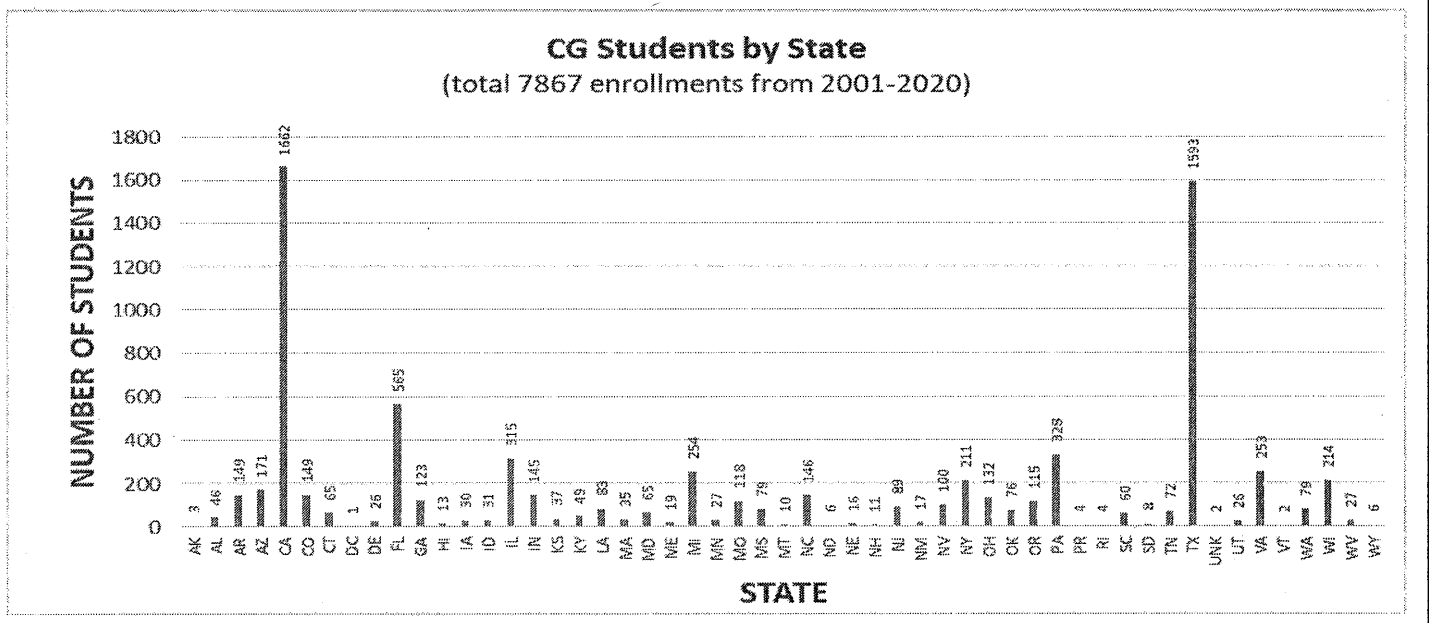
Pandemic Opportunities - The opportunities presented to College Guild as a result of the pandemic are many. First was the deepening of our commitment to keep student units going out the door. We were closed for just 4 weeks and then we all agreed it was time to figure out how to get back up and running. Our students have continued to send their work into the office. Our readers are ravenous for meaningful things to do and are delighted to be engaged again.

Secondly, changing how we use our office space plus shifting staff schedules caused a big revision in our workflow. The result is that Tracey, our volunteer coordinator, has found new ways to do volunteer orientations that are more fun for her and a better use of time by using an online meeting format. She loves it! I do too.

Workflow revisions have also shown us that we can accommodate more students in the same amount of time! That means..... wait for it..... drum roll ... we are going to be able to eliminate our WAITLIST before the end of the year! I can’t guarantee that we’ll never have a waitlist again, but right now this is big news and we are really excited about it.

The pandemic has been an opportunity to re-envision College Guild and what it can accomplish. This is being supported by the work of 5 summer interns, all Bowdoin College students. Two of them, Emma Hahesey and Spencer Follett, are working with Julie to write new courses. Summer Chamberlain is putting together our first ever social media strategy and posting schedule. Amy Hussey, working from Jamaica, is doing updates on our website, getting reader email newsletters out, and developing new videos to support volunteer readers. And finally Raine Raynor has taken our 19 years of enrollment data and cleaned it up in order to create powerful charts telling us a story about who our students are and where they are from.

Here is one of her charts:



From Our Executive Director: College Guild in Times of Covid-19 cont'd from page 2

Being able to present our data across social media platforms is one of the most important things we can do right now to get our story in front of potential grant funders, new volunteers and donors.

And finally, the board has just finished a series of conversations on strategy – reimagining College Guild. Can we grow to serve more students? Should we? What would that look like? Who do we need to collaborate and partner with? They worked with a series of questions and over the course of two weeks, brought all the ideas and insights down to 4 action steps.

We need to add a marketing/communications/social media position to our staff mix. This is essential to growing our reach and getting our story out in front of people who are looking for ways to make a difference in mass incarceration.

The board will work on adding new board members to fill the seats of two people who dropped off the board early. This is essential to Step 3.

In January of 2021, we will activate a Board Outreach Committee to support growing our connections to organizations working to support families of prisoners and other advocacy groups who can share our mission and work so that more incarcerated people hear about us.

Fundraising – with our data we are in a much stronger position to win grant funding while we also work to continue growing the number of individual donors who support our work. Grant monies are often restricted and can only be spent on approved expenses while donations from individual donors are unrestricted and allow us to cover costs such as rent, utilities, insurances, etc.

Our students are leading extremely difficult lives right now. Most are in almost constant lockdown with no access to educational or religious programs and no visits from loved ones. The spread of the virus in prisons is frightening to read about and emphasizes the need for us to continue our work and expand our reach in order to be a steady and supportive element for our students during the pandemic. A student from Texas wrote that he works 48 hours a week with no pay. He is being fed cold sandwiches for every meal. He has no money to buy extra food from the commissary and is hungry every day. He has no family and no one to help. College Guild makes a difference to him as a steady respectful connection that helps him to get through the day. His situation is so inhumane and it's happening in many prisons these days.

If you've read this far, then let me ask you to take action to support our work. Please send your most generous donation today. Help us get rid of the waitlist, get more stories out to the world about this good work, get dictionaries into the hands of new students who complete their first unit and enable this organization to serve many more incarcerated people this year!

We hope you and your loved ones are safe! Thank you for your support.

Mary G. Malia

Shine A Light Virtual Discussions and Fundraiser! JOIN US!

We are hosting a series of online discussions related to mass incarceration, the 13th Amendment, and how our history as a slave holding nation took us to the mass incarceration of today. This series of events will end with our annual Shine A Light Fundraiser that will also be online and virtual this year!

We'd love to have you join us! Visit our website for more information.

Shine A Light – virtual discussions hosted by College Guild

Please visit our website for more information and to register!

www.collegeguild.org

July 15th – Normal is Over: Virtual Film Discussion - in partnership with Curtis Memorial Library, Citizens' Climate Lobby and the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust.

July 22nd – Justice in Crisis: Virtual Film Discussion - Dean Beer and Keisha Hudson filed an amicus brief with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, underscoring the illegal pre-trial system in Montgomery County. Soon after, they were fired because they supposedly failed to ask permission first from the very powers that allowed this illegal system to persist.

Aug 5th – The movie “13th”: Virtual Film Discussion – An in-depth look at the prison system in the United States and how it reveals the nation's history of racial inequality.

Aug 22nd - 1619 Project: Discussion - Published by The New York Times in 2019 with the goal of re-examining the legacy of slavery in the United States on the 400th anniversary of the first black slaves arriving in the Americas.

Sept 2nd – The New Jim Crow: book discussion - meaningful dialogue about race, racism, and structural inequality in the age of mass incarceration.

Sept 15th – Shine A Light – College Guild's Virtual Fundraiser!

College Guild students share their talent

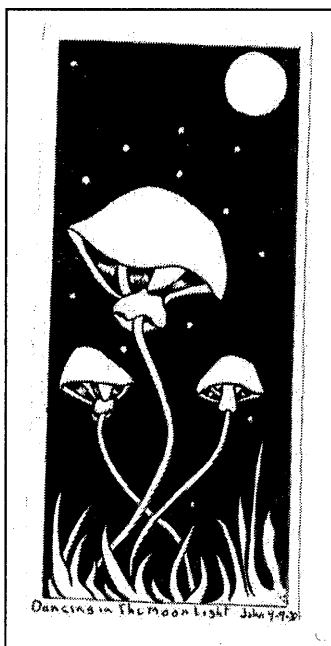
SERIOUS SITUATION

A magnificent day with clear blue skies
 Silent enemy, stalking in disguise
 Streets empty, nation-wide shutdown
 Schools and parks closed, no kids around
 People locked inside against their will
 Well, it's a good time, Netflix and chill
 Grocery store shelves naked as a newborn
 Panic, excessive hoarding, you have been warned
 Face masks a must when out and about
 Six feet apart, talking – you must shout
 Mother Nature an accomplice maybe. Why so mean?
 Tough times for everyone dealing with Covid-19

James Martin



Pedro Torres



John Steiner

Donations made in memory of:

Ann Cort

Marjorie Holland

Robert Malin

CHANGES

Because we are understimulated
 they allow us an extra hour on the phone

The phone tablets are not working

To keep us occupied
 they allow us to purchase games
 on our JPay tablets

The games will not download

I waited eight hours for canteen
 They are out of Dove soap, lotion,
 many snacks and legal envelopes

Canteen shelves are empty

One woman has been waiting
 one month to buy lotion.

She is still waiting

I spend my time napping,
 reading or meditating

Wondering what happened to the woman who fell ill

Carla Walker

Everything is so upside down right now, I don't know what will happen from one day to the next. I've been moved to three different buildings over the past month and my whole prison life has been turned on its head. I presume it's similar for everyone around the world now too. I will continue to pray for the CG team's health and safety.
 Ignacio Carillo

I'm glad you all are slowly coming off lockdown. Just remember, I was social distancing before it was cool! I want to say Illinois is somewhat upwards of 2000 Covid fatalities. Not sure how many people here at the facility have it but it's pretty bad.

Dan Grote

Thank you for telling me about the slowdown and everything. I recently wrote and made sure y'all knew I was thinking about you and wished you all safe & healthy prayers. Without you, a lot of us would be without the positive in our lives that keep us sane and creative. I thank you for that!
 Raymond D.

Just stay safe and healthy. I will certainly pray for all of those outside. There are no confirmed cases of Covid virus at this facility yet! Some other facilities have it bad. We are in a shelter in place mode, also no transfers or movement out of our cells until May 18.
 Dale Grau

It sure is a funny time our country is going through. Our state is on a lockdown too. Our prison system isn't doing any transfers. So since the start of March I have been volunteering to sew facemasks. There is very little movement here. They are trying their hardest to keep the virus out. I hope everyone at College Guild and their families are safe and healthy.

Allan Koch

In the wake of our world Coronavirus pandemic crisis, there has been a lot of changes in how we live today. Change may seem frightening at first, but actually there was always something good in the end. I believe it is a healthy reality check for the world to be reminded of how important it is to be and stay aware of what we do and of how we share when interacting with each other. Being aware of what I think, say and do without abusing the freedom I possess reminds me of what the rest of the world is currently coming to terms with. For me, freedom is wanting to live.
 Andrew Velez

DONATE TO COLLEGE GUILD TODAY!

PO Box 696, Brunswick, ME 04011

Please consider becoming an ongoing donor to College Guild with a monthly recurring donation, whether \$10 a month or \$100 a month, we are very grateful for your support. Thank you on behalf of College Guild incarcerated students and volunteers and for your generous tax-deductible donations!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

\$60 (\$5 a month) puts dictionaries in the hands of 4 students, many who have never owned a book of their own.

\$240 (\$20 a month) allows us to cover the costs of delivering 4 courses during a year.

\$400 (\$33 a month) helps us move two names from the wait list to the active student list, allowing two more incarcerated people to become students of College Guild.

\$600 (\$50 a month) provides envelopes, paper and printing costs for 6 months so we can put course work into eagerly waiting students' hands.

\$1000 (\$83 a month) provides 3 months of postage to ensure course work, special requests and information gets out to students in hundreds of prisons across the country.

\$1200 (\$100 a month) enables 6 incarcerated people to participate in College Guild's life changing courses for a year.

Or any amount of your choice will be put to good use for our students.

To donate by credit card: www.collegeguild.org/support

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US: info@collegeguild.org