



Baroness Celia Thomas and Lovisa Stannow.

**W**HEN WE ASKED OUR SUPPORTERS to send a greeting to a survivor over the holidays, we expected many wonderful notes. What we did not anticipate was receiving 1,700 of them, nor the outpouring of compassion that these messages contained.

As JDI staff prepared to mail your greetings to prisoners across the country, we found ourselves reading them out loud to each other. We marveled at the capacity of people to care so deeply for the well-being of others — of fellow human beings they have never met.

I am not exaggerating when I say that every one of you who sent a holiday message helped transform another person's life, injecting some love and joy into the bleakness of prison.

In the ten years since I joined JDI, the diversity and impact of this movement has been ever-growing, in the U.S. and beyond. A few weeks ago, I had a chance to discuss prisoner rape over tea and scones at the British House of Lords. Baroness Cecil Thomas of Winchester agreed that not enough is known about the situation in UK prisons and offered to submit questions to the government.

Prisoner rape is an international human rights crisis — but it's a crisis we can end. Thank you for helping us do that.

Lovisa Stannow  
Executive Director

## What Your Words Meant: Giving Hope Behind Bars

*Survivors of Prisoner Rape Draw Inspiration, Courage from the Words of JDI Supporters*

**F**or survivors of prisoner rape, letters from those on the outside are a lifeline. Often desperate and alone, inmates find comfort and strength in the words of loved ones, friends, and even people they have never met. This is particularly true during the holiday season, a time when the loneliness of prison life can feel overwhelming.

For the past two years, JDI has asked its supporters to send holiday cards to people who have been sexually abused behind bars. In 2010, over 600 supporters wrote messages of hope and encouragement to incarcerated survivors. Amazingly, last year that number almost tripled; more than 1,700 JDI supporters sent personal,

heartfelt greetings to survivors of prisoner rape. Nick, a young activist who only recently became involved with JDI, wrote, "I may not know you, but know that I care. I hope I can give you a smile."

These compassionate messages made a difference. Indeed, they saved lives. In the first days of 2012, JDI was flooded with responses from survivors expressing how much your words meant to them. One of them was Ca'Linda, a 28-year-old woman who is serving time in Kentucky for a nonviolent offense. She wrote to JDI last month to express her appreciation: "You told me to remember that my life matters, no matter where I lay my head at night, and that you are out there fighting for all of us rape survivors."

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*I just want to give my sincere gratitude to JDI supporters for their words of encouragement, which are priceless to me and fill my spirit with joy. Holidays can be sad in a place like this, but with great supporters I will never be by myself, sad or lost.*

*Rafael, a 46-year-old man who was sexually abused multiple times by staff at a New York prison, expresses his heartfelt thanks to JDI supporters for their holiday cards. More than 1,700 JDI supporters wrote messages of hope to incarcerated survivors.*

## *Bipartisan Congressional Briefing* **JDI Demands Greater Protection for Immigration Detainees**

**A**T A HISTORIC Congressional briefing in December, JDI delivered an urgent message to the government: all detainees have the right to be safe, no matter what agency happens to hold them. The bipartisan briefing challenged the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) position that immigration facilities are not covered under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

"Most Americans would agree that immigration detainees, the majority of whom have committed no crime, should have the same protections from sexual abuse as other prisoners. The widespread sexual abuse in immigration detention, most often committed by the government officials we pay to keep detainees safe, must end now," said Chris Daley, JDI's Deputy Executive Director.

Witnesses at the briefing — which was hosted by JDI, Congressmen Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Frank Wolf (R-VA), former members of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission, and other allied organizations — refuted the claims by the DHS that its internal policies to prevent sexual abuse are sufficient to ensure the safety of immigration detainees. In particular, Representative Scott made clear that Congress always intended PREA to apply to immigration detention facilities.

If PREA protections are not applied to DHS facilities, the agency will be left to regulate itself. JDI staff highlighted the horrific consequences of this outcome at the briefing. Senior Program Director Cynthia Totten read testimony from Esmeralda Soto, a transgender woman from Mexico who was sexually abused by a DHS official while being held at a California immigration facility. After reporting her abuse, Soto was subjected to retaliation and pressured to recant her story, which she courageously did not.

Since the briefing, in a move applauded by JDI and its allies, the Government Accountability Office — Congress's internal watchdog — announced in February that it will investigate sexual abuse in immigration detention centers. The investigation was prompted by Congressional concern following multiple official reports of abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender detainees filed by the National Immigrant Justice Center.

"If we are ever going to end the crisis of sexual abuse in immigration detention facilities, we must force DHS to follow Congressional intent by fully implementing PREA," said Daley. "The hundreds of thousands of detainees who pass through DHS facilities each year deserve no less."

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## **Welcome, Gwyn Smith-Ingley**

**J**DI is delighted to announce the hiring of Gwyn Smith-Ingley, former Executive Director of the American Jail Association (AJA), as Senior Program Director. With nearly 25 years of experience in the corrections field, Smith-Ingley will help lead JDI's rapidly expanding programs in U.S. prisons and jails.

Prior to working at AJA, Smith-Ingley served as Executive Director of the National Correctional Industries Association and worked as a legislative liaison at the American

Correctional Association. A respected policy analyst who has written extensively about criminal justice issues, in her new role Smith-Ingley will work directly with prison and jail officials to prevent sexual abuse in detention.

"It's an honor to be part of JDI, an organization I have long admired," said Smith-Ingley. "Responsible corrections officials and JDI have the same goal — making prisons and jails as safe as possible. At JDI, I look forward to helping make that goal a reality."

## **With JDI's Help, Texas Youth Facilities Fight Abuse**

**F**OR DECADES, TEXAS has been one of the most dangerous states for detainees. Many of its corrections leaders have adopted an adversarial stance toward advocates, allowing fear of liability and public embarrassment to trump concern for the safety of inmates.

One of the most notorious examples was the Texas Youth Commission (TYC). In 2007, the TYC was rocked by scandal when it was revealed that systemic abuse of youth in its custody had been occurring — and had been covered up — for years. JDI was one of many groups that openly criticized the TYC for its disgraceful failure to prevent its staff from raping children.

At that time, few would have predicted that the TYC would one day welcome the idea of working with JDI to prevent abuse. Yet last November JDI was part of a team that traveled to Texas to provide training to juvenile justice officials on how to work with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth — some of the kids who are at the highest risk for sexual abuse.

The transformation that has begun in Texas has been dramatic, both structurally and in terms of culture change. On December 1, 2011 the TYC, which had run state facilities, and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC), which had run local facilities, merged into a new agency, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD). Cherie Townsend, the former head of the TYC and a champion in the effort to protect the safety of youth detainees, became the TJJD's Executive Director.

Texas is concrete proof that drastic shifts in prison culture can take place, even at facilities with a history of widespread abuse. Passionate and responsible leaders who are willing to collaborate are able to make detention facilities safer. "As we work to ensure the sexual safety of youth and to provide expanded opportunities for rehabilitation and successful re-entry, we have come to appreciate and value the role of helpful advocates, such as JDI," said Townsend.



*Clockwise from left: Ca'Linda (sexually assaulted by staff in two facilities) with her daughter, in 2002; John (raped twice in a Texas prison); and Andrew (sexually assaulted by his cellmate in a Texas prison).*

## Hope Behind Bars *continued from page 1*

Other survivors expressed similar sentiments:

*I recently received the holiday greeting cards and I appreciate them more than anyone can imagine! I really appreciate you and the supporters for everything ya'll do. Knowing someone cares about me and what I've been through really helps the painful situation.*

– Andrew, who was sexually assaulted by his cellmate in a Texas prison

*I go much of my current existence without communication with other people. I know you all probably wrote dozens of cards to strangers all over the country. Yet, the little notes you wrote brought tears to my eyes and I thank you.*

– John, who has been raped twice in a Texas prison

The struggles of survivors like Ca'Linda, John, and Andrew are not over. After being attacked by a corrections officer five years ago, Ca'Linda was transferred to a new facility, only to be assaulted again — and again. Despite her brave efforts to report the abuse, her second attacker, also a corrections officer, still works at the prison.

But your letters have given Ca'Linda the courage to continue to stand up against sexual abuse in prison — and to fight on behalf of other survivors. She wrote, “Knowing that someone who doesn't know me cares enough to take a stand in this fight for justice inspires me to do the same. Once my time here expires, I hope to give someone at least half as much comfort as your cards gave me. Thank you.”

## More Survivor Quotes

*I can't remember the last time anything has ignited so much emotion and joy, but you guys truly have lifted my spirits and made this most difficult time of year a bit easier to bear.*

– Jeremy, sexually abused by other inmates and corrections officials

*Your cards helped me stay positive and warm in a cold and bleak landscape, and knowing that I'm not alone in this struggle gives me fortitude and the courage to go on.*

– Natalie, beaten and sexually assaulted after staff placed her in a cell with a known rapist

*I know none of these fine people, yet someone did send me something simple, yet very meaningful — a simple card which put a smile in my heart behind these cold walls.*

– Alezander, sexually assaulted many times while incarcerated

*The cards and letters like those you sent me give me the hope I need to carry on.*

– Roderick, repeatedly assaulted by gang members while serving time

## Top Score from Charity Navigator

For the second consecutive year, JDI has been awarded four stars by Charity Navigator, its highest possible mark. The nation's largest evaluator of non-profit organizations, Charity Navigator bases its grades on financial health, accountability, and transparency — all values that JDI strives to uphold.

JDI ensures that each dollar it raises is spent as efficiently as possible, with 87 percent of funds going directly to program work, including training in prisons and jails, outreach to prisoner rape survivors, and public awareness campaigns. JDI is committed to protecting the privacy of its supporters and never sells or trades the personal information of its donors.

To learn more about how you can support JDI's work, please visit our website: [www.justdetention.org](http://www.justdetention.org).

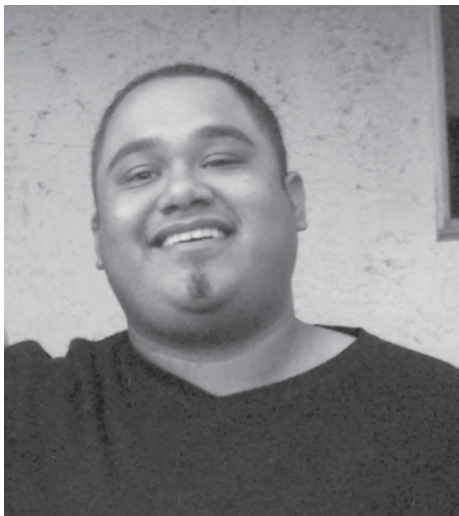
# “People used to joke about sexual abuse. They don’t anymore.”

*Inmates Educate One Another on How to Stop Prisoner Rape*

JDI, along with responsible corrections officials, works inside prisons and jails across the country to educate inmates and staff on how to prevent and respond to sexual abuse. But it is not just JDI staff and other advocates who are fighting to end this violence — some of the best educators are inmates themselves.

In 2010, JDI launched an inmate peer education program at the California Correctional Institution (CCI). This initiative has led to a dramatic culture shift at the prison: gay and transgender people tell JDI that the levels of harassment are decreasing, while staff speak about an equally noticeable change in staff attitudes toward inmate reports of sexual abuse. Jodi Ramirez, a Health Program Specialist at CCI and the staff sponsor of the project, calls peer education “the fastest way to change the culture of the yard.”

Recently JDI spoke with a few of CCI’s peer educators to get their views on the program, and what it has meant to them and fellow inmates.



*A peer educator at the California Correctional Institution, which has seen a drastic culture shift in attitudes toward rape.*

**JDI:** What changes have you seen in the yard since the inmate peer education program began?

**CJ:** People used to joke about sexual abuse. They don’t anymore.

**DAVID:** The yard has changed a lot. Some inmates used to see sexual abuse as something that was just uncomfortable, but people started loosening up and realizing this is something we need to talk about. Now people are eager to come to the classes.

**JDI:** What made you want to be a part of this program?

**CJ:** Me personally, I don’t like bullies. I want to help any way I can and I like a challenge. This is a challenge. If I can make a difference in one life, it’s worth it. I like to give people information that changes their minds. And doing this work has opened my eyes to the myths about sexual abuse.

**DAVID:** I’ve never been a victim of sexual abuse, but I can see that rape survivors are hurting and deserve help. Providing information that can actually prevent sexual abuse makes me feel good at the end of the day.

**JDI:** How will the adoption of the national standards mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act affect your work?

**CJ:** First off, the standards will back up what we say and make sure staff do what they say they are going to do. There are a lot of things in the national standards that can really help people, but because they aren’t signed, it’s still too tenuous, a dream.

**DAVID:** I think that it’s extremely important for the standards to be signed. We’re building a foundation here, but it is still only groundwork. Without the standards, the program can’t expand to help other institutions.

## Thank you, Congressman Wolf

Last month Frank Wolf (R-VA) issued an urgent message to Attorney General Eric Holder: finalize national standards addressing prisoner rape. Speaking at a House Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, the Republican Congressman and co-sponsor of the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) made reference to the many lives that have been affected by the lack of federal standards:

“I’ve talked to people who have been raped in prison. [PREA] passed in 2003. It was signed by President Bush. This was one of the few times I ever went to the Oval Office for a bill signing — because I cared about it. That’s nine years. There have been a lot of bad things that have happened to a lot of people during that period of time. We really have to finish this thing.”

Congressman Wolf also pressed the Attorney General on the issue of immigration detention facilities, which were not covered in the Department of Justice’s 2011 draft standards, contrary to the explicit intent of Congress. JDI applauds Congressman Wolf for his remarkable dedication to ending sexual abuse in detention; hundreds of JDI supporters wrote the Congressman directly to thank him.

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