

May-June 2019 – Inmates letters

I'm writing to give you a brief update on what's happening here on my dorm. Things are really and truly changing for the better, Mr. Ron. It's amazing how something as simple as a dormitory spread can't have the ability to change a man from the inside out. It's such a joy for a man to discover something deep within himself that he never knew he had. There are simply no words that can adequately describe the love that each of these men emanate towards one another on a day-to-day basis.

I've now come to realize Mr. Ron, that people can never give you what they have never received. Some people don't know how to give love because love has never been given to them. This bridge that you and your members provide for my dorm has enabled me to realize, know, and understand that the most hardened of criminals can be shown how to love in ways that words alone could never explain. We experienced that each day that passes.

Brothers on my dorm have taken the initiative to create their very own dorm spread in honor of the love and kindness that the members of your organization have shown to us! And we'd like to thank you guys for what you've started on our facility. We can't thank you enough my friend. Peace and harmony sir - that's what it's all about.

-Adrian Eleby

PS: Quick update on what's going on with the hygiene donations here on the Wynne Unit. Everything is moving according to plan. With the help of you and the loyal members of Roger's International Support Group I was fortunate enough to buy numerous tubes of toothpaste, soap, powder, lotion, deodorant etc. I still have a few items left. I'm taking care of business – honoring what you guys told me to do.

Everyone sends their love and appreciation to you and everyone involved in this very beautiful movement. Ron, sometimes I ask myself if you are heavenly sent for the sole purpose of helping others in need of support. It is such an honor and pleasure to have you guys so deeply involved in our situation. Your kindness and generosity towards us have enabled us to put aside our ethnic differences and has forced us to operate in Love, Peace and Harmony! We just can't thank you guys enough for what you all do for us.

-Adrian Eleby

Thanks for all you do for the guys and me. Honestly, for me "Thank you" seems too small a phrase to meet a generosity so grand, yet not even a thousand "Thank yous" could express a gratitude this great! In this way it seems that your kindness has not only captured my heart, but has conquered my language as well – for I am rendered speechless! "Thanks a lot Ron!" LOL!!

But seriously, you must know that it is both an honor and pleasure to share this connection with such like-minded hearts. We all embrace our duties and this opportunity (blessing) with a very high level of integrity and sincerity, which we express through the preparation and serving of our fellowship meals

We challenge ourselves and each other to grow, and in this way we are made better brothers, better people, and ultimately better chefs! LOL!! Each event is always better than the last one. So much so, that even would be adversities such as disgruntled officers and commissary complications all seem to dissipate in the wake of our movement.

How amazing it is to witness these brothers, separated by an assortment of differences made equal by kindness and appreciation! How blessed I am to be joined with my brothers

in their moments of great joy. Once more, my words defy me as a joy of this magnitude cannot be explained. Sadly, I am reduced to a simple "Thank you!"

-Lakim Guild

I just want to say thank you for the blessings you have given me. Without your organization's kindness and generosity I would be without hygiene and other needed things. I do not have a family nor friends out in the world to help me, so when I receive a JPay from you and your International Support Group I know that someone somewhere cares about me. It makes me feel like I'm not worthless.

- Michael Moose

Last night we did another spread and had probably the biggest turn out yet. It seems like anytime you have people spreading love, blessings, and just getting along, there's always some form of opposition somehow someway. We do things in an orderly fashion to where we have three tables that are set up in a row, and people can come straight down the line and then go take a seat. The capacity of the day room is 84 and there were over 100 people that turned out last night – so we had a line pretty much going around in a respectful manner. Even the officer in the block came to my little "Nacho table" with a big smile and said "Oh my God, that looks good - and it's a lot!" This time, I was able to more than double the meat I usually put out as well as add extra condiments. As usual, I got nonstop praise for the nachos! The other tables were able to step it up a notch as well and we definitely had enough food!

About halfway done serving, the lieutenant came and started screaming about sitting down and racking everyone up if we didn't sit down. This is probably the biggest anti-inmate officer we've got, but instead of putting a stop to it all, she allowed it to go on! No one was disrespectful, and no one shouted profanity - nothing. Which shows quite a bit about the environment that we have created. When all the food was gone, we cleaned up and the atmosphere was joyous, with countless handshakes, and expressions of "thank-you" and "God bless you!" I always make it a point to tell people to please not thank me, but thank God, because it's him working through other people that makes this possible. Once again, it was nothing short of a blessing and an amazing experience. I am always humbled by the feelings that overwhelm me every time I can help make this happen.

We greatly appreciate the love and generosity from you all. It has been the greatest blessing to be a part of this, and all of you are true examples of God working through people and answering prayers! There just are no words to describe the love and appreciation I feel for you all and all that you do. We love you!

-Edward Hughes

While I was incarcerated at the Wynn Unit I lost loved ones who had supported me financially, which made doing time bearable. Then death came upon them and I felt as if I did not have a friend in the world. I am a practicing Christian and my faith is what I leaned on. I've met some really good people in prison that would lift my spirits - which brings me to write this letter.

Caught totally off guard one evening, an inmate whom I only encountered on occasion, spoke to me in the chow hall on one of those days when the meal alone would break down your spirit. He said, "Hey Dave, how are you doing?" My response was, "I'm holding on." His response was, "My condolences to you and yours. I heard about the loss of your family

members." My response was, "Thank you. That means a lot." In prison, it's not every day you find other inmates showing sympathy! This particular guy went on to say, "I'm going to send you a gift!" And I said, "Oh yeah? What do you mean?"

He went on to explain how he was associated with a group of individuals who help guys while incarcerated by bringing them a ray of hope with a gift. Now mind you it has never happened to me while incarcerated during 15 years, that anyone would give you anything without asking for something in return.

Now this ray of hope became real to me letting me know that there are people, total strangers, that don't know me from the man in the moon, so to speak who actually care! That God has angels in place (for real!) – that he has people about his business, working, showing love, bringing joy to one's heart.

Under the circumstances of incarceration, this Angel told me that I would receive a JPay deposit in my name, after giving him my information. Now, mind you, I have never received a JPay in my life. To receive one, as I did, telling me a deposit was made on my behalf... I had no choice, it brought me to my knees thanking God with the tears for the people he used to bring that joy. His Angel was "Roger W McGowen – a.k.a. "Rock!" He did not know me, and to this day I think he only knew me briefly. But the kind gesture will live in my mind and heart for the rest of my life, letting me know that there is a God who cares, and that he is using people who care: His angels spreading his love, giving guys who are incarcerated a ray of hope!

To those that are involved, "Thanks!" I was released from prison in January and If I can be of any help to continue the work, I too wish that work would be available to me. This is the influence that the gift from you all had on me!

-David Bolas

I want to share with you how the spread went and how it really created a lot of brothers in here, and how it has changed my life for the better. First and foremost, on behalf of the Wynne Unit I would like to say thanks to all the brothers and sisters who have help to provide the funds for the spread. You all just don't know what this really means to us! By you all showing love to this unit, it has brought a lot of people together. At one point of time no race could eat with another race. But now, all you see is smiles when we sit all together with one another and enjoy the good food. What really touched me was when this 70-something-year-old man was almost in tears because he said he hadn't felt this much love in years. Not only that, but he hadn't been to Commissary in years. So for me to bring him some food, let him know that some still care for him.

Brother Ron, to be honest with you I have been through some bad things and those things caused me to lose my way in life I was just living my life from day to day and not caring about anyone but myself. I never had any responsibility to do my best. I don't have any children and I've never been married and remain single.

So, going from not having any responsibility to being the one that is over my cell block to make sure the spread goes right, turned that light back on in my heart that was out. I've been incarcerated for six years now, and by you all doing this for us really put a new outlook on life for me. Even though my family is not here for me, I still make it my business to help others even if it is just a hug or a warm smile.

The only two things that keep me sane are 1. God, and 2. helping with the spread every month. Doing the spread gives me something to look forward to. Seeing the brothers smiling faces around here bring something out of me that I thought had died a long time ago, and that is love, hope, joy, peace and happiness. Brother Ron, I would love to keep

this going once I am free. Back home, I never gave myself a chance. All my life I've been a failure and that's something I just don't want to be anymore.

I know I won't be locked up in prison forever, and I really would like to keep this going when I get out. Ron, thank you so much. Now I can shine my light through me to others. Between you and me, I believe I have finally found my purpose in this old world! When you get this letter, just smile – because that's what you're doing for a lot of brothers. And again, thanks so much to you all!

-Demarcus Osborn

I want to thank you guys for your support. You have truly motivated change in my life in more ways than one. Ron, "Rock" is truly a motivational person. Just being around him is a life-changing blessing. I can't explain it in detail, yet, he gave me something of myself back. Something that I had lost. God knows what you guys are doing is truly amazing! Since being moved to the Goree Unit, I miss him. When I felt down all I had to do was see him, and I'd say to myself, "Man, quit tripping. You control your happiness!"

-Samson Winn