

ACTION UPDATE

APRIL 2015

THE COUNTY JAIL IN San Antonio, Texas, holds an infamous place in JDI's history. In 1968, an activist named Tom Cahill was brutally gang raped at the jail, after his arrest at an anti-war rally. Tom's attackers were other inmates, but it was staff — the people there to protect him — who orchestrated the assault.

Tom was devastated by the abuse, but he channeled his pain into powerful, effective advocacy. As JDI's President, he built a national movement of people committed to ensuring that no person would ever have to suffer as he did. The pinnacle of Tom's activism was the



passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which called for the creation of national standards that are changing the culture of prisons and jails today.

It is a powerful symbol of Tom's legacy that JDI is helping to implement the PREA standards in Bexar County, Texas, which runs the very jail where Tom was raped nearly 50 years ago. Today, the jail staff take their jobs seriously, and the thought of setting up an inmate to be sexually assaulted is an affront to their professional integrity.

With your help, JDI is making a huge difference in the lives of inmates. But we are going to keep fighting until we achieve nothing less than an end to prisoner rape everywhere.

Lovisa Stannow
Executive Director

"Give PREA a Try — It Works"

JDI Helps Turn Miami-Dade's Jails into a National Model

WHEN JDI BEGAN WORKING with the Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department (MDCR) to establish rape crisis services for inmates, it may have seemed idealistic to expect that the project would succeed. MDCR's jail system was broken, sexual violence widespread. Worse still, some officials did not think it was their job to address the problem. "Many staff thought sexual abuse was just part of being in jail," explained Lieutenant Wynnie Testamark-Samuels.

That was in 2011, when JDI and MDCR started working together, with funding from the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). Fast forward to today and MDCR staff paint a differ-

ent picture. "This project has brought a new focus to our work. It has made everyone look at themselves in the mirror. We were not asking the right questions before, not noticing obvious signs that someone might be at risk of abuse," said Lieutenant Jan C. Smith. "We are not just guards, we are professionals, and we must behave as professionals."

It wasn't easy in the beginning, however. "Many of the jail staff considered us adversaries simply because we were outsiders. At first, some officers were overtly hostile," said JDI Deputy Executive Director Linda McFarlane. "But MDCR's leaders recognized that the old way of doing things wasn't working. Pretty soon, line staff also started to see that inmate safety and good corrections are one and the same."

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Two senior MDCR staff members — Captain Enrique Rodriguez (left) and Assistant Director Daniel Junior — show compassion for rape survivors by writing Words of Hope holiday cards.

PREA in Action, Even in Texas

Culture Change Key to Creating Safe Prisons and Jails

IN 2014, FORMER TEXAS Governor Rick Perry rejected the PREA standards. To justify his decision, Perry argued that the standards would never work in Texas.

Today, JDI is proving that Perry was dead wrong.

In Texas's Bexar County, JDI joined forces last year with the sheriff's department to protect jail inmates from sexual abuse. The partnership's success shows that, contrary to Perry's claims, PREA compliance is not a pipe dream. All it takes is some hard work and common sense.

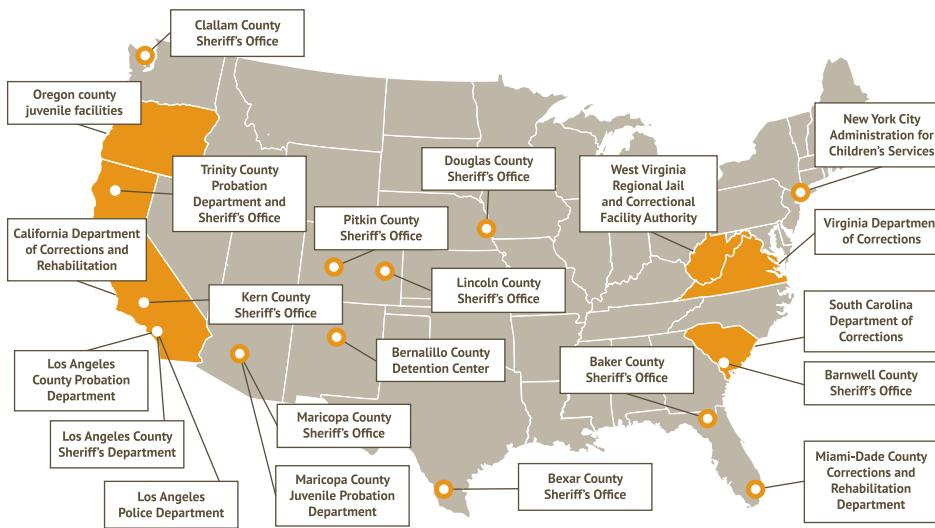
With JDI's help, Bexar County has adopted pivotal reforms that are having an impact on staff culture and improving the safety of its jail. Most notably, the county set up a free, confidential hotline for inmates to get help — one of only a handful of counties nationwide to have done so. Last year, Bexar County passed its PREA audit.

JDI's project with Bexar County is one of many trailblazing partnerships nationwide. Last year, JDI worked with the Clallam County jail in Washington, the state prison system in South Carolina, and the Los Angeles Police Department. In 2015, JDI is collaborating with an equally diverse mix of agencies, launching projects in jails in Maricopa County (Arizona), Los Angeles County, and throughout West Virginia, as well as state prisons in Virginia.

Whether working in a tiny jail, like the one in Aspen, Colorado, or one of the largest jail systems in the world, like the one in Los Angeles, JDI emphasizes that dedicated corrections officials can — and must — keep inmates safe. "Every single inmate has a right to be safe, in all detention settings. Even one sexual assault is one too many. Having said that, it's especially exciting to see large, complex agencies, like the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, commit to PREA," said Lovisa Stannow, JDI's Executive Director.

MAKING CHANGE ON THE INSIDE

JDI works inside state prisons, local jails, police lockups, and juvenile facilities to implement PREA. The map below shows JDI's partner agencies in the U.S. over the past year.



Miami-Dade Jails

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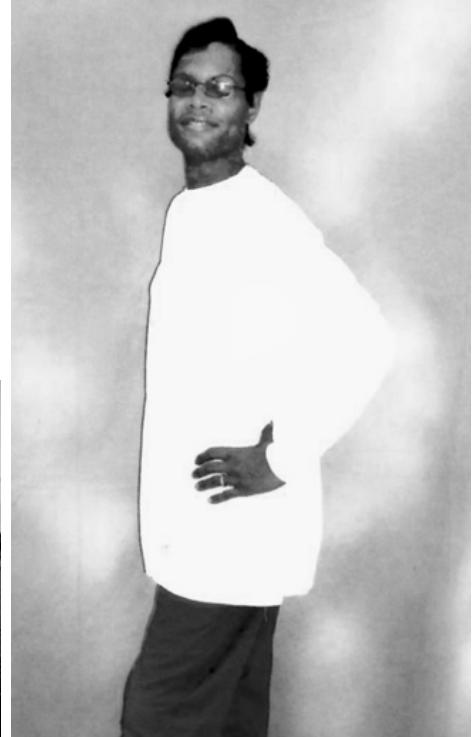
The shift in staff attitudes helped pave the way for much-needed reform. Using the PREA standards as a baseline, MDCR worked with JDI to create a hotline for inmates to report sexual abuse, and to set up confidential rape crisis services for survivors — provided by community-based counselors. JDI helped train MDCR staff on effective communication with inmates who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Policies and practices were updated throughout the jail system.

Corrections officer Pamela Stewart, who works in classification, described how PREA has made her and her colleagues change the way they do their jobs: "We had to train staff to slow down. In the past, the guy you were interviewing may have been crying, but you didn't notice, because you never looked up. You never looked at the person sitting in front of you."

The deep change that has occurred in Miami depends on a commitment from the top. When faced with data showing very high levels of abuse at his jail, MDCR's now-retired Director, Tim Ryan, decided to bet on PREA. "PREA has set the stage for a new world," he said. "Miami-Dade is part of that new world and proud to hold hands with others set on the same path." Testamark-Samuels echoed Ryan's sentiment: "Give PREA a try — it works. Miami-Dade runs the eighth largest jail in the country. If we can do it, so can you."

Today, MDCR's PREA program stands as a nationwide model. JDI, with OVC's support, is producing a resource guide to help other communities replicate Miami's successes. In Miami, the fear of outsiders has been replaced by a desire to work with local organizations. Staff see the value of having beliefs and practices challenged. Training Officer Sanya Houston said, "JDI made us all change. Sometimes jail staff forget that inmates are human beings, but the JDI team wouldn't let us. JDI shocked us, molded us, and praised us. And it worked."

Through *Words of Hope*, JDI Supporters Inspire, Heal, and Save Lives — Thank You!



Through the Words of Hope holiday card campaign, JDI supporters made a profound difference in the lives of prisoner rape survivors. Among the many survivors whose lives you touched are (clockwise from left) Milo, Cindy, Winter, and Rafael.

PRISON LIFE CAN be unbearably isolating, especially during the holiday season. Many incarcerated survivors have told JDI that they feel more alone at this time of year than at any other.

Through JDI's *Words of Hope* campaign, however, survivors have reclaimed the holidays as a time for celebration. This remarkable campaign is simple and powerful, and it is based entirely on the compassion of people like you. Since 2011, many JDI supporters have written countless holiday greetings to survivors who are locked up, as part of *Words of Hope*.

This year, you proved yet again that you care deeply about survivors, writing thousands of *Words of Hope* messages. The kindness and warmth in these greetings meant everything to the people who received them. One survi-

vor, Milo, explained that the cards provided a sense of comfort that had long been missing from his life inside an Idaho prison. He wrote, "I received the cards and learned that people from all over have come into my heart, without even knowing me, to share their love, encouragement, and strength. You could not have known, my dear friends, how alone I have felt, but your cards came as a wonderful present, a gift of true love and friendship."

Many other survivors echoed Milo's feelings. Rafael, a survivor in a New York prison who has been getting *Words of Hope* cards since 2012, was filled with gratitude for your messages. He told JDI, "Every year, I feel like a child who waits anxiously for Christmas Day to open his present. I am extremely grateful for all the encouraging words — words that bring tranquility, energy, and inspiration. You and your supporters have become family to

me. Thank you for setting me free and making me feel worthy."

Another survivor who expressed profound appreciation for the cards is Winter. A transgender woman held in a men's prison in Pennsylvania, Winter was raped by another inmate, her sense of worth shattered. She was disconnected from the outside world — until she got your messages. She wrote, "I cried like a baby when I received all of the beautiful cards from all of you. Throughout my incarceration, I have been estranged from my family and just knowing I have your love gives me hope and strength to achieve my goals and help others who have become victims of sexual abuse."

Thank you so much for sharing your compassion with Milo, Rafael, Winter, and so many others!

Too Many Inmates, Too Few Staff

New Report: Violence Plagues South Africa's "Sun City" Prison

WHEN ONE SINGLE OFFICER is responsible for 400 inmates, when lights don't work, buildings are decrepit, and gangs are allowed to run the show, it's no surprise that violence flourishes — nor that staff morale is at rock bottom. That's the scenario powerfully described in JDI-South Africa's groundbreaking new research report, *In Their Boots*.

Focused on the situation inside Johannesburg Correctional Management Area, also known as "Sun City," *In Their Boots* highlights serious and systemic problems that endanger staff and inmates alike. Sun City is one of South Africa's most notorious prisons and the report is based on interviews with front-line staff, managers, and inmates.

Considering the dramatic content of *In Their Boots*, it came as a pleasant surprise that Department of Correctional Services (DCS) officials not only attended the January 2015 launch event, but were receptive to the report's findings. As one high-ranking official remarked, "You shouldn't break a mirror just because you don't like what it shows you."

As *In Their Boots* makes clear, Sun City staff are ill-equipped to keep prisoners safe, lacking both resources and training. Staff speak about the twin problems of inmate over-

crowding and understaffing, and about the fear and anxiety that pervade their every work shift. They make clear that they want to do the right thing, but that they have not been given the necessary tools and guidance by their superiors to succeed. "When you put on the uniform, you don't know whether you will be going back home or you will be taken to the hospital," said one officer.

While staff undoubtedly face hardship at Sun City, prisoners endure far worse. *In Their Boots* illustrates the appalling conditions in the facility. One account describes a young inmate, Obed, who was sexually abused by an older gang member over a period of several months. Staff did not have the skills to detect the abuse earlier — nor were they able to provide Obed with support once they knew what happened. One officer said, "What is it that we are going to say that will make Obed feel like a man again? I am not trained to do that."

Although *In Their Boots* is sometimes scathing in its assessment of DCS, the report's intent is not to point fingers. Rather, JDI-SA's primary aim in issuing *In Their Boots* is to offer solutions and to stimulate real and enduring change inside South Africa's prisons.

To download the report, visit: bit.ly/1arfew



Standing Up for Detained Children

THANK YOU, JDI SUPPORTERS, for taking action to help defend the rights of immigrant children. Last month, hundreds of people like you signed JDI's letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), demanding strong protections for the thousands of immigrant kids in its custody.

The letter was in response to HHS' release of interim standards mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act. The interim standards are strong, but they need to be even better. By joining this campaign, JDI supporters sent a clear message to HHS that people care about the right of all children to be safe from sexual abuse.

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