

In Solidarity

NEWSLETTER OF THE
SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT'S PRISONER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to *In Solidarity*! As I write these words, we are preparing to celebrate SRLP's 10th anniversary on November 8. It is an exciting time for all of us who have been part of SRLP to look back at the organization's decade of work and celebrate its impact. SRLP is a truly unique organization. We have built an innovative organizational model focused on anti-oppression, operating through consensus, and prioritizing trans people of color leadership. We have changed the conversation about what trans politics is--putting racism and poverty at the center.

Participating in SRLP for the last ten years has been transformative for me. SRLP is doing work that we are again and again told is impossible. Too often, the most well-resourced gay and lesbian organizations have said that trans issues are "not viable" and should be left aside. Too often, traditionally structured hierarchical social change organizations have said that prioritizing people of color leadership, or making decisions by consensus, is unrealistic. For me, as a member of SRLP, being involved in our daily processes of figuring out how to do our work according to our beliefs, how to refuse to throw anyone under the bus to forward the interests of some part of our constituency, means constant growth. Our relationships grow, our thinking grows, our connection to all the movements we are part of grow. As we approach this 10 year mark, we are

looking forward at the work SRLP continues to develop to address the seemingly expanding challenges facing trans, intersex

and gender non-conforming people. It's a rough time to be poor, with services being cut across the country. And it's a rough time to be a target of law enforcement, with the US marking the highest levels of deportation in its history, and ongoing expansion of criminal punishment systems. Our 10th Anniversary is an opportunity to bring light to these conditions and to bring energy and resources to our work transforming them. *In Solidarity* is such an important part of our work, building deep connections between trans people inside and outside of prisons working together to break down those walls. I hope you enjoy this issue!

-Dean Spade, SRLP founder & Collective Member



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PRISONER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project strongly believes that the people most affected by the systems of violence and oppression we fight against are the best people to lead that fight. We also believe that social justice organizations must find ways to directly involve the members of our community who have been separated from us by the criminal injustice system. The Prisoner Advisory Committee (PAC) is one way to overcome the enormous state-created barriers to communication and political participation for the people who are most affected by the prison industrial complex.

DISCLAIMER

Please note that the ideas and opinions expressed in In Solidarity are solely those of the authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. The Sylvia Rivera Law Project makes no representations as to the accuracy of any statements made in In Solidarity. Authors and artists bear sole responsibility for their work.

PAC currently has around 60 amazing members who are enthusiastic about sharing their time, passion, and expertise with SRLP. Our members are trans, intersex, gender non-conforming people and allies who are currently incarcerated in New York. Members of PAC work together with members of our collective to develop strategies & goals for our work.

IN SOLIDARITY

is a collaborative newsletter created by PAC members, who are involuntarily locked away, SRLP staff & volunteers. Together our words & collective efforts work against injustice for low-income and/or people of color who are trans, intersex & gender non-conforming both inside and out of the prison industrial complex and towards gender self determination for all. Additionally, this newsletter has always been a critical way for SRLP staff to connect with & inform volunteer members of the Prison Advisory Committee.

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THE SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine their gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination, or violence. SRLP is a collective organization founded on the understanding that gender self-determination is inextricably

intertwined with racial, social and economic justice. Therefore, we seek to increase the political voice and visibility of low-income people and people of color who are transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming. SRLP works to improve access to respectful and affirming social, health, and

legal services for our communities. We believe that in order to create meaningful political participation and leadership, we must have access to basic means of survival and safety from violence.

SRLP STAFF &
COLLECTIVE
MEMBERS



SYLVIA RIVERA STORY

This project is named for civil rights pioneer Sylvia Rivera. A veteran of the 1969 Stonewall uprising, Sylvia was a tireless advocate for all those who have been marginalized as the "gay rights" movement has mainstreamed. Sylvia fought hard against the exclusion of transgender people from the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act in New York, and was a loud and persistent voice for the rights of people of color and low-income queer and trans people. This project works to continue Sylvia's work by centralizing issues of systemic poverty and racism, and prioritizing the struggles of queer and trans people who face the most severe and multifaceted discrimination.

"All of us were working for so many movements at that time. Everyone was involved with the women's movement, the peace movement, the civil-rights movement. We were all radicals. I believe that's what brought it around.

You get tired of being just pushed around."

-Sylvia Rivera on Stonewall Riots

SRLP COLLECTIVE STRUCTURE

SRLP functions as a multi-racial, intergenerational collective of people committed to a broad understanding of gender self-determination. As a collective, we recognize that it is essential to create structures that model our vision of a more just society.

We believe that in the struggle for social justice too often change is perceived as a product and not a process. We seek to use a non-hierarchical structure to support work that aims to redistribute power and wealth for a more just society.

We also strongly believe that our community-based structure, which maximizes community involvement, will support the sustainability of our work and the accountability of SRLP to its constituencies.

We have developed an organizational structure with five equally important teams and a Board working together on a shared vision and mission.

The Direct Services Team provides direct legal services, runs our legal clinics, makes determinations about how to take and handle cases, advocates for policy reform within institutions that impact our community, and sustains relationships with allied service providers.

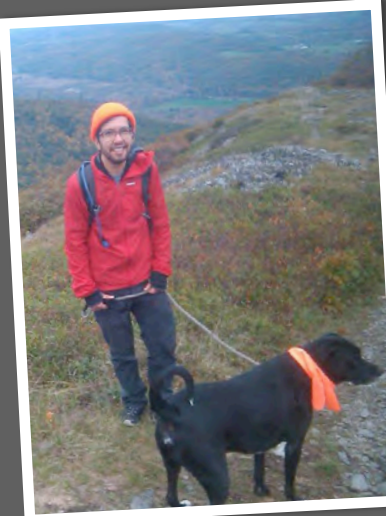
The Public Education Team creates and implements our trainings for other groups



KATHERINE

Core Collective Member

is an aspiring sociologist & researcher who specializes in the study of gender. Her current areas of interest include the sociology of gender in gaming, & the sociology of work & family. A committed feminist, Katherine is passionate about women's rights & has worked to elucidate the issues of trans* women through her writing & oratory—often speaking from her experience as a trans woman herself. She loves roleplaying games, My Little Pony, pizza, & a good opera.



DANIEL

Staff, Director of Finance & Development

has been involved with SRLP since 2003. He first served on the Steering Committee and then joined the Collective Development Team before becoming a staff member in 2006. Daniel has hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, from Georgia to Maine and plays trumpet with the Rude Mechanical Orchestra, a collectively-run radical marching band which supports social and economic justice efforts in New York City.



ALISHA

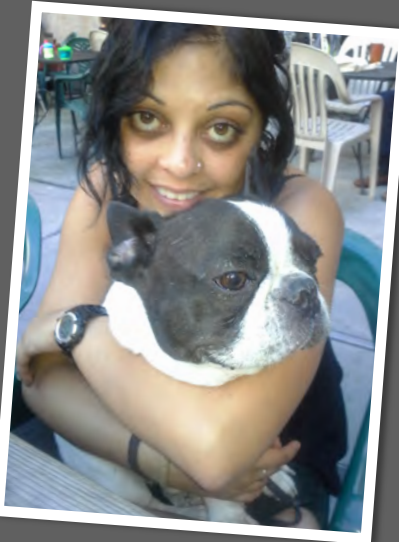
Staff, Director of Prisoner Justice Program

joined the collective in 2009 after a year of working with DST. After graduating from Cardozo Law School, Alisha moved to Philadelphia, where she was an essential member of the Philly Books Through Bars Collective which focuses on prisoner justice organizing. As a passionate legal advocate for low-income trans communities, Alisha is very excited to join the SRLP staff.

POOJA

Staff, Lawyer

Prior to working at SRLP she was a member of the Justice and Solidarity Collective in Washington DC. Pooja has organized against police brutality, the prison industrial complex, immigration detention, globalization, and unfair labor practices with the Coalition of Immokalee Farm Workers. Pooja co-authored an article, Unraveling Injustice: Race & Class Impact of Medicaid Exclusions of Transition-Related Health Care for Transgender People. She also practices a lot of Bikram yoga.



and organizations, creates and distributes our public education materials, develops and maintains our website, and creates and implements SRLP's media advocacy work.

The Fundraising and Finance Team is responsible for raising money for our operations, coordinating our budget-planning process, maintaining relationships with our donor base, creating fundraising events, and administering our financial systems.

ELANA

Staff, Lawyer

is a longtime advocate for grassroots organizing strategies and community leadership in legal work, Elana co-authored "The Role of Lawyers In Trans Liberation: Building a Transformative Movement For Social Change" with Pooja Gehi & Gabriel Arkles. Elana is also one of SRLP's primary trainers, having trained over 500 service providers in transgender awareness, criminal justice, disability justice, & immigration issues. In her free time, Elana is an avid surfer & performs in a country & western band.



The Collective Development Team is responsible for recruiting staff and collective members, for making policies and programs regarding SRLP's diversity, and developing policies and procedures for SRLP staff and collective members.

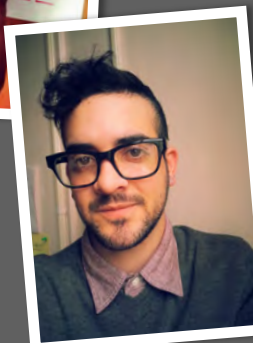
The Movement Building Team supports the community-based leadership development and organizing of SRLP's low-income trans communities & trans communities of color.

PETER & CHRIS

Interns, Movement Building Team

Peter joined SRLP last Summer from Hampshire College in Western Massachusetts. Raised in Boston, he began to understand the power of the people to transform society.

Chris joined SRLP this Fall. He is a queer & trans Peruvian tropical flower raised in Miami, Florida. He is passionate about social justice and currently in grad school to become a radical social worker.



The Board is charged with oversight of the legal, ethical, and moral responsibilities of the organization and its financial health. SRLP is developing a structure where people committed to gender self-determination, and trans, intersex, and gender variant people can take powerful leadership roles in transforming their own lives as well as their communities.

PAC MEMBER // SUBMISSIONS

A LETTER TO MY GOD

BY DEAN HOLLOWAY

AT TIMES WHEN I'M SITTING
ALONE, I START TO
QUESTION MY INNER SELF
WHERE I KNOW YOU LIVE. I
ALWAYS TRY SO HARD TO
LISTEN FOR THE ANSWERS
TO THE QUESTIONS THAT I
PUT TO YOU. I
SOMETIMES QUESTION MY
WAYS AND ACTIONS HERE. I
LIVE THIS SPECIAL LIFESTYLE,
AND I QUESTION, ARE YOU
SATISFIED WITH WHOM I'VE
BECOME? I KNOW I WANT SO
BADLY TO PLEASE ONLY YOU,
(DO I?) YET SOMETIMES I FEAR
THAT I WON'T LIVE UP TO
YOUR STANDARDS (CAN I?)
I WANT SO BADLY TO EARN

It's rather a wonder, I think,
When friends are made through
pen and ink,
A piece of paper, blue & black on
white,
Someone decides that he will
write,
To someone he has never seen,
Who lives somewhere he has
never been,

YOUR BLESSINGS BUT THERE
ARE FORCES PULLING

ME AWAY FROM YOUR PATH.
(WHY?) I QUESTION WHY
GIVE ME THE FREE WILL,
WHEN ALL MY CHOICES ARE
THE WRONG ONES? WILL MY
HEART'S GOODNESS



His pen becomes his magic wand,
Two strangers start to correspond.

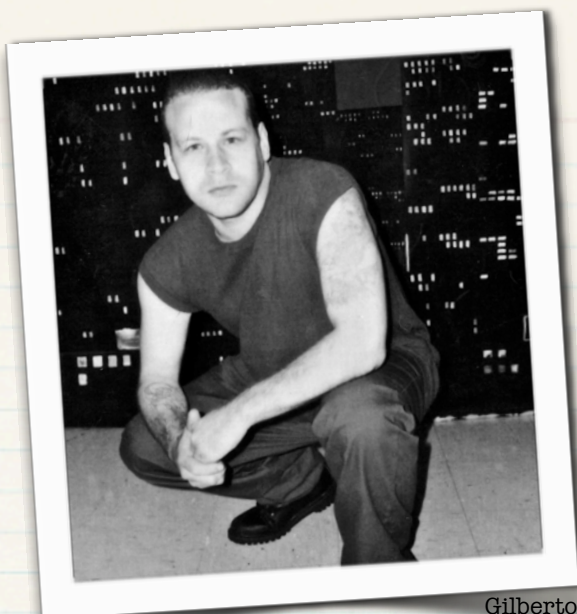
Not strangers long, but soon good
friends,
Just notice how that last letter ends!
How pleasant their exchange of
views,
Their comments on important
news,
Two friends who live quite far apart,
Can gladden much each others;
heart,
Can nourish, too, each other's mind,
With living thoughts in letters kind.
It's truly beautiful, I think,
When friends spring through pen
and ink.

Artwork (featured above) and poetry by,
Shaylanna Luvme

OVERRIDE MY BAD CHOICES?
CAN I LIVE AS I DO AND STILL
BE WELCOME INTO YOUR
GOOD GRACES AT MY END?

By Ms. Tatiana Williams

I am writing this brief letter to
all [of the] LGBT community. I
am Tatiana Williams and I am
currently incarcerated [in a
New York state] correctional
facility. I am going through a
lot but I'm also standing my
ground & speaking for
transgender people. I
currently take my hormone
injections as well as pills
(Premarin). At first, when I
reached this facility medical
told me that they don't give
injections here so then I went
to Albany. Which they later on
approved it & I now believe
them. All I'm saying is that
don't never be afraid to use
your voice because we are a
part of the community. Just
know that if I did it, so can
you. This is a letter to all
transgender people as well as
LGBT people. Don't never
stop being you :)
Smile + Stay Strong.



Gilberto

IN THE NEWS...

The CeCe McDonald Case

Written by Leslie Feinburg, Support CeCe McDonald! Solidarity with Trans People Targeted by the Prison Industrial Complex.

CeCe is a creative and energetic person who, before her life was so unjustly interrupted, was studying fashion at MCTC. She had a stable home where she lived with and helped support four other African American youth, her family. CeCe's family describes her as a leader, a role model, and a loyal friend. She is known as a wise, out-spoken, and welcoming person, with a cheerful disposition and a history of handling prejudice with amazing grace.

Around 12:30 am on June 5, 2011, CeCe was walking to the grocery store with some friends, all of them young, African American, and LGBTIQ or allied. As they passed a local bar, the Schooner Tavern, a group of older, white people who were standing outside the bar's side door began hurling racist and transphobic slurs at them, without provocation. They called CeCe and her friends 'faggots,' 'niggers,' and 'chicks with dicks,' and suggested that CeCe was 'dressed as a woman' in order to 'rape' Dean Schmitz, one of the attackers. When CeCe approached the group and told them that her crew would not tolerate hate speech,

one of the women said, "I'll take you bitches on," and then smashed her glass into CeCe's face. She punctured CeCe's cheek all the way through, lacerating her salivary gland. A fight ensued, during which one of the attackers, Dean Schmitz, was fatally stabbed.

The only person arrested that night was CeCe. She was briefly taken to the hospital where she received 11 stitches in her cheek. While she was still suffering both physically and mentally from this traumatic incident, she was left alone in a room for three hours and then interrogated, and then placed in solitary confinement at the Hennepin County men's jail. She spent the next several months in jail and had to wait almost two months between her initial doctors' visit and a much-needed follow-up appointment. After her arrest, CeCe was quickly charged with second-degree murder. In short, she was prosecuted for surviving a violent, racist, transphobic attack. Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman—the self described "Michael Jordan of prosecutors"—held the power to drop the charges against CeCe. But in the face of powerful community demands to "Free CeCe," Freeman did not drop the charges: instead, he dug in his heels and escalated the attack against CeCe by adding an additional charge of second-degree murder. On May 2, 2012, as jury selection for CeCe's trial was underway, CeCe accepted a plea agreement: she pled guilty to a reduced charge of 2nd degree

manslaughter, which carries a sentence of 41 months. CeCe was officially sentenced on June 4th, 2012.

CeCe is currently being held in the men's prison in St. Cloud, MN. With time served and time off of her sentence for good behavior, she will likely spend about 21 months in prison.

Words from CeCe

This is from a post originally written from CeCe to a gathering of CeCe McDonald's family, friends, and Support Committee, which she organized from within the Hennepin County jail. The letter was written a few weeks before her trial was set to begin. She asked for it to be shared with the greater public as a blog post.

April 12, 2012

A couple of days ago I woke up and felt drained so I found some inspiration in the Bible. I usually don't read the Bible, but that day it called for me. And as usual I don't go looking, yet I let it lead me, and it took me to 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 1 through 13, which gave me strength & peace. It talks about love, which is the best way of all. It says, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I had the understanding of a child. When I became a [wo]man I put childish ways behind me. Now we see only a dim likeness of things. It is as if we were seeing them in a mirror. But someday we will see clearly. We will see face to face. What I know now is not complete. But someday I will know completely, just as

God knows me completely. The three most important things to have are faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of them is love.”(1Cor 13:11-13)

This passage was almost poetry to me, but most importantly I acknowledged and understood what the scripture was telling me. For a long time in my own life I struggled to know the identity of love. I searched high and low, and the wanting of love resulted in me conceiving a false love for others and myself. And like the scripture said, I saw things more clearly and I’ve seen those things face to face in reality. When I have given up on love, whether it be with me, my family and friends, or even my partners, I realized that love is unending and cannot be avoided. And it started with myself. And all the while I searched and longed for love, and didn’t even love myself. So that’s where I started, and now I have enough love within me to love myself and all of you. I love you all because you all invested in me what I could have not done on my own. Your own time, dedication, and emotions. And wherever it may have come from, it has given me the motivation and inspiration to fight for all of us. Society says that love is one way and very black and white, but we all know that love is a bustling highway and bursting with all vivid colors. They tell us who we can and can’t love, how we should love them, and why. And well, that’s not love at all because love is natural, organic, how it was intended to be before it was used for greed and

manipulation. Love can never be manufactured!

Those who oppose us couldn’t stop the love which has, and was defined, to bring us all together. To give us the strength and the mental durability to go the distance and fight this evil who tells us we are wrong. We all were made in the image of God, and he makes no mistakes. I love all of you, no matter what, and I believe in my heart that you love me too. We are all different with different beliefs and a different story to us all, but we are connected through that and our love for each other draws us closer. What’s most important is to love those who hate you and have wronged you, for they are wrong and they only see love on a one-way street. But they are still lost and do not know love at all. This situation I’m in would have made one second guess their own faith, trust, and love but I know where my heart and mind is. Plus, the support of all those I love lets me know there is no situation or hardship that I or any of us can’t overcome. Now with everything in my life that has happened to me up until what I am facing now I know that God and love has brought me through it all and will continue to after it is done. I just want my love to spread throughout to inspire, to celebrate, to endure. To be patient, kind, understanding, loyal, and selfless, because that’s what love is. I know all our love can change the ways of the ignorant and the hearts that have been hardened. Not just for us now, but also for all the generations who will come after

us. So that they can live and thrive and show each other love, vividly and honestly. I love you all, and I give much thanks and appreciation.

-CeCe <3

Update from CeCe, July 2012

CeCe is doing fine and looking fabulous. She is steadily devouring the books that everyone is sending – currently she is reading Angela Davis and is totally inspired.

She spoke a bit about the push from some supporters to launch large-scale campaigns to get Gov. Mark Dayton to pardon her, and/or to have her moved to a women’s facility. She talked about how these campaigns would not only not benefit her, but how they exceptionalize her in a way that she doesn’t want.

The pardoning process would not only be painful for her, but were she even to get considered, it wouldn’t be until after she served her sentence. She thinks about people incarcerated for much longer terms than she, and for incredibly minor offenses (mostly drug related). Even if the emotional hardship of the process was something she felt up for, and even if the slim chance of it working actually succeeded, the outcome of her getting a pardon while others sat in prison is antithetical to her values and the whole reason she is struggling against this racist system in the first place. As for being transferred to a women’s facility, her thoughts,

CONTINUED...

are: Prison sucks. Period. Women's or men's. Prisons are not safe for anyone. Period. CeCe asserts (as do we) that incarcerated individuals should be able to decide for themselves where they would be safest within the system. For now, CeCe is fine being in a men's facility. For supporters to push for her to be transferred from one hell to another only serves the purpose of misdirecting energy away from the real problems of incarceration in the U.S., and the problem of the Prison Industrial Complex as a whole.

To sum it up: CeCe does not want supporters to launch long-term campaigns on her behalf that exceptionalize her situation.. Also importantly, these specific campaigns: a pardon from Gov. Dayton and getting transferred to a women's facility, wouldn't actually be beneficial to her at all. Short term campaigns such as call-ins to administration, and media blasts, are targeted efforts that let the DOC know that CeCe has widespread support, and it sends a message that we are watching them and will respond to prisoner's needs – CeCe's today, and other incarcerated trans people tomorrow.

CeCe sends her love and gratitude to everyone who called-in on her behalf.

If you have internet access, you can see updates at: <http://supportcece.wordpress.com>



CeCe McDonald photograph by, Leslie Feinburg

In Other News

SRLP MBT member makes headlines...

Victory! Transgender Woman Wins Insurance Coverage for Sex Reassignment Surgery

An excerpt of a press release put out by the Transgender Legal Defense & Educational Fund

October 3, 2012 – We are thrilled to announce that we have resolved a claim on behalf of a transgender woman who had been denied health insurance coverage for sex reassignment surgery. Ida Hammer, a 34-year-old New York City resident, applied for pre-authorization for male-to-female sex reassignment surgery in July 2011. MVP Health Care denied her claim on the grounds that the surgery was “cosmetic” and therefore was not covered under the policy. MVP refused to alter its position and denied two internal appeals, even after TLDEF submitted extensive evidence in support of Ms. Hammer’s claim. Only after TLDEF threatened to file a lawsuit did MVP reverse its position and agree to cover the doctor-recommended procedure. MVP stated in its

letter authorizing the surgery that “the requested surgery is medically necessary.” “I have been undergoing treatment for gender dysphoria for the past five years. My doctors determined that surgery is the only adequate treatment for my condition,” said Ms. Hammer. “My insurance company should not be second-guessing my doctors. I’m relieved that it is finally treating me fairly and covering the health care I need.” “The well-established medical and legal consensus is that transgender-related health care is medically necessary care,” said TLDEF executive director Michael Silverman. “This surgery is not designed to improve one’s appearance, but rather to treat a recognized medical condition. Transgender individuals pay the same premiums and simply want the same benefits as anyone else,” he added. The medical necessity of sex reassignment surgery has been widely recognized in medicine and law. Organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association & the World Professional Association for Transgender Health recognize surgery as medically necessary and support insurance coverage for it. Since the 1970s, numerous state & federal courts have recognized this surgery as non-cosmetic, medically necessary surgery. Even the Internal Revenue Service recognizes transgender-related surgery as medically necessary & tax deductible.

IN SOLIDARITY WORD SEARCH!

Z E E C R Y S X C O N N E C T
W M N H Q W X P E T X S C G O
N M Y C T S S G E E O U N V G
V K Y B O A L P S A O P A C Z
M M E U C U E I I R K P D C W
O O L R D O R R G R A O D R K
D V V N I N M A B D I R I N I
W A I E N P N M G U Q T I K T
V Q E O M I S J U E E H A S X
E H C R Z E N N V N T Z A H S
O R Z E X U N O I H I N X A W
R E S I S T L T Z G D C P R N
D M S B Y B G A U U O S A E B
V N Z U C L G A I A Y F C T T
I L K Z K G M P I L M A N C E

BREATHE
COMMUNICATE
CONNECT
CRY
DANCE
ENCOURAGE
INDULGE
INSPIRE
LAUGH
LOVE
MOVEMENT
ORGANIZE
READ
RESIST
RISE
SHARE
SOUL
SPEAK
SPIRIT
SUPPORT
THINK
WRITE

Health & Wellness

As trans, gender non-conforming, intersex people and allies in prison, we want to know how you take care of yourself. Because prisons and detention facilities often break down people's spirits, we want know what you do you do to stay strong and how you de-stress, relax and maintain your health and wellness as much as possible.



by Robert Cepeda

Civil Rights Behind Bars: Fighting for Political Power in Virginia



By Richael Faithful, Equal Justice Works Fellow, Virginia Rights Restoration Project

...

The Virginia Rights Restoration Project is a community-centered, statewide campaign aimed at changing laws that permanently take away civil rights of people convicted of a felony.

What lead you to start this project?

November's election was historic for many reasons. Perhaps, for the first time, mainstream political elite saw that the "Obama" coalition—people of color, young people, white liberals, and some working class/poor people, among others—care about the political process and will speak by voting. This reality is not a surprise to most of us fighting injustice every day. We not only care about what is happening but we are already engaged, though not in the ways that pollsters expect. The fact

remains that we—queer folks, folks of color, poor folks, immigrants, and others on the margins—have been, and continue to, build political power from our school board meetings to national elections. We organize and participate, as a matter of resistance, in spite of the fact that many of us are legally excluded.

Today, nearly six million people—in and out of prison—are unable to vote in the U.S. because of a criminal conviction. And in four states, including my home of Virginia, over 450,000 people have had their civil rights taken away forever, so that they are citizens in name and taxes only. (The three other states are Kentucky, Florida and Iowa.) The only way disenfranchised people can restore their rights is by individual Governor petition.

The Virginia Rights Restoration Project hopes to deepen the capacity for Virginians to eliminate permanent civil rights disenfranchisement, and help build political power to fight mass incarceration in the South. In the short term we are pressuring the current Governor

to automatically restore civil rights through her legal power.

What does the project look like?

The project is standing on the shoulders of a decade worth of work by my host organization, Advancement Project, and at least a couple of decades of organizing among formerly incarcerated people and their families. The project is a little over a year old, and has grown to three full-time staff members.

On one level we want to "fix" the legal issue. The legal "fix" is to amend the state constitution that allows for people with felony convictions to have their voting rights forever taken away. We are working toward building support and figuring out the best strategy for this fix. At the same time, we are working on the short-term alternative of a Governor executive order. On another level we want to use our access and resources to put organizers in a better position to fight this 10-15 year campaign, regardless of whether we are here. Ultimately the levels all overlap and feed each other. Here are some of things that we

do:

- Offer free, direct legal assistance to people with the rights restoration petition process;
- Create self-help petition tools and referral program;
- Teach disenfranchised people/ community leaders about the process;
- Help leaders across the state setup petition clinics and other political education events;
- Organize local leaders—often people who have had their rights restored—to teach others in the community;
- Bring local leaders and social justice non-profits together to discuss strategy and work;
- Facilitate leader meetings with government officials, pressuring courts and probation/parole offices to be more responsive and transparent with their roles in the petition process;
- Implement strategic media plan – radio, TV, newspapers and social media— that elevates the experiences of real folks, often local leaders;
- Preparing community-centered litigation should it help our organizing strategy.

Any details, quotes, stories that could help people better understand?

M. Jones lived in Buckingham County, a rural area in central Virginia with her two children, and abusive husband. One night, after a particularly violent beating in which she was thrown through a screen door—while pregnant—M fought back with a firearm. She did not seriously injure her husband, and because she was acting in self-defense, she could not be convicted for a

more serious crime. However, the prosecutor sought a forgery charge, of which she was convicted. After completing community service to satisfy her restitution, she fled the area with her three children—including her newborn, disabled son—to Fairfax County where she knew that she could receive help. M got in her car and just drove that desperate night over twenty years ago. Until recently, even though she continued to be outspoken about injustices that she witnessed, she did not know that she could receive her voting rights back. With the project's help she applied for her civil rights in spring of this year. Just before Labor Day she received her certificate from the Governor restoring her rights, and she fulfilled her long-time dream on November 6. M's pride for participating in this year's historic election was enormous. Restoring her rights, in a small but significant way, help restored her sense of belonging and dignity.

What have you discovered along the way?

This is my closest experience with the U.S. criminal system. It is uglier than I ever imagined. I am, at the same time, overcome by how resilient we all are. The most powerful political work that I've seen through this project is made of the same survivalist instincts some folks have used their entire lives. A reminder how we're all human, you know?

What you hope will happen next?

Lots of things! But most of all I hope that we can really integrate this project into the anti-mass incarceration movement in the U.S. That work is going to get big.

Why this kind of info is important to know/share?

Many people will have their voting rights restored after they are released, because most states do this automatically. Please contact me if you have any questions about your status.

Richael Faithful,
Equal Justice Works Fellow,
Virginia Rights
Restoration Project
Advancement Project
Attn: R. Faithful
1220 L St NW, Ste. 850
Washington, DC, 20005
rfaithful@advancementproject.org

CARE OF 9/11

BY D. NELSON

WHENEVER PEOPLE GROW CLOSE

A HEART IS BORN BETWEEN THEM.

IT ISN'T INSIDE OUR BODIES.

WHENEVER WE CARE ABOUT ONE

WHENEVER WE CARE ABOUT
ANOTHER PERSON

A HEART IS BORN!

IF YOU WERE ALONE IN THE WORLD, I
DON'T THINK YOU COULD HAVE A
HEART.

THAT WHAT YOU HAVE TO BELIEVED

DON'T THINK ABOUT IT TOO HARD.

IF YOUR HEART LONGS TO BE HERE,
THEN YOUR HEART'S HERE.

THERE'S ONE THING YOU HAVE IT
HERE!

Unknown Rights Are No Rights At All

a speech given by core collective member, Katherine Cross at the opening plenary of the *From Abortion, Rights to Social Justice: Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom* conference.



Katherine Cross,
SRLP Core Collective Member

So, just what is “a right?”

You see, there is something about “rights”—those things we keep fighting and dying for, those amorphous, evanescent phantoms of liberty that keep us striving towards the infinite horizon of change. Rights are what movements like ours are built on. So what are they?

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a nonprofit that provides free legal services to low income trans people and trans people of color in New York City, has a rather novel idea of what rights are.

We believe that a right is something that you can touch, can taste, can live and breathe. It is something tactile, material, with a size and shape that is known, and something that is more than a phantom of a whisper of a thought on parchment: a right is the recognition of your humanity. For SRLP this has meant one thing: rights require justice in order to be exercised. In order to be something more than “theoretical.”

If a woman has a right to reproductive choice, but cannot afford it, then for all practical intents and purposes SHE HAS NO RIGHT to reproductive choice. That is reality, and it is a reality that Sylvia Rivera Law Project has attended to. Human dignity requires

material conditions, it requires economic justice, and it requires the power that knowledge brings. There is a reason that “Know Your Rights” brochures are our most popular offerings.

Unknown rights are no rights at all.

We see in all of our fellow sisters, brothers, and siblings, a member of a wider human family that has been denied that humanity. At Sylvia Rivera, we take the cases few others will; we take the cases that strive for humanity where prejudice and petty hatred has most forgotten it. Because their rights matter. Because we count.

What are these rights I keep talking about in the airy abstract? The rights of transgender people of color, of low income trans people, of immigrant trans people, of trans women who society has forgotten, sex workers, our incarcerated family members. We make humankind our business. A humankind that is holistic, that forgets no one, that celebrates the love of humanity and joy within us all, that elevates our art, our poetry, our struggles, our quotidian joys in the midst of an oppressive society where patriarchy pushes down. From the smallest name change case to the largest appellate court case on access to Medicaid, we are there fighting for rights that are real.

A right on paper is no right at all. A right that is coupled with economic liberty, however, a right that comes with the material resources needed to access it, is a right that can be exercised. A right that is known, that is understood, can be struggled for and it can be won. That is why we at Sylvia Rivera have struggled against the doubts, the fears, the worries, and the hand wringing that attend a law project’s work and seem only to promise death by a thousand cuts.

We have fought through these doubts because we know that our clients are more than clients: they are sisters, brothers, and siblings. They come from the communities we serve and

that we know. They live and breathe with us, and they too are artists, poets, lawyers, teachers, and activists. There is no bright red line between activists and clients, lawyers and plaintiffs, service providers and the served.

Whither the link to reproductive justice, however?

- If a trans woman cannot legally change her name, she loses access to the rights she supposedly has. The name she has given her own body is not recognized by authorities that then wield structural power over her.
- If a trans woman must be sterilized before she can legally change her gender, where are her reproductive rights? If she is considered an unfit parent purely by dint of her being trans... where are her reproductive rights?
- If a genderqueer person who is undocumented finds themselves at the mercy of the INS or other institutions, where are their reproductive rights?
- How can a sex worker who is transgender access health services without enormous risk, simply because of their profession and their gender?

“What that means is that none of us win unless everybody wins. None of us are safe until all of us are safe”

All of these people are united in seeing their bodies policed by authorities that think they know how to manage our lives better than we do. Sound familiar? Just as the Hyde Amendment ensures *Roe v. Wade* is merely theoretical for millions of American women, so too does heteropatriarchy more generally ensure that trans people's bodies are not our own. I share with my cisgender [non trans] sisters the painful fact that my body is public property, and that my rights are contingent on that fact. Sylvia Rivera, the namesake of our organization, said enough is enough. We, as a collective, continue that cry. Liberation is a collective process, goes our popular slogan. What that means is that none of us wins unless everybody wins. None of us are safe until all of us are safe. Citizenship realizes its promise only when humanity is universally recognized and not contingent on gender, skin color or national origin.

Equality is not just a word, it is not a soundbyte, it is no benighted slogan! It is a truth, a thing with substance, with real dimensions, that can be felt, that can be **lived**. Transgender people cannot live their lives without a measure of reproductive justice, and reproductive justice cannot exist in a world where trans people's bodies are not their own. When we fight for the right to name ourselves, we are fighting for the right to control our bodies and our existence. When we fight for healthcare access we are fighting for our bodies and the right to **live**; when we fight prison injustice we are fighting against an oppression that criminalizes us for existing; when we fight, we share the cause of reproductive justice.

Our bodies, *our* choices.



SRLP members & staff getting ready to march in the 2012 Trans Day of Action.

Growing up from early childhood I knew I was different. I always wanted the opposite of what I was given. I didn't like playing with cars, trucks or tools so, I would take my sister's toys. I was forced to wear hideous clothes by my parents. Ugly loose pants a baggy t-shirt, I knew what I wanted I wanted to be pretty like my sister wear dresses and make up, but got yelled at when my sister dressed me up. This only made me do it more but when no one was around. As I got older I began wearing my style of clothing out in public and didn't care. Tight skinny jeans, with a cute top stuffing my 34C bra. I knew who I was and I knew what I was, a woman. People would always laugh at me call me a faggot it really hurt I couldn't change who I was like Lady Gaga said "I was born this way." I never knew about hormones until I was 14 when I started stealing my sister's birth control for 3 months. Then I got locked up and am now forced to wear the same clothes I hated when my parent would make me wear them. I am grateful to have found SRLP, and I am thankful for all the help they have given me, such as a name change and assistance in obtaining proper medical treatment for transition. My name is Natalie Rose and I'm a transgendered woman and I love all my fellow brothers and sisters and can't wait until I can help in the struggle for our rights. We are unique and we are beautiful.

-Natalie Rose



Natalie Rose



Dee Piazza

I Bought Me A Husband

By Dee Piazza

Well I did it, I bought me a husband!
At first it was just a lease with an
option to buy,

But I made all the payment and
purchased a guy.

A 1974 model with hardly any miles
on him;
black exterior and black interior and
trim.

He has a supple yet firm suspension,
with a killer power train and
proportionate dimensions.

He doesn't have power windows,
doors, or locks,

but I love the big transmission and
smooth gearbox.

Big black leather seats surround me
inside,

this bad boy begs for me to ride!

The nose is wide and headlights set
far apart,

And under his hood, a large engine
that jumps my heart.

A classic muscle car, more substance
than style,

A slow 0 to 60 but excellent in the
quarter-mile.

The handling is taut and the steering
very good,

And I adore the stick-shift knob in
solid wood.

I can repair any rust, he's a total
keeper,

forget newer models, my ride is a
sleeper.

It's all I can do when R.P.M. line is in
the red,

And do I feed him fuel with or
without lead?

Hey, he came without an owner's
manual.

LEGAL UPDATES

The Direct Services Team (DST) at SRLP is composed of our three staff attorneys Elana Redfield, Pooja Gehi & up until September 2012, Chase Strangio. We represent transgender, gender non-conforming and intersex individuals who are low-income and transgender, gender non-conforming and intersex people of color in a range of civil legal cases including name changes petitions, immigration applications, public benefits, and challenges to conditions of incarceration. We wanted to share some updates on the legal front and remind you of some ongoing programs.

A STEP FORWARD!

Michelle Kosilek has taken another important step forward in her struggle to get sex reassignment surgery (SRS) while in prison in Massachusetts. In September, a federal court ordered the head of the Mass. Department of Corrections to provide Michelle with SRS. The court said that for some trans people, like Michelle, treatment with hormones and therapy is not enough. The court also said that it was not okay to deny someone surgery they need just because it is controversial. The state has appealed the decision, which means that Michelle still has a longer fight in front of her.

There have been a lot of stories about this case in the media. A lot of it has been very negative,

but some of it has supported the court's decision.

Kosilek v. Spencer, CA 00-12455-MLW, 2012 WL 3799660 (D. Mass. Sept. 4, 2012)

PROGRESS FOR LARRY LEE

Larry Lee has also made progress in his case about harassment and rape in a Michigan prison. When Larry went to prison, guards started making homophobic comments, like "sissy for sale." Larry spoke to a psychologist about the harassment from guards, the sexual pressure he was getting from prisoners, his mental health problems, and his need for protection. The psychologist said, "I don't think you need protection. What you need is God." Two other prisoners came into his cell and raped him. Afterward, guards wouldn't give him a grievance form when he asked for one. He wrote his grievance on plain paper instead. He sued the guards and the psychologist. The people he sued tried to get rid of the case through summary judgment.

Larry won in some ways, but lost in others. The court said that he had exhausted the administrative remedies available to him, so the defendants couldn't get rid of his case that way. The court also said there was enough evidence for a jury to find that the guards and psychologist were deliberately indifferent to the

risk he would get raped. His claim for intentional infliction of emotional distress also continued. But, the court said that there wasn't enough evidence to show that Larry was treated differently because of his gender or sexual orientation. The court also said that Larry's right to privacy hadn't been violated.

His case may now go to trial.

Lee v. Willey, CIV.A. 10-12625, 2012 WL 4009629 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 10, 2012) report and recommendation adopted, 10-12625, 2012 WL 4009766 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 12, 2012)

If you give me your heart
I will grant you a dream
If you give me your love
I'll be all that you need
I'll hold you close
Through the long, dark
nights
I'll protect you from all evils
And if you hurt I'll make you
feel alright
Please baby don't cry
Don't you dare shed a tear
You say happiness is what
you want babe
So happiness is what you'll
get, don't fear.

By Vellon

10 Years of History & Reflection,

a Q&A with SRLP Collective Member and Founder, Dean Spade

When and how did you get involved with SRLP?

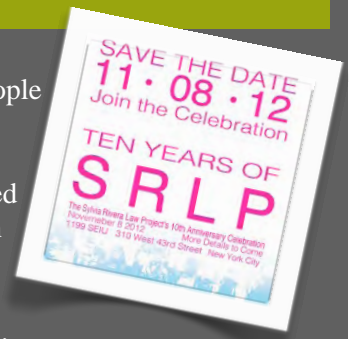
In 2002 I started the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. At first it was just a one-person project inside the Urban Justice Center. Immediately the community energy for the project was so big, and the need for services was so big, that I worked with a bunch of people to put together a steering committee that created the SRLP collective structure and spun the project into its own organization.

How did it go from an idea to an organization?

Basically, when I graduated from law school I was working in the Federal District Court clerking for a judge. This is something that law students are really encouraged to do--its supposed to be great experience. I knew I wanted to do work to address poverty, but I took this job because my mentors were all encouraging me that it was the best first step toward the work I wanted to do. I got there and realized it was definitely not for me--how could I be working for the US government, participating in cases that put people in prison, got people deported, or decided which of two wealth parties got money. It was *so* far from my values. Also, I started the job

SRLP 10

For the past 10 years SRLP has been providing legal services to hundreds of poor people & people of color facing homelessness, police violence, prison & immigration enforcement. We have been an active part of a vibrant movement aimed at building power for gender self-determination and community liberation. On November 8th, 2012 we celebrated this history and called for continued community support and participation. The contributions & experiences of the PAC were there with us on that night.



right near the World Trade Center. After 9/11 the patriotic racist fervor of the country, and inside the courthouse itself, was just awful. In February of that year, I got arrested trying to use a men's bathroom in Grand Central Station after leaving a day of protesting the World Economic Forum meetings. I had a terrible transphobic experience with my court-appointed attorney at my arraignment. My arrest was publicized by independent and activist media and I heard from people all over the country about similar experiences they were having with transphobia, bathrooms, cops and various sex-segregated spaces. I realized I wanted to create a poverty law project that would address the extreme harms that trans people face in so many systems--criminal, immigration, public benefits, education and more. I saw how huge the need was, how people were experiencing terrible conditions and not being able to get legal help. These are the things that led me to initially opening SRLP's doors, but the real ideas that fuel the organization weren't developed by me alone, they were

developed by the steering committee that formed in 2003 and all the collective members who have been part of SRLP since then. That's what's so great about the organization--it is a collaborative space where we all think together and create together, which makes what we create way more powerful and transformative than any one of us could be alone.

Why did you and/or other founding members choose to name the organization after Sylvia Rivera? Why was that important?

Sylvia Rivera died in 2002, the year the organization opened. I had the honor to speak at a rally with her earlier that year. She was very passionate about building a movement that centered anti-racism and anti-poverty activism. She'd seen how the gay and lesbian rights movement had transformed to exclude people of color, trans people and poor people and she was a loud voice of critique against that. Our work aims to mirror her vision, putting people who are facing the worst situations first.

Continued on next page...

Interview, ctd...

Are there parts of SRLP's work in the past or currently that make your heart beat faster?

I'm really excited that SRLP supports people locked up in psychiatric facilities. In the past few years, this part of our work has expanded. Mental health systems are brutally racist and transphobic and many trans and gender non-conforming people are trapped in those kinds of prisons, often very isolated and abused. SRLP is an organization that is known for its work on issues of trans imprisonment in criminal punishment prisons and perhaps immigration prisons, but I want a lot of people who care about those issues and concerns to realize that the same racist and abusive dynamics are happening in psychiatric prisons.

Over the past ten years, what positive changes and continuing challenges do believe tgnci communities are experiencing?



Dean Spade, September 2012

These are rough times. Its getting harder to survive if you're poor because even the crappy and inadequate programs and services that exist for poor people are being cut. Policing and immigration enforcement are having a bigger and bigger impact in people's lives, and there are less and less resources for survival. Obama is breaking records with the numbers of people his administration is deporting. We desperately need to be building strong movements to end prisons and borders, and trans people need to be loud in those movements, helping develop an understanding of how gender violence is a huge part of those systems.

How long were you a staff member at SRLP? What have you been up to since leaving the staff of SRLP?

I was a staff attorney at SRLP from 2002-2006. Since then I've remained a collective member, but my paid work is as a professor. My main job is at Seattle University School of Law, teaching classes like Poverty Law and Law and Social Movements. Right now I've got a two-year job at Columbia Law School in the Center for Gender and Sexuality Law.

Looking forward into the next ten years, what do you envision for the work of SRLP? I hope to see SRLP's membership grow so that we can take on more explicit campaigns to change government policies and

practices, not just through lawsuits and meetings with government officials, but also through turning out huge protests, collaborating with other membership based projects to throw wrenches in the workings of the violent systems that attack our communities. I am excited to see our capacity for large scale membership-based interventions grow.

I stay in this work because:

SRLP's collective model gives me more hope than almost anything. I love seeing people really working closely together, holding each other to our principles, facing enormous obstacles and being creative and thoughtful and generous and loving. In the world today, it can be hard to remember that this kind of trust and collaboration is possible, especially in communities under attack. But SRLP keeps proving that its not only possible, its actually what saves our lives.

One thing I learned from being involved with SRLP for 10 years is: Our relationships are what the movement is actually made.

Mi Negrito

By Ms. Synthia "Oshun-Remi" China Blast
Dedicated to Akili Nix,
Johnny Mojica, and to
all the Santeros,
Santeras, and
Babalawos.



He play congas
and panderas
he play ancestral tongues
through his hands:
their mouths drums:
their voice to mi gente:
hambre for self
Sediento for message
familyfightbackfindlovekeepkeepingon
Neverforgettingwhereyoucamefrom

he be Boricua
finest negrito this side of San Juan
he be muy inteligente
he got degrees
honoring legacy
got Clique, Clemente, Garifun, and Maroons
running strong through his veins
he so bad
he play the blues
in the plenas and the bombas

cuz
he be the rhythms
in a tone-death place
the magic
in a wonder-less place
the blackness
in a lily-white space
he be the Son of Oshun
Brother to Oya and Yemaya
as Warrior Shango

he dance the dance
called life
la vida
la vida
he say
yo soy morenito
del barrio
yo tengo la musica Afro-Puertoriqueno
with hands:
his corazon drums:
his alma
he feeds Ghana, Nigeria, and the Congo
to mi gente
ready for Sankofa
ready to fly
home.



Love Letters

In the last edition of In Solidarity, we asked the following:

When was the last time you wrote a love letter...

A love letter to yourself?

When was the last time you gave yourself permission to appreciate yourself? Thanked yourself for getting through the day, or gave yourself props for making it through challenging times.

As individuals and communities who face oppression, we're fed a lot of messages (not always positive ones) about who we are. So, who are we? In Solidarity encourages you to take a minute to step outside of yourself for a different prospective and show some love by writing yourself a love letter. Maybe the letter is something you keep to read at a later time, send to someone or get rid of it right away.

The point is, THIS is for you!
Here's to love, a truly
revolutionary act.

My Love Letter to Myself To my dearest Katherine Marie Brown (A.K.A Diamond) June 26, 2012

Dear Katherine,
I love the way that you keep strong through all the ordeals you have been through. No matter what

happens to you, you always have that smile "so beautiful" on your face. I admire the way that you handle yourself against all the discrimination that rises up against you. That poem that you wrote "A BRIGHTER TOMORROW WITH FRIENDS WHO CARES" and was published in December's In Solidarity through SRLP proves the strength that you have to carry on. SRLP must have loved it to, because it's in a copy of In Solidarity. Do you know that about sixty plus friends have a copy of In Solidarity? So all of them read your poem. That poem of yours I bet gave them all a feel of their hopes going up. They believe that tomorrow will be a brighter day for them. And Katherine, I know how you felt after you read your poem in the In Solidarity. You are so happy because for two reasons: 1) Is that you care for all the people in our way of life and you wanted to give their hopes a lift with that poem. 2) Is that you have never had anything in your whole life publish for a big group of people to read.

Katherine, do you remember your first copy of In Solidarity back in the fall of 2009? Do you remember the one story in there called "Know your place" by Kelly McTiernan. What did you do and say after you read her story? That's right, it was so powerful that you cried and made a vow that you will help fight for all

the GLBT individuals for their rights. You also said that you hope that one of these days, you would like to meet Kelly McTiernan, wrap your arms around her and tell her that she isn't alone anymore. She has sixty plus friends by her side now. I told you Katherine that one of these days you will meet her and tell her all of that. Go and find your fall 2009 copy of In Solidarity and read Kelly's story again like you do once in a while. Remember when you start feeling down, you grab that issue and read Kelly's story. After reading it, it makes you feel better.

Katherine, I think that you should send in that poem that a friend sent into you about a "Rainbow." I believe that all the volunteers and all PAC members at SRLP will like it. You submit it to In Solidarity. They will all like it.

Well Katherine Marie Brown, it's time for me to sign off for now. Just remember to always stay strong like you've been. And just concrete on getting out of prison and supporting your friends at SRLP and PAC members. Anything else worry about when you get home "which I know that home for you is hopefully in New York City with your friends." Also remember that I love you and admire you for your courage. Until next time! P.S. Submit that poem!

In Solidarity,
Katherine Brown

SRLP 10 Honors

Stefanie Rivera

To celebrate 10 years of SRLP, on November 8, 2012 we honored community advocates & artists whose efforts have increased the political leadership of low-income & people of color who are trans, gender nonconforming or intersex. In October, activist & journalist, Steven Ira sat down to talk with one of the SRLP 10 honorees, Stefanie Rivera.

"Some days you feel so stark." Stefani Rivera folds her hands. What does a radical look like? Rivera looks awfully respectable. What does a radical sound like? She sounds modest as all hell. "I come up in this building all the time on the elevator. I bet half of those kids up there don't know I'm a founding member of FIERCE." FIERCE, which works for the empowerment of queer youth of color in New York City, shares a building with the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, where Stefani has come in once a week at the least for the past five years. She does "whatever she can"—translates, handles the phones, takes someone down to the courthouse if they don't know the way or need a steady hand for support. But you won't find her preening over her work. "I just don't put myself out there like that." Rivera shrugs. No big deal. It's just not what she's about.

"Some days you feel so stark. You wake up and think, do I really want to be here?" Does she? She does. She's here, making the world less stark by making human connection happen in its starkest parts. Her baby at SRLP is their pen pal project—connecting

incarcerated trans people with pen pals to write to. They send letters with cartoons, anecdotes, serious conversation—reminders that the world does not end at prison walls.

"The people who are behind bars need to know that we have not forgotten them."

Rivera has fought against cages for years. She helped organize the Transforming Justice conference, making space for trans women who have experienced incarceration like Miss Major, for whom FIERCE and SRLP's building is named. She wants to remind incarcerated trans people that solidarity and community refuse cages; she wants to remind un-incarcerated people that the prison industrial complex others prisoners by disconnecting them. The prison industrial complex wants us to believe that prisoners do not have spouses, children, lovers, friends, parents. The toxic idea that imprisonment is the answer affects everyone, whether, as Rivera puts it, "you're inside or not."

Some days, the world is stark, and other times working the grain of that starkness can save us. When Rivera went to see the movie *The Crying Game* as a queer teen, the movie's (in)famous transmisogynistic twist was no twist for her—the shock of, "Oh my god, a trans woman!" only really works if you believe trans women aren't people—but it was for two older white ladies in the theatre.



As Rivera sat watching Dil's clothes come off, revealing a trans body, an old lady cried out, "Well, I never!"

"And I *lost* it!" Rivera cries out now, telling the story, both of us cracking up. "I didn't know that that was like, a thing real people *said*, not in movies!" A little later on she shakes her head, looks down, and says of the prison industrial complex, of racism, of transphobia, of all the stark parts of the world, "It's just stupid."

No part of the stupidity or starkness can be forgotten, and it can be illuminated. Who illuminates it? "The brightest of the bright sunshine," says Rivera of the woman who shared her last name, Sylvia. ("We used to joke about that.") These two Riveras knew one another, and of her and the other folks she's known through grassroots activism, she says bewilderedly, "I didn't expect to meet such wonderful people."

Well! I never!

RESOURCES

PEN PAL PROJECTS

Black and Pink

LGBT Prisoner pen pal program & monthly newsletter
c/o Jason Lydon
Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

Hearts on a Wire

Ending policing & imprisoning in trans communities. PA only.
P.O. Box 36831
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Reaching Beyond the Walls

Inmate pen pal website
P.O. Box 6905
Rutland, VT 05702-6905

TIG Pen Pal Project

For transgender, intersex and gender nonconforming prisoners
P.O. Box 1122
Portland, OR 97211

Write to Win

For IL prisoners only
2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647
(773) 262-2172

Queers Against Prisons-Philly

Grassroots prison abolitionist organizing
LGBTQ prisoners only
210 S. 49th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19139

Human Rights Coalition Fedup!

Prisoner resource and support
4134 Lancaster Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19104

TGI Justice Project

California only
342 9th Street, Suite 202B
San Francisco, CA 94103
415.252.1444

Inside/Out

NY State only
666 Broadway, Ste. 444
New York, NY 10012

Gender Mutiny Collective

PO Box 0494
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

NEWSLETTERS & MAGAZINES

T.I.P. Journal

Free Trans In Prison newsletter
Attn: Teeg
P.O. Box 404
Kittredge, CO 80457
Hotline: 303.586.1452

Justice Denied

Magazine for the wrongly convicted
P.O. Box 68911
Seattle, WA 98168

Prison Health News

Quarterly newsletter
c/o Institute for Community Justice
21 S. Locust Street, 7th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215.525.0461

POZ

POZ is a magazine about the HIV epidemic, including profiles and updates on treatment. It is published in English and Spanish and is free for people who cannot afford it.
500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 320,
New York, NY 10110

Pro Se

Prisoners' rights legal updates- NY State only
114 Prospect St.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Southland Prison News

Monthly Newsletter
East Coast Regional
PMB 339
955 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

OTHER PROGRAMS

Critical Resistance

Prison abolition organization
1904 Franklin St., Suite 504
Oakland, CA 94612

The Fortune Society

Community reentry program
26-76 Northern Blvd
Long Island City, NY 11101

Prison Book Program

Free books for prisoners
c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore
1306 Hancock St., Suite 100
Quincy, MA 02169

Locked Out

Resource list for LGBT prisoners
c/o Prison Book Project
PO Box 396
Amherst, MA 01004



By S. Torma

By April Walker



Darkness Falls

By Nicole Batts

Lost Word (Queen of Ice)

I chase my goals and my dreams such a futile effort.

Some people will be ready to accept that they have no purpose except to suffer and then to die, that is our destiny our reason for being well I refuse to accept that if I have to I will evolve into a fit being able to survive the pain of all human emotions.

How?

Well I'll become a being of inner ice and I will channel all human emotions
Sent my way into the calm rage that keeps me safe and sane.

I am fit for survival. "Derwin" says only the strong survive.

That is much better advice than the bible built on fantasy, I will be strong and it's not about where you are, it's about where you end
And I will adapt with ease because I am fit for survival.

I try to keep faith in the human race but once again it has proven to be useless.

Thus I return to being the queen of ice and no one may break down

The ice of my ice.

I am

By Ms. Isis Manning

Growing bright, for such beauty
Isn't an oversight
And what once was, is mostly gone now
As the saying goes "No one is Perfect"
Boys will be boys though
Against all odds growth came
And didn't want to leave
Hey, look at what I found?
Were the spoken words of an innocent soul
In everything I wanted to be
What was it that I couldn't find?
I guess mystery got the best of me
Opening all doors, walking and setting
the past free was the old me, who thought I'd
never mature?
Things are never still with growth
As it comes in many forms
And changes the way we hold regard
It's best to say that for me
It wasn't an easy task, nor a quick process
Thanks to the now clearly focused vision
I'd plunder no more
He'd always be the same – you watch and see
Is that life, sat back, and thought about me
As if these dreams could be written for score
Or to be re-lived and spoken out loud once
more
Hopefully you'd understand and greet
my triumph
No longer being an idle-minded boy
Being a grown man, with a purpose
and reason it's what
I am

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

- The fabulous & dedicated Prison Advisory Committee
- Those of you who support the voices & experiences of our incarcerated community members

With You, Not Without You



WHAT YOU HAVE TO SHARE IS IMPORTANT

In Solidarity accepts submissions on an ongoing basis. **While we may not always be able to get your work published**

in the following issue, we will work hard to publish it in future newsletters. We happily accept essays, articles, poems, drawings, short stories, art work, messages of hope & inspiration and letters from transgender, intersex, gender non-conforming people and our allies who are or were incarcerated. Please be sure mark your name clearly, on each page you submit.

PLEASE SEND YOUR WORK TO:

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project
In Solidarity Submissions
147 W 24th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10011

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Let us know what you would like to see in the next issue of IN SOLIDARITY... WRITE US!



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New York, NY 10011