



BREAKING NEW GROUND:
**DADDY-DAUGHTER
DANCE**

The ECHO is a criminal justice publication produced by the publisher and staff for use by those confined within the TDCJ. Submissions and letters may be sent via regular mail to:

The ECHO
 c/o Windham Admin. Bldg.
 P.O. Box 40
 Huntsville, TX 77342-0040.

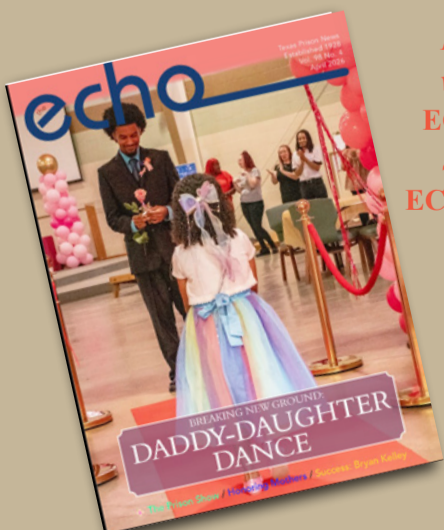
Permission is granted for the reproduction of non-copyrighted materials, provided credit is given to author and publication. Due to the volume of submitted material, unused material will NOT be returned to the sender. The publisher reserves the right to edit all materials for content and space. Any references to Internet sources have been provided by Windham employees.

Annual subscriptions to *The ECHO* can be purchased for \$12. Money orders or personal checks must be made out to *The ECHO*/Windham and sent to:

The ECHO
 Attn: Subscriptions
 P.O. Box 40
 Huntsville, TX 77342-0040

ISSN 1530-7298

Find the digital versions of *The ECHO* online by searching: *The ECHO* newspaper at Windham's website: wsdtx.org.



the echo

MANAGEMENT

Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S.
Superintendent / Publisher

Bambi Kiser
Managing Editor

Blair Dupre
Assistant Managing Editor

STAFF

Todd Carman

William Hill

Ashley Morrison

Fabian Flores

Pricila Maumalanga

Kelly Roddy

Robert Gonzales

Robert Morgan

Joshua Schnizer

CONTRIBUTORS

Jesse Castillo—Briscoe Unit
 Ashley Dack—O'Daniel Unit
 Robert Fridell—Roach Unit
 Brandon Hayes—Wynne Unit
 Lisa Jackson—O'Daniel Unit

Daniel Meehan—Connally Unit
 James Noer—Hightower Unit
 Andrew Reynolds—Wynne Unit
 Tim Scoggin—Wynne Unit
 Vincent Smith—Wynne Unit

UNIT REPORTERS

Allred Unit—Patricio Sevillano
 Bartlett Innovative Unit—Phillip Lockhart
 Beto Unit—Josue Garcia-Morales
 Boyd Unit—Joseph Dauben
 Bridgeport—Shawn Zabick
 Clemens Unit—Lawrence Burks Jr.
 Clements Unit—Johnny Wooten
 Coffield Unit—Mark Brock
 Coleman Unit—Cheryl Jackson
 Crain Unit—Rhonda Orr
 Dalhart Unit—Patrick Bentley
 Diboll Unit—Robert Jones
 Dominguez Unit—Fernando Garcia
 Ellis Unit—Daniel Lagrone
 Estelle Unit—Ervin Kay
 Ferguson Unit—Adam Eannarino
 Fort Stockton Unit—Jaime Stewart
 Goree Unit—Patrick Russo
 Hodge Unit—Wyatt Proud
 Hughes Unit—Toby Rod
 Huntsville Unit—Bryan Horton
 Luther Unit—James Swarhout

Lynaugh Unit—Jose Ramos
 McConnell Unit—Cody Davis
 Mechler Unit—LaWarren Davis
 Michael Unit—Tommy Harrell
 Montford Unit—Jason Ishee
 O'Daniel Unit—Misty Weaver
 Pack Unit—Walter Lindberg
 Polunsky Unit—Robert Arroyo
 Powledge Unit—Josh Garrison
 Ramsey Unit—Juan Munoz
 Ramsey Unit—Quincy Patterson
 Roach Unit—Jose Martinez
 Robertson Unit—Gabriel Esquivel
 San Saba Unit—Jay Morgan
 Smith Unit—Harvey Hodo
 Stevenson Unit—William Bondurant
 Stevenson Unit—Landon Brook
 Stiles Unit—Arthur Sterns
 Stringfellow Unit—Damion Faulkner
 Torres Unit—Stephen Unger
 Wainwright Unit—Thomas Bradley

SUPPORTED BY



C contents

Vol. 98 No. 4 / April 2026

departments

Letters to the Editor	04
Dear Darla	04
Dear Darby	05
Opinion	06
Success Story: Bryan Kelley	19
Creative Writing	25
Art Expo Special	41
Poetry Corner	43



pg. 12

pg. 29

features



pg. 22

Honoring Mothers	09
Success Story: Bryan Kelley	19
Prison Show Expands Coverage	22
Lace Up	29
Highlight: Chuck Norris	39

Letter to the Editor

Bambi Kiser | Managing Editor

The ECHO
c/o Windham Admin. Bldg.
P.O. Box 40
Huntsville, TX 77342-0040



To the editor,

I would like to appreciate each and every person that contributes to *The ECHO*, from management to resident contributors. There are a number of reasons for writing this letter. First, I want to give you some insight into what I do and what I am trying to create while incarcerated. As an upcoming inspirational author, I want to introduce you to the second book project I have been working on for two years. It is a whole book, but at the same time, I wrote it in a creative way that could be turned into a program for residents. I call it “Gardening Tactics,” and it is broken down into two parts, which are self-recovery and relational recovery. Each part consists of its own guidelines and steps to recovery using the Bible and great stories drawn from mythology. This leads me to my second purpose during the creation of my work. I call it a true and divine message from God. I am was working on the relational recovery part of my book, when I saw a lone issue of *The ECHO* lying on the dayroom table. I picked it up with the sole intention of being entertained, but I was soon engrossed by an article. As background, in my book I use the African myth story

of Isis and Osiris as a script to create a healing paradigm for all relationships. The goal of “Gardening Tactics” is to learn how to uproot, plow, sow and plant seeds of a real garden and to replicate that to our own bodies. We have to uproot the weeds of bad characteristics out of the hardened soil and sow seeds from the fruit of the spirit, as mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 and Philippians 1:11. The issue of *The ECHO* I picked up on that fateful day had an article titled “The Science of Story: How Stories Shape Our Mind,” written by staff writer Elkanah Hendrix. I was so enlightened by that article because I had literally used mythology to facilitate recovering relationally. I knew that story could revive the spirit, but Elkanah gave me the science on how and why the story is able to do it. To me, it was a divine detour for me to be at the right place at the right time. I will forever mention him in my work.

Korrinn McGruder
Bradshaw Unit

To the reader,

We are glad that our content has helped you on your writing journey. Elkanah Hendrix has returned to his home community and is now a published self-help author. Thank you for writing and encouraging others.

Letters
to
D-Best

Dear
Darla



Hey y'all!

Check it out; I'm so official now! I have my own banner! Isn't it cute? The only thing I'm missing is your letters. I want to discuss it all: your questions, ideas, musings and goals. Send them to me and prepare to receive D-Best advice ever! I can't wait to hear from you!

Sincerely,

D-Best Cousin Ever, Darla 😊



Dear Darby,

What it do, Darby? I have a question for you. Well, it is actually a question and a bit of an observation. The other day a resident said, “Good morning!” to me in the chow line. Later the same day, someone else said, “Hey man, how you doing?” Darby, I’m confused. It seems like prison is really changing on the Ramsey Unit. I think that if this “Good morning!” and “How you doing?” stuff catches on, we might actually start living like normally polite people in here. What do you think, Darby? Oh, and good morning to you sir!

Dennes Bowles
Ramsey Unit

Dear DB,

And good afternoon to you, Dennes — I looked at your letter this morning, but I’m writing your response after lunch! There are some kernels of truth in your perspective: we have to be here, physically, but what you do with your mind and mindset is up to you. Having some social etiquette — ya’ know, good manners — is one of the keys in being able to get along with others. Making the most out of where you’re at just makes good sense. Keep up the keen observations!

Dear Darby,

How’s it going, O’ Wise One? How’s it going with your cousin, Darla? When is she going to start answering some letters? I want to see if snark runs in the family! Anyway, I wanted to lace you up about a resource available on Edovo: the Texas Prison Alliance (TPA) has a 215-page listing of Texas transitional living (halfway houses) that is sorted by county. This is under the Reentry Resources tab of TPA, and is a huge benefit to anyone needing this type of living arrangement when leaving TDCJ. Let your readers know!

Jay Vanstory
Wynne Unit

Dear Jay,

So you ask, how’s it goin’ with Darla, and does she have the Darbster snark? Stay tuned to read her answers (see below) and find out for yourself! And thanks for your heads-up about the halfway house listing available on the tablets — anything that helps residents transition to their communities is a good thing. I hope our readers keep findin’ good resources on the tablets and sharin’ it with all of us!

HELP SHAPE THE ECHO CONTENT

Do you want to be part of *The ECHO*? There are several ways of getting involved.

1. Showcase your artistic talent! Send in examples of your artwork to be highlighted in the Art Expo issues.
2. Send in a delicious recipe for the Chow Hound section.
3. Need advice or want to give out some? Write advice columnist Dear Darby who is ready and willing to help with questions about relationships, daily concerns, general life and prison etiquette.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE:

Have you learned something in a class that you want to share with the rest of the readers? Are you getting closer to your reentry date and want to leave some parting words of wisdom? Send a copy of your submission to:

The ECHO
 c/o Windham Admin. Bldg.
 P. O. Box 40
 Huntsville, TX 77342-0400

ATTENTION STAFF:

Do you spend your day repeatedly answering the same question? Is there something you wish the resident population understood better? Are you a facilitator of a graduating program or class? Contact Bambi.Kiser@wsdtx.org and share your idea or information with *The ECHO* readers throughout Texas.





Find Technological Balance

By **Ashley Morrison**
Staff Writer

Most residents of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) have access to tablets. While this is a relatively new advancement, technology continues to evolve rapidly within the community. Meanwhile, scientific evidence is still emerging from numerous studies concerning the positive and negative effects of technology on the brain.

General Facts of Technology Usage

Technology transforms everyday life. For residents of TDCJ, tablets have limited streaming capability through apps such as Pando, Edovo, podcasts and more, making it easy to spend hours searching for content. What is known about the effects of technology use on the brain can be used to find and achieve an appropriate balance.

Positive Effects of Technology

Due to multiple apps and gaming platforms, it is possible to use tech-

nology for several benefits, including brain-strengthening neural exercise, cognitive training and memory training. According to the Neurology Care Center (March 10, 2025), studies have shown that mental stimulation and cognitive training improve memory in adults. Other findings show potential benefits of multitasking skills.

Multitasking is defined as performing two simultaneous tasks, which is only possible when the tasks are automatic, but can also refer to rapidly switching between tasks. This is one of the cognitive domains that declines as people age. Many video games require this skill and others, such as fluid intelligence.

Fluid intelligence refers to the capacity to reason and think flexibly, and requires working memory, which is the ability to retain information over a brief period. Those who gain fluid intelligence have a better ability to solve problems. Other skills such as visual attention and reaction time are two

more components gained.

Surprisingly, one study showed a potential link between action video games and surgical skills. The improvements gained in regular video gamers showed 47% fewer errors and a performance 39% faster than those who did not play video games. There are many positive effects when utilizing technology properly, but it's important to remember that there can also be negative effects.

Negative Effects of Technology

According to the National Library of Medicine (April 1, 2022), multiple studies have shown a link between extensive screen time and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Other findings suggest too much time spent in front of a screen impairs both emotional and social intelligence. When people are constantly using their devices, they have fewer opportunities to interact offline and allow their brain to rest in default mode.

continued on next page

For those who have addictive personalities, there is evidence of technology easily becoming an addiction. If technology is used in every moment of free time during the day, there may be a problem. Technology addiction shares side effects with substance use, including mood swings, development of tolerance, withdrawal and function impairment. Residents need to be aware of their tablet time for these reasons and more.

Another negative side effect of too much screen time is disrupted sleep. Excessive screen time relates to poor sleep because screens emit slow wave, blue light that suppresses the hormonal sleep regulator known as melatonin. Studies show poor sleep quality is associated with brain changes, such as reduced functional connectivity.

Here are some tips scientists encourage people to use when it comes to technology usage and maintaining brain health.

Helpful Tips to Balance Technology Usage

- Limit screen time: Establish daily restrictions for screen time to stop sensory overload, which leads to mental exhaustion.

- Take breaks: Pause and gaze at an object placed 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes to decrease eye fatigue (the 20-20-20 rule).
- Practice mindfulness: To lower stress and enhance the ability to focus, practice meditation and deep breathing exercises.
- Sleep hygiene: Avoid looking at electronic screens the hour before sleep.

Finding Balance

There is no exact amount of time scientists have found pertaining to when to disconnect from technology. The general recommendation for good brain health is two hours a day for continued screen time, while also enabling the 20-20-20 rule. It is up to each user to be self-aware of their technology usage. Finding balance in daily life is always important, but sometimes it is forgotten when it comes to the devices people are so dependent on. Technology is not an extension of oneself, and it is OK to turn it off and disconnect.

SOURCES:
neurologycarecenter.us €

Excessive screen time relates to poor sleep because screens emit slow wave, blue light that suppresses the hormonal sleep regulator known as melatonin.

Tips for Prevention and Recognition of Heat Illness

Due to the high temperature, residents and staff are encouraged to be aware of the types of heat illnesses.

Higher risk conditions for heat illness include:

- ☉ Being newly assigned to a job
- ☉ Receiving psychiatric medications or certain other medications, or having certain medical conditions
- ☉ Being elderly
- ☉ High temperatures and humidity
- ☉ No significant breeze

Prevention of heat illness includes:

- ☉ Increasing fluid intake when working in hot environments
- ☉ Supplemental water will be made available
- ☉ Taking a break every 30-60 minutes
- ☉ Decreasing intensity of work under extreme conditions
- ☉ Access to cold water showers
- ☉ Access to respite areas
- ☉ Allowed fans for all residents
- ☉ Following preventive measures on heat posters

Types of heat illness:

Heat Cramps: Can be painful and intermittent, involving involuntary muscle spasms following hard physical work or exercise in a hot environment. Cramps usually occur after heavy perspiration and typically occur in the abdomen, arms and legs. The cause is inadequate replacement of electrolytes (sodium and potassium).

Heat Exhaustion: The most common form of heat illness is caused by depletion of water and salt. Symptoms include weakness, anxiety, fatigue, dizziness, headache and nausea. Signs include profuse perspiration and rapid pulse and breathing. Confusion or loss of coordination may also be present. Heat exhaustion, if not treated, may lead to heat stroke.

Heat Stroke: While it may be preceded by signs of heat exhaustion, the onset of heat stroke is often sudden. Symptoms include diminished or absent perspiration, and hot, dry and flushed skin. Other conditions that may be present include increased body temperatures, delirium, convulsions, seizures,

rapid pulse, weakness, headache, mental confusion, dizziness, extreme fatigue, nausea/vomiting and incoherent speech progressing to coma. Medical care is urgently needed. Death may result if left untreated.

Treatment: Seek medical attention as soon as possible. Move the person out of direct sunlight into an air conditioned environment if possible, remove clothing while maintaining modesty, and provide water to drink if conscious. Liberally apply cold water on them, and if possible, fan them if there is no breeze.

Access to Respite Areas: During times of extreme temperatures, residents must be allowed access to respite areas. Employees and residents will be trained to be compliant with heat precaution procedures including knowledge of respite area locations and resident access. The location of each respite area is also posted in resident housing areas and other common areas on the unit. Please consult unit staff regarding directions to the respite areas if needed.

Report all incidents of heat-related illness to a staff member immediately! ★



When All is Lost,

There is Everything to Gain

By **Vincent Smith**
Contributing Writer

Sometimes I think back to my first day in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). That day I felt like I had lost everything. Although this isn't a pleasant memory, I now see that there is a better way to look at it: it could be the beginning of a chance to get my life straight.

For me, this situation was the result of a lifetime of addiction and poor choices. Those things eventually led to my day in court, where a judge sentenced me to TDCJ for more years than I had lived. I remember wondering how I was going to be able to do all that time. Eventually, I decided that this had to be my opportunity to overcome my addictions and the right time to address the things that caused me to make these poor choices. It was time for me to grow up.

We all have experienced things in

our lives that have contributed to who we are. Some good, some not. We often choose to blame the bad things for our disagreeable position in life, or we can use these things to explain why our life hasn't turned out as well as it could have. The difference between blame and explain is when we blame, we are admitting that something outside of ourselves has control over our destiny. When we explain, we try to understand why something affected us and ideally look for a better solution. That is how we take back control of life.

It wasn't until I chose to be sober and began trying to understand why bad things affected me like they did, that I took back control of my life. Although running from my problems sometimes still feels like my easiest path, I know it's not. My years of substance use were

just a way of kicking my problems down the road, all the way from Fort Worth to Huntsville. At some point, we all need to acknowledge that our problems aren't going to go away on their own.

One of the most meaningful things I've done for myself is to admit that many of the bad things I have experienced were of my own making. I need to be able to explain these bad choices to myself so hopefully I won't repeat them. It is often hard for many of us to admit something is our fault, but we all need to do it.

So, if you are at a point where you feel like you have lost everything, you have a choice to make. You can put a band-aid on your problems or you can begin the hardest work you have ever done. You have everything to gain. **€**

A Mother's Love



By **Anthony Caldwell**
Clements Unit

As I reflect on the choices that led me to my current situation, many thoughts flow through my mind. The most frequent thought is of a person: my mother. As I gaze out of the window, tears accumulate, then slowly stream down my face. The pain I put my mother through is beyond measure. Her resiliency amazes me. Multiple times throughout my childhood, she was forced to leave work to pick me up from school after I had been kicked out.

Years went by, and she was picking me up from juvenile detention. Then, one day, she was unable to rescue me from my mistakes. I was an adult facing years in incarceration.

Although she could not pick me up, she still came to visit. Seeing my mother crying behind a glass window did something to me. It made me realize that my decisions not only affected me, but also my family. The ancient Greeks used to say, "We suffer our way to wisdom." After sitting with my pain and the new reality I brought to fruition with my own actions, I began to think. I

thought of all the love my mother had shown and continued to show me. I realized how fortunate I was to have a mother who never faltered nor wavered. After I was transferred to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), I was finally allowed to have contact visits. The feeling of being able to hug my mom after two years was indescribable. Her beautiful smile and warm touch alleviated most of the pain I felt in my heart.

Before my one-year mark of being in TDCJ, I was able to accomplish getting my high school equivalency. When I told my mother the good news, she sounded elated and pleased. She said she was proud of me. I have to admit the words, "I'm proud of you," were perplexing to me. How could she possibly be proud of her son, who is incarcerated? So I asked her, "How could you be proud of me after everything I have done?" Her response brought a flood of emotions to the surface. She said, "Because you are my son, and I will always be proud of your accomplishments and the things you do to change for the better."

continued on next page

I have always been a mama's boy at heart, and those words completely changed the way I viewed my situation. Realizing I could still make my mother happy by using my time wisely and taking advantage of the educational courses available reinforced my pursuit of transformation.

I will no longer allow myself to be hindered by past mistakes. I will no longer allow another person's opinion to bring me down. I will continue reading and studying. I will trek onward in my quest for betterment. I will continue to make the neces-

sary preparations to step out of TDCJ as an educated, loving and considerate man, no longer blinded by the veil of the youthful ignorance that once obscured my vision.

All of the above is possible because of the unconditional love that my mom has continued to show me. Never underestimate a mother's love. I believe a mother's love for her children is the strongest force known to man. I believe the ultimate bond in life is the bond between mother and child.

A mother's love and belief in her child has the power to propel that child to the stars. The desire to bring happiness to

one's mother is a universal characteristic. The Prophet Muhammad was once approached by a man who wanted to join the military. The Prophet asked the man if he had a mother, and when the man replied yes, the Prophet said, "Stay with her. Paradise is at her feet." I will remain eternally grateful and aware of the countless sacrifices my mother and mothers all over the world continue to make to ensure that their child/children are safe, secure, fed, healthy and loved no matter what. I write this in the name of all grateful children to their beautiful mothers. €

Experimenting in Motherhood



By **Kelly Roddy**
Staff Writer

“Lastly, no matter the situation, don't ever stop making an effort.”

This might come as a shock to some of you and an injustice to others, but children do not come with an instruction manual. Often you are given full responsibility and autonomy for a tiny, helpless human being in under 24 hours of giving birth. A new mother will then begin an extensive science project, testing everything from feeding times to the proper motivation tactics for chore completion — all to provide a healthy trajectory for

their child's life.

Just when you think you might have this “mothering” thing figured out, a second child comes along, and you discover you know absolutely nothing. All the rules go out the window as every strategy that worked for your easygoing, phlegmatic first child, elicits catastrophic meltdowns from your intuitive and sensitive second child. Here are just a few things I've enjoyed learning along the way.

Don't Make Comparisons

Every child is born with a unique temperament, talents, gifts and skills. Their uniqueness is what brings color into the world. Some children may need to experiment and try different things until they find what they are passionate about. As a mother, we should encourage them to pursue these unlimited possibilities and remind them that failure is not doing something badly; failure is when we just quit trying.

continued on next page

Accept Mistakes as Opportunities to Grow

I remember being a new mother and thinking I had to be perfect or I would somehow cause irreparable damage to my children. Now, I realize being fallible and recognizing and owning my mistakes creates an environment of accountability and growth. It allows my children to make their own mistakes and formulate their opinions about how they would like to live their lives.

Don't Lie to Your Children

Lying may seem easier, but ultimately compromises trust in the relationship. Clearly, you have to speak to them according to their age and comprehension level, but lying fosters future resentments. I've made the mistake of lying about the culpability of my crime, thinking I was protecting them from disappointment. When I really peeled back the layers, I feared losing the only thing I valued in the world: my family. Last Mother's Day, during an extremely emotional visit, I shared the truth and exposed a burden I carried for too many years. Together, we unraveled the layers, exposing the truth and have since moved forward in healing, honesty and transparency.

Provide a Safe Space for Communication

This allows them to talk to you about anything and anyone without judgment. Listen empathetically and ask probing questions to gain deeper understanding, while presenting them with angles they may have not considered. I've had to remind myself I'm not dealing with their struggles daily, so it wasn't my place to judge their choices or their guardian's directions. Often, I shared my thoughts on the topic, but ultimately, they had to live with the consequences of their actions. Therefore, it has always been their right to make their own decisions. It was my job to love them regardless.

Keep Putting in the Work

Lastly, no matter the situation, don't ever stop making an effort. For the first six years of my incarceration, my daughter was unable to visit. Each week I wrote her a letter, sharing one thing I loved about her. This allowed her to appreciate qualities about herself she may not have noticed or even developed yet. Weekly, I poured love into all of her unique traits, helping her develop self-confidence and self-love. She has saved every letter.

If you are a mother who is unable to currently correspond with your children, I would like to encourage you to still write to them. You can journal, collect artwork, write birthday cards and save anything you would have liked to send them if you were able. When they can seek you out, you will be able to share with

them how much you have thought about them over time. Your love will be the evidence needed to begin the restoration process.

Our time as a resident is limited, but our responsibility as a mother is eternal. Take this time to learn, grow and become the type of women you want your children to find when you return home.

While preparing to share my thoughts about being a mother, I asked each of my children, "What do you feel is the most important characteristic of a good mom?"

My soon to be daughter-in-law said, "Discipleship and being able to serve your family while guiding them at the same time."

My daughter said, "Resiliency, no matter how hard it gets, you can never give up." My son said, "A good mom has to be able to cook."

This is the type of diversity that makes being a mom both challenging and fulfilling. This Mother's Day I would like to honor my mom, my children and all you mothers who are helping to shape tomorrow's generation. €

**"Take this time to learn, grow
and become the type of
women you want your children
to find when you return home."**



TDCJ HOSTS FIRST-EVER *Daddy-Daughter Dance at Wainwright*



TDCJ Press Release

HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS, April 27, 2026 — The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) held its inaugural Daddy-Daughter Dance and Dinner on April 25, 2026, at the Wainwright Unit in Lovelady, Texas. The event brought together 12 fathers in TDCJ and their 20 daughters for a special evening aimed at strengthening family bonds.

The Windham School District (Windham), Prison Fellowship and Therapon Theological Seminary and Bible College collaborated with TDCJ to organize this unique event. The fathers participating in the event are part of Windham's Family Literacy program, a three-phase program designed to

strengthen family engagement among parents and caregivers, supporting academic and emotional growth for both parents and children.

The Wainwright Unit's chapel/gymnasium was transformed into a shimmering ballroom for the event, themed "A Memory of a Lifetime." TDCJ and Windham staff and volunteers set up a red carpet, balloon arches, beanbag game, photo booth, frame decorating area and cookie decorating station, with cookies made by Lee College's Culinary Arts class at Wainwright.

A dance floor and dining area were also arranged to create a festive atmosphere.

At 1:30 p.m., the fathers prepared in a designated area, donning suits and ties, donated by TDCJ's Rehabilitation and Reentry Division (RRD). In

a separate area, their daughters chose dresses, shoes, jewelry, makeup and hair accessories, provided by the Texas Restaurant Foundation (TRF). Fathers wore boutonnieres and daughters received corsages.

The event started at 3 p.m. when each daughter walked the red carpet into the waiting arms of her father, many of whom had tears in their eyes. After warm hugs and greetings, they entered the ballroom for formal photographs and participated in various activities. The event featured a daddy-daughter line dance, a limbo competition and a formal sit-down dinner catered by Windham's Culinary Arts class from the Ferguson Unit and served by Lee College's Culinary Arts class at Wainwright. The evening concluded at 6

“
It was just an amazing thing to see how much she’s grown; I’m going to remember this for the rest of my life.”

hope. It’s in these moments that humanity leads, and relationships begin to heal and grow stronger,” Texas Board of Criminal Justice Secretary Sydney Zuiker said. “We know that family connection is consistently linked to improved reentry outcomes, and the Texas Board of Criminal Justice is committed to creating opportunities that nurture those relationships and help

about strengthening family bonds and reminding the fathers, daughters and families that positive connection matters,” said Windham Superintendent Kristina J. Hartman. “When fathers have meaningful opportunities to engage with their children in constructive ways, it supports personal growth, accountability and successful reentry. We are proud to provide this opportunity for families to share a moment that is both joyful and impactful.”

“We are grateful to the TDCJ for their leadership and for trusting us to serve alongside them to make this Daddy-Daughter event so impactful,” said Cody Wilde, senior vice president of correctional programs at Prison Fellowship. “When incarcerated fathers and their daughters share time together, we see bonds restored, hope renewed and healing happen on both sides of the wall. We are honored to be part of it.”

TDCJ plans to host more of these types of events to bring hope and

p.m. with a final dance between the fathers and daughters.

“My daughter is 15 years old. I hadn’t seen her since she was about eight,” said Mario Lanning, a dad who participated in the Daddy-Daughter dance. “It was just an amazing thing to see how much she’s grown; I’m going to remember this for the rest of my life.”

“For these fathers and daughters, this was more than a dance; it was a moment of connection, dignity and

families move forward together.”

“When families stay connected, the path to rehabilitation grows stronger. This event reflects our commitment to supporting those relationships as a foundation for growth, stability and success beyond incarceration,” TDCJ Executive Director Bobby Lumpkin said. “We are proud to have collaborated with such dedicated partners to make this event possible.”

“This Daddy-Daughter Dance is



unification to families impacted by incarceration, underscoring its commitment to rehabilitation, family healing and successful reentry.

Supporting Organizations

Many organizations contributed to the Daddy-Daughter event to make this a magical memory for the incarcerated dads and their daughters. In addition to the TDCJ (including the Rehabilitation and Reentry Division, Chaplaincy and Volunteer Services Division, Correctional Institutions Division and Classification and Inmate Transportation Division), Windham, Prison Fellowship, Therapon and the TRF) helped to organize the event.

About TDCJ:

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice protects Texans by overseeing the state's adult correctional, parole and probation systems. As one of the largest criminal justice agencies in the nation, TDCJ is committed to public safety, responsible stewardship of state resources and the successful reintegration of individuals under our supervision. The agency manages 104 prison facilities and 67 parole offices across the state. Through innovative programs, the agency seeks to transform lives for a better Texas and protect the public of our great state.

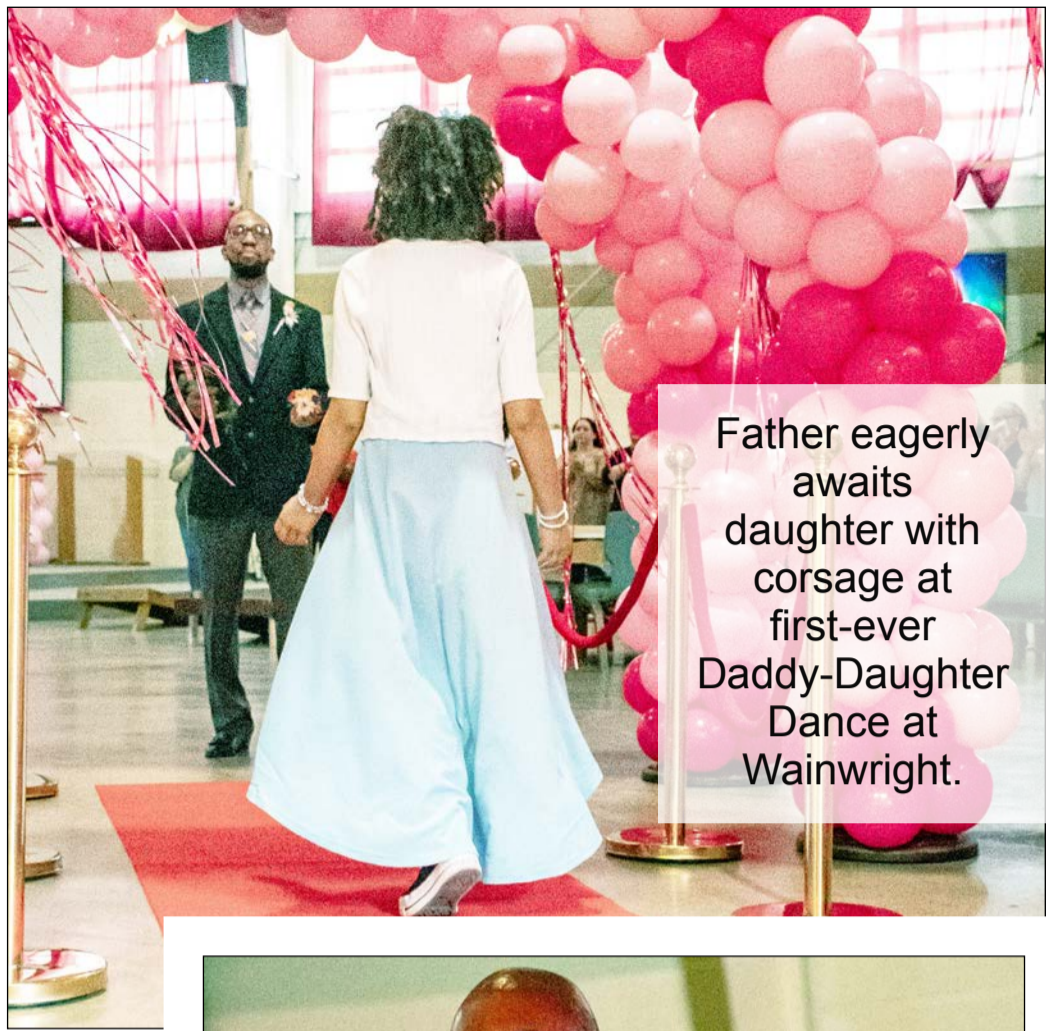
About Windham:

Windham School District provides academic, career and technical education and life skills programs to eligible students within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). With 102 campuses located in prison facilities across Texas, Windham strives to equip students with the necessary education and skills to progress to postsecondary education programs and successfully reenter the workforce within their communities. As supported by the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook, this press release includes person-centered language. The district uses terms such as "student" and "graduate," to describe people incarcerated in TDCJ facilities, building the foundation for personal and professional growth.

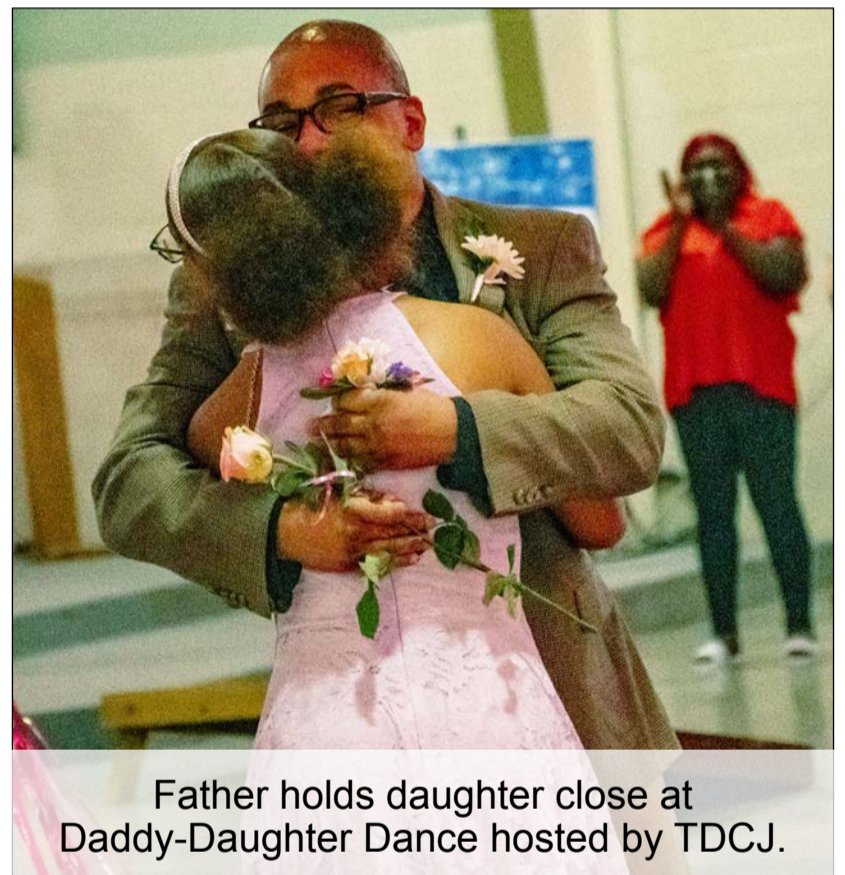
About Prison Fellowship:

Celebrating 50 years of prison ministry, Prison Fellowship is the nation's largest Christian nonprofit equipping the Church to serve currently and formerly incarcerated people and their families, and to advocate for justice and human dignity. Prison Fellowship and its church partners encounter Jesus with those behind bars, breaking cycles of crime and prayerfully anticipating a revival of justice, mercy and hope in our culture. €

Editor's Note: Photos used with permission by TDCJ.



Father eagerly awaits daughter with corsage at first-ever Daddy-Daughter Dance at Wainwright.



Father holds daughter close at Daddy-Daughter Dance hosted by TDCJ.



Father and daughter excitedly greet each other during Daddy-Daughter Dance at Wainwright.

Dance Creates Lifetime Opportunities

By Robert L. Gonzales | ECHO Staff

Editor's Note: Fathers share the personal impact of joining their daughters in TDCJ's first Daddy-Daughter Dance.

Skylar Bell

“The Wainwright Unit’s North Chapel looked more like a convention hall hosting formal events, with fully decorated dining tables, a dance floor, picture booth and an activity area. It didn’t look or feel anything like incarceration. My daughters were the center of my attention, but the support from everybody who made this event possible was unbelievable. My experience seemed surreal. It was like being in a bubble where there was a buzz of nervous energy filled with excitement, transitioning into joy and elation. I was the second father to greet my daughters on the red carpet, and I’ll never forget how they were each the center of attention in that moment and I was their biggest fan being able to love on them. This experience allowed me to wear a grey suit with black shoes that made me feel physically good about myself. God made a way for everything to come together through every individual who showed support in this event. I recommend anybody who has an opportunity to participate in the Family Literacy program to get involved.”



D’Audre Hight-Ealy

“We worked all year long to prepare for this event in the Family Literacy program. Only 15-minutes after dressing in my suit, I was placed fourth in line to greet my daughter standing at the end of the red carpet. I became increasingly emotional watching the fathers ahead of me unite with their daughters. I stood there waiting for my daughter with a rose and a corsage to place on her wrist. When I saw my daughter in her blue and white dress with silver sparkly heels for the first time, I cried. We were able to hug each other as long as we wanted before having our picture taken. My experience was highly emotional seeing how wonderful the entire event turned

out because nothing like it has happened before. My daughter has gone to dances with my brother, but this one was special because it was just between us. We enjoyed the day’s activities together eating, playing, talking and dancing. My daughter told me to stay in the Family Literacy program as long as possible so we could have rewards like this event. I let my daughter know I would do whatever it takes to stay in the program and be a good father. We didn’t want the day to ever end, but when it did, I was allowed to hold my daughter until she was ready to leave. April 25, 2026, will stand as our special anniversary because she told me never to forget it at the end. We built a day we’ll never forget.”

John Martinez

“This opportunity provided me with the awesome and thrilling experience of wearing a suit for the first time in my life. I needed somebody to help me tie my tie correctly the day of the event, but after putting on the full suit, it made me feel good about myself while I danced with my daughters. I was number 10 in the line-up to greet my daughters, so I was able to watch the other guys have their experiences with their daughters and root for them until I got my chance. I had the sense of pins and needles, feeling extremely nervous as my opportunity fastly approached. Everything turned out perfectly. All the effort put into planning and coordinating this event paid off, allow-

ing us to focus our attention on our daughters. My favorite part was dancing with my daughters. We’re not the best dancers, and we didn’t have all the steps down. At a certain point, we were the only family out there dancing. My daughter told me we were the only crazy ones, and I responded, yeah, we were, but that’s alright.”



Jordan Jones

“This experience was a first for my girls and for me because I never participated in formal events when I was growing up. I have regular visits with my daughters, but this event allowed a greater amount of freedom to move around, dance and play. I experienced a lot of excitement and a lot of nerves, but in a good way, to just spend the day with my kids. More than anything, there was a lot of build up to it, and I was just ready to embrace them, get the hugs, give them the flowers and take the pictures. Being able to wear a nice suit reminded me of what it means to be a man — the image I should present to my daughters every day. This program provided my daughters with extra frilly dresses, shoes, custom jewelry and a gift-bag with a rose they were allowed to keep and take home. My four-year-old has worn her dress every day since the event! It was a little tough parting ways at the end after our last dance, but I took time to prep them that they were going to have to leave without me. I assured them that



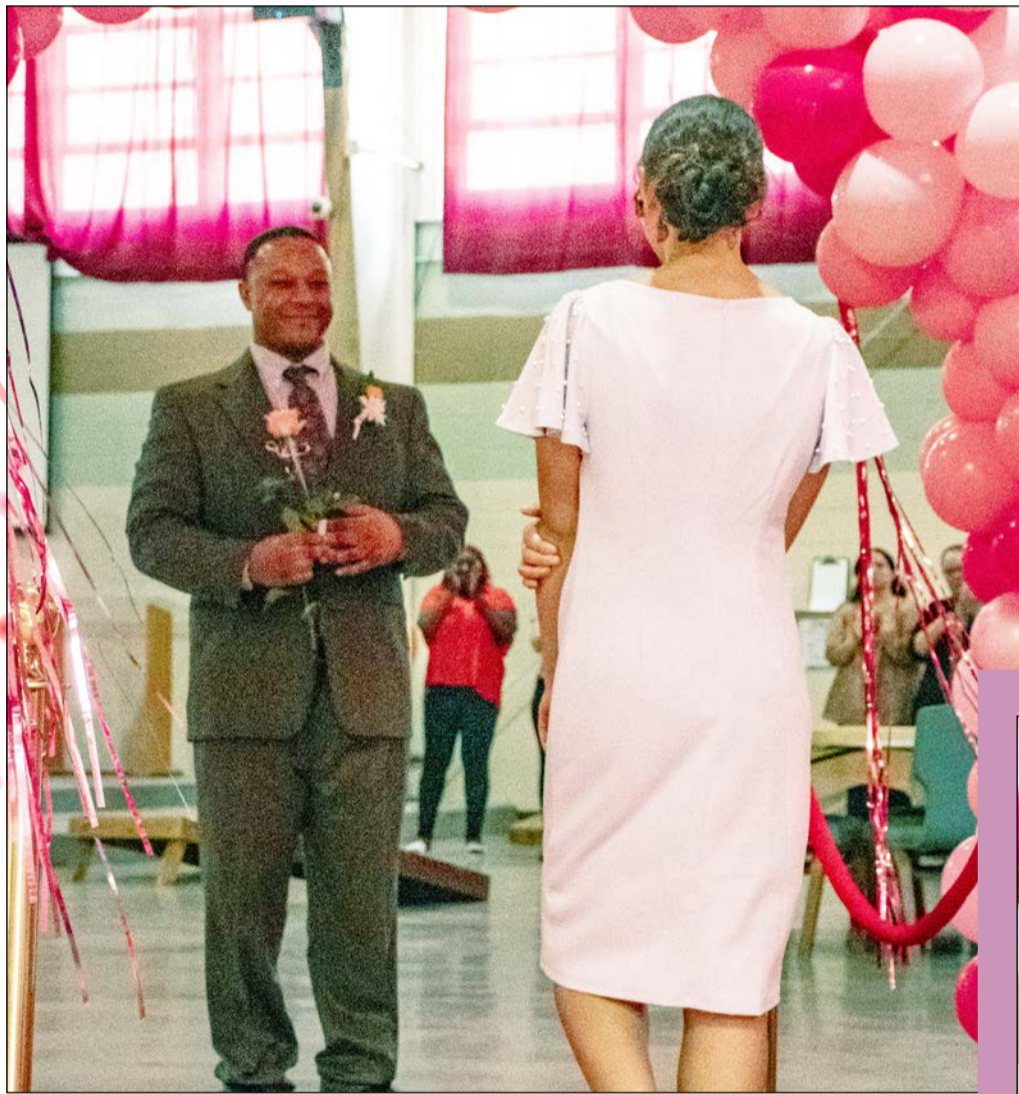
once I returned home, they wouldn’t have to worry about me leaving them again. More than anything, I

appreciate everyone who made this opportunity possible for me to spend time with my kids.”

Billy Casel

“My experience was pretty cool because I never had an opportunity to wear a suit before and when I saw myself in the mirror, I was able to imagine myself wearing suits in the future. I felt proud to hear my daughter tell me I looked good in that suit. We were able to focus our energy and attention on our daughters, which made this entire event an emotional experience. Witnessing the emotions expressed by other participants created a chain reaction for me. I tried to keep my emotions under control, but I began to lose it seeing the daughters cry. It’s hard knowing the value of time lost away from our daughters who grow up so quickly.

Attending the Family Literacy program has helped me understand the impact my presence has in my daughter’s life. I’m never going to forget any of it, but what stood out to me the most was my daughter beating me at the bean bag contest — she’s competitive! I had a great time dancing with my daughter. We never stopped smiling together all day through all the activities. Going into this event I was focused on how this experience would impact my relationship with my daughter because I never had the chance to do anything like this with my four older daughters. Participating in this Daddy-Daughter Dance raised my awareness about how important it is for me to provide for my daughters by creating positive memories in their lives.” €



ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



Personal Success Story of Bryan Kelley

Recovery, Christ Set One Man Free — Long Before Reentry

Editor's Note: April is Second Chance Month, and The ECHO is featuring Bryan Kelley, a former resident of Texas Department of Criminal Justice, as he shares his personal story of reentry and recovery challenges. As Outreach and Engagement director for the CrossWalk Center in Houston, Kelley supports others in their reentry journey, using his experiences to facilitate lives transformed and hope restored.

By Bryan Kelley

When people ask me about my lowest moment, I don't sugarcoat it: in the depths of addiction, I took the life of a man who was my friend. That is a truth I carry with me every day — one I can never undo, but one that Christ has redeemed and repurposed.



My story isn't about blaming my past or my upbringing. Like many, my childhood was far from perfect, but the truth is that I made choices. I didn't learn from the struggles I saw. I shaped an identity built on running, hiding, performing and pretending. That identity — false to the core — became the engine behind my addiction.

By the time cocaine took over my life, I was convinced that the best thing I had to offer the world was "party Bryan." I believed deep down that I needed to keep people entertained so they wouldn't see who I really was. The more I embraced that lie, the faster I spiraled toward the night when cocaine meant more to me than a human life.

In 1992, at 26 years old, I was sent to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) with a life sentence for murder.

I thought that was the end of my story. I was wrong.

Finding Light in the Belly of the Whale

About a year into my sentence, I attended Kairos on the Beto Unit. Men of light sat at tables with men like me — men of the darkness who were running, lying and pretending. A Lutheran pastor at my table gained my trust, and

Graduates Earn Windham Certificates, CTC, TWU Diplomas

By Ashley Morrison | ECHO Staff

The O'Daniel campus recently held the first combined graduation between Windham School District (Windham), Central Texas College (CTC) and Texas Woman's University (TWU), with over 40 students receiving certificates or diplomas. This event marked TWU's inaugural graduation as a Windham and Texas Department of Criminal Justice postsecondary partner. €



TWU cum laude graduate Stella Aguilar displays her new Bachelor of Science in Sociology diploma at the O'Daniel campus.



“My thinking changed. My heart changed. And as people poured into me, I started pouring into others.”

for the first time in my life, I told the full, unfiltered truth. The whole truth. Every dark detail.

He listened. And then he said three words that dropped me to my knees:

“I forgive you.”

He told me I needed to ask God for forgiveness, too. I said, “I can’t. I don’t deserve that.” He said, “None of us do. That’s why it’s called grace.”

And on May 28, 1994, with nothing left but the broken pieces of a life going nowhere, I gave Christ everything, and I discovered He could take shattered pieces and make a masterpiece.

That moment was freedom, but it wasn’t magic. What came next was work — hard, relentless recovery work.

A New Identity Through Recovery

After Kairos, I moved into a recovery dorm. Another resident took me under his wing and showed me what it meant to work the 12 Steps, honestly. For the first time in my life, I was completely authentic with another human being. I stopped pretending. I stopped performing. I traded the false “party Bryan” mask for a man who was terrified but finally real. And in that vulnerability, I found freedom that prison walls could never take away.

I learned that my biggest enemy was not the system, my family or my circumstances. My biggest enemy was the false identity I had created.

As I worked the Steps, Christ reshaped me. My thinking changed. My heart changed. And as people poured into me, I started pouring into others. I sponsored men. I disciplined men. I led classes. I helped men build reentry and business plans. I invested in their sobriety, their walk with Christ and their future. And in serving them, I found my calling: I was created by community, for community.

Life wasn’t about me — it never was and it never would be.

Recovery on the Yard: “Last Man Standing”

At the Wynne Unit in the early 2000s, our counselors were suddenly removed. One of the men I sponsored, “Big Footz,” came to me, terrified.

“I don’t think I can make it without these meetings,” he said.

“Footz, recovery isn’t about counselors,” I told him. “It’s about us. And we can do this.”

So, we started an AA group on the rec yard — dodging basketballs, mosqui-

tos and noise — but hungry for growth. We called it “Last Man Standing,” because we vowed that even if each of us were the last man on the unit who cared about recovery, we would still carry the message.

That group is still going over 20 years later. It now has more than 150 men enrolled, and thousands have gone through it. That’s the power of men who decide to be real. Men who refuse to quit. Men who choose to become, rather than appear.

Transformation, Restoration and a Calling Beyond the Gates

Sobriety didn’t just change me — it built a future I never imagined possible. Christ gave me a new identity. Recovery gave me a new way to live. Consistently working the Steps gave me tools for real transformation.

And because of that combination, I have:

- Served as Chief Executive Officer of the Prison Entrepreneurship Program.
- Led a Houston community center as Executive Director.
- Become Director of Outreach & Engagement for CrossWalk Center.



- Bought two homes — my first ever at age 53, just five years after my reentry.
- Become an elder in my church.
- Led hundreds of people through Christ-centered recovery programs.
- Been invited twice to speak at the White House.
- Helped men and women across the nation pursue transformation through Christ.

Everything I am today is because of Christ's grace and the daily work of recovery.

Esse Quam Videri (Latin) — To Be, Rather Than to Appear

I once lived behind a mask — tough, cool and slick. But that was all a lie. Christ didn't save that man; He replaced him. Now I know who I am. Now I live as that man. And everything changed. Here's what I tell every resident [of TDCJ] who asks me for advice:



I stopped pretending. I stopped performing. I traded the false 'party Bryan' mask for a man who was terrified but finally real. And in that vulnerability, I found freedom that prison walls could never take away.

- Don't waste your time in here.
- Don't waste your life pretending all is well.
- Use this time to become who you were created to be.
- Take a fearless look at your life.
- Take ownership.
- Work the steps.
- Seek truth.
- Get involved in recovery on your unit.

- Show up. Be real. Be honest. What do you have to lose?

Because if God can take a broken man like me and turn my life into something I never imagined — He can do it for you, too.

If You Want to Begin Your Own Journey

If you're ready for something new:

- Go to the recovery groups on your unit: AA, NA, Celebrate Recovery, Overcomers — whatever is available. Just start.
- And if you want to be part of a Christ-centered reentry discipleship program when you reenter the Houston-area community, write us.

**CrossWalk Center, Suite 514
9800 NW Freeway
Houston, TX 77092**

We provide housing, mentoring, jobs, recovery support and discipleship with people who are adamant about walking a new path in life. We walk with you as you become the man or woman God created you to be, because the abundant life Jesus promised in John 10:10 isn't just for people on the outside. It's for anyone. It begins right where you are, and it can begin today. €



PRISON SHOW EXPANDS COVERAGE



By Todd R. Carman | ECHO Staff

The Prison Show, created by former resident and activist Ray Hill on March 20, 1980, is a radio show hosted by FM 90.1 KPFT in Houston. The program is live every Friday from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m., and its focus is on sharing information with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) resident population. The last hour of the show is dedicated to shoutouts, where family, friends and loved ones call in to the show and talk to those on the inside via the radio. Listeners can hear these shoutouts.

"The Prison Show is a platform for advocates to get on the air, reach the population and tell listeners in TDCJ what's going on or what they're actually doing for you [residents of TDCJ] during the first hour," Collingsworth said. "And then the second hour is about the shoutouts."

Recently, Kristina J. Hartman, Superintendent of Windham School District, participated in an interview highlighting educational programs available in TDCJ through the district and higher education partners. She spoke about career paths viable in Texas communities, engaging with employers and recent

funding from the 89th Texas Legislature to support digital literacy, technical training and college programs. Hartman also detailed the district's shift to person-centered language and concluded by encouraging and thanking students in TDCJ for their efforts.

The Prison Show is available on the Edovo app, in both audio and video formats. Listeners can type in "The Prison Show" to access the audio version, or "The Prison Show Video" to view the video version, which has additional content. New content is added each week.

The Prison Show can be reached at:

The Prison Show
c/o David Collingsworth
226 Chipmunk Trail
Shepherd, TX 77371

The program can also be reached by those in the community:

For Shoutouts: 713-526-5738, Fridays from 9 to 11 p.m.
Producer David Collingsworth: 903-360-4697, call anytime.

Email: david@theprisonshow.net

Facebook: The Prison Show

YouTube: 90.1 FM KPFT The Prison Show €



The Prison Show welcomes (far right) Windham Superintendent Kristina J. Hartman to a broadcast.

Prison Show Staff Highlight:

Host Dani Allen

By Todd R. Carman | ECHO Staff

“I’m a woman who feels strongly about advocacy for all who are incarcerated,” said Dani Allen, host of The Prison Show, a radio program out of Houston available on tablets in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Allen has been justice-involved for years, having been a victim of assault in her 20s and having a family member who was the victim of homicide. Rather than become an embittered victim, she instead embraced the role of advocacy, hoping to help break the criminal cycle.

“People don’t realize that I’m a victim,” Allen said. “The circle of violence has to end at some point, and I choose to make it end with me.”

Her involvement with the justice system extends beyond herself as she also has friends and loved ones who are living in incarceration.

Allen’s work with the radio station reaches back to 2014 when she first became involved with The Prison Show. By 2023, she had become the show’s host. In addition to hosting the show, she was inspired to volunteer with a non-profit advocacy group in Houston.

All of Allen’s work at The Prison Show is volunteer. Her day job is within the government sector, where she has held various roles since graduating from college. Yet she feels it is her volunteer work that impacts many lives within the criminal justice sphere.

“It’s so rewarding,” Allen said. “Everyone helping out with The Prison Show is a volunteer. I love working with the families, with those in incarceration and with the advocates.”

Allen believes hosting the shoutout segment of The Prison Show is especially impactful. This segment is where family, friends and loved ones call in to the show and talk to those on the inside via the radio. Listeners can hear these shoutouts.

Allen accepts correspondence from those inside TDCJ via The Prison Show address and communication from those in the community at The Prison Show on Facebook.



She said that sometimes she is inundated with messages.

“I want to answer every single message I get and every single call I get,” Allen said. “It is so challenging. I sometimes get more than 100 messages in a week. Not all require a response, but I want to answer each and every message, but it’s not physically and realistically possible to do that.”

Allen wants those living in incarceration to know that she and the rest of The Prison Show are there to aid them and their loved ones on their criminal justice journey.

“David, Linda and I are there to help in any way we can,” Allen said. “Even if it’s just talking to them — if they just need someone to talk to — we are always there.” €

Prison Show Staff Highlight:

Producer David Collingsworth

By Todd R. Carman | ECHO Staff

“I’ve been in [TDCJ] three times on a 28-year sentence,” said David Collingsworth, producer of The Prison Show. “I got out the last time from the Kyle Unit in 2010 and I’ve been out ever since.”

Collingsworth said he went from years of drug and alcohol use and stints in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to becoming a clean, sober and productive member of his community. He was released from parole on Feb. 16, 2025, and he recently celebrated his 19th year of sobriety.

“Something finally clicked. I realized that as long as I was chasing wild women and using drugs and alcohol, I was going to keep going back to prison,” Collingsworth said. “I had been sober for eight years when I started dating my high school sweetheart again, and after dating for two years, we ended up getting married. Now I’m a good father and husband. I’m also a good air conditioning guy — there’s nothing I can’t fix — and I work in facility maintenance.”

David said he first learned about The Prison Show in the 1990s while living in TDCJ.

“I had the radio on at the Gib Lewis Unit, and I heard Ray Hill [the show’s creator and long-time host], and I couldn’t believe that someone actually cared about us,” Collingsworth said. “I felt like I was going to be lost inside TDCJ because I just really didn’t have anybody that cared. Years later, when I was out, I had a girlfriend who started volunteering down at the radio station, so I got involved. The more I worked with the show, the more I realized that [working there] probably kept us all out of trouble.”

Over time, Collingsworth’s role with The Prison Show evolved from just visiting the station to working as a volunteer — and then becoming producer.

“I actually run the [sound] board and I do the videos,” Collingsworth said. “I set up the interviews and do the scheduling. I pretty much run the show, except I’m not the mouthpiece.”

Under Collingsworth’s direction, the show continues its focus of sharing news and information from justice-involved advocates during the first hour and conducting



shoutouts in the second hour. He feels the shoutout section of the show helps residents stay emotionally connected with those in the community.

“We make sure that the families have a way to be able to make shoutouts for you [residents] and let you know that you are loved and important,” Collingsworth said. “If listeners have a loved one that’s within the footprint of the radio station — and now it’s a pretty big footprint since we’re on the Edovo app — they can shout out and get two or three minutes to say whatever they want, within reason.”

Collingsworth encourages residents of TDCJ to write to the show to give feedback. This helps them serve the needs of listeners and make the show’s content better.

“We want to hear from you — we want to hear what your likes and dislikes are,” Collingsworth said. €

Run Your Race

By Lloyd Carter
Wynne Unit

In the summer of 2013, I flew to Detroit to watch my daughter run in the Junior Olympics. She was participating in the 4 x 400-meter relay.

I sat in the stands and looked down into the arena with anticipation. Finally, the race began, and the girl who ran the first leg for my daughter's team did not get off to a good start. I watched as the other girls quickly put distance between themselves and my daughter's teammate. The young lady who ran the second leg was already at a significant disadvantage when she received the baton. She ran as fast as she could to try and close the gap, but it seemed almost to be an impossible feat. As she came around the final turn, her energy began to wane, and she started to cry. She was pushing her body to the limit.

As I looked down the track, I could see that my daughter had already positioned herself to receive the baton. One by one, the other runners exchanged batons and were off, but she was still waiting. Her teammate finally reached her, and with the last of her strength, placed the baton in my daughter's hand. She took off, continuously gaining speed as she passed one runner, and then another. As she took the turn,



“We can't look at our circumstances and count ourselves out before we even start.”

she passed yet another runner. At this point, the crowd had taken notice, and some began to stand up. Their attention had shifted from the girl in the lead to my daughter, who seemed to be pulling her team back into the race.

After she passed the baton to the girl running the anchor leg, I saw her go to the side of the track with her hands on her head, trying to catch her breath. I knew she had given everything she had. I had never been prouder. Her team lost, but she had run her best race, and that's all anyone could ask for. About 20-minutes later, she made her way back into the stands and sat beside me. The man sitting next to me said, “Is that your daughter? She just ran an amazing race.”

I tell that story because we all have our own race to run. In Hebrews 12:1, it says, “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” My daughter could have easily given up when she saw how far behind her team had gotten, but she chose to run the race that was set before her. We can't look at our circumstances and count ourselves out before we even start. We can't say things like, “I didn't have a father growing up, so I never had a chance,”

or “I'm in prison now, so there is nothing I can do.” That mentality will get you nowhere. Whether you are homeless, unemployed, incarcerated or experiencing substance use, each day that God allows you to wake up means that the baton is still in your hands. Our only concern should be running the very best race we can.

When my daughter started running, she shifted the focus of the whole crowd. They knew she wouldn't win, but her performance in spite of the circumstances was inspiring. She told me that her time in the relay was always faster than her time in the individual 400 meters. When I asked why, she said, “Because I don't want to let my team down.” She ran harder for her team than she did for herself.

We have to remember that this life is a relay. The gains we make are not just for us. They help put the next generation in a better position to succeed. We have the ability to inspire an entire generation with the way we live our lives; the way we run our race. If we continue to put one foot in front of the other, despite the odds, our children will be encouraged to do the same. €

SPEED DEMON

By Howard Overby
Coffield Unit

Driving on this dark night, my headlights cut through to the road passing under my wheels. I'm gripping the steering wheel and feeling the horses bounding beneath my touch. Pushing the pedal a little more, the pipes rumble and the engine sounds strong, tough and bad.

While the white stripes look like one long line, my hunger for more speed rises. Trees are just blurred shadows on both sides of this two-lane black-top, where many other speed junkies have perished. There are many dangers along the twists and turns of this road.

Looking to the rearview mirror, I see headlights back in the darkness. A trail of sweat runs down the side of my face, at the same time I realize I am holding my breath.

"Nothing to be afraid of," I say to myself out loud. I don't know why I am so worried now. There hasn't been any word or sighting in years.

"Get a grip, dude," I tell myself. I reach and turn up the pioneer stereo. I see my speed is at 63. As I push the gas pedal down, I tighten my grip, push myself back in the seat and quickly glance in the rearview. Those lights are closer now. I drive this way to enjoy a little "need for speed," and now I will. I don't want what's behind me to catch up. I will leave this joker in the dust.

Shifting to fourth gear, I feel confident that the muscle under the hood will burn almost any vehicle on the road. As my speed increases over 100 miles per hour (mph), I start seeing the signs for the S-turns coming up. I can only take the turns at around 75 mph I have no doubt that I will be able to leave those headlights to the stars. I use all my years of driving to take this road like never before.

Once I complete the first group of turns, I look back and don't see any lights on the road. There is another couple of

turns coming up, so I am feeling good about this trip. I shift from third gear to fourth as I gain speed, and then I feel a tug, jerk—and all the power leave. Then the engine dies. I push in the clutch so I can coast as far as I can. I have to take a look at her—and don't know what's wrong.

As the rest stop comes into sight, headlights flash in the rearview, coming around the last turn behind me. I am gripped by an overwhelming fear. I start shaking, sweating even more. My mind is racing faster than any car.

I start digging through the glove box, middle console and under the seats, suddenly thinking of the trunk.

"Come on," I yell, as I find nothing but fast-food wrappers

continued on next page





“Shifting to fourth gear, I feel confident that the muscle under the hood will burn almost any vehicle on the road.”

and empty bottles. I throw them to the side. Turning in my seat to look out the back window, I see nothing. Complete darkness. No lights, no cars, only the moon glowing off the road. I take a deep breath and try to calm myself. As I turn back to face front, two headlights come on, bright beams right into the windshield, blinding me. I put my hand up to try and block the light to see. I think it’s a truck. “Hey, can you turn off your brights,” I yell, and I reach for the door to give this guy a couple of things to think about. I fling the door open and jump out as quick as I can. As I stand next to my car, my eyesight adjusts. Now I can see behind the lights and I am struck with terror. There is a nightmare that is before me, and I see many big teeth glistening under those lights. I see a large head that is housing eyes that look a lot like headlights. If I can just...

There is a sound like a chain dragging across cement, coming from my left. I try to look, but I am frozen in place, losing all control, and I can’t turn my head to see what the noise is. I can see something, something that is so very wrong. A monster, Godzilla, giant lizard-looking thing — I guess this is what people might call a dragon. To my horror, I find out what the noise is when I hear a hiss, yell and a sound so out of place that my eardrums pop like bubble gum. Two human-size, lizard-like objects are moving all around me. I am so scared and trembling that the only thing I can do or say right before the two monstrosities pounce is, “Mama!”

...

“Car 261, come in,” the radio hisses on the dash. The driver grabs the mic.

“This is car 261, over,” the patrol officer says.

“We have reports of an abandoned car out on Devil’s Road. Can you check on that? Over.”

“10-4,” the officer answers.

“Do you think it’s happening again, Dave?” he asks his partner.

“You believe all those stories, John?” Dave responds with a chuckle and a grin. He has been in the town of Hoby less than a year. He has only heard stories, but not like his partner. John has been an officer of Hoby for going on 20 years. He knows more than stories and has seen the leftovers of blood and shredded bodies. He was even best friends with a guy named Shane Hergert, who now resides at Eli Crane Mental Hospital since a summer night in 1996, when he was the only person found down by the river on Devil’s Road. Five of his friends were taken, eaten, killed or just left to run away — no one knows. They’re gone.

“Dave, I have been on the force long enough to know that there are demons out there,” John says, putting the car in drive. “Oh, and one more thing, promise me you won’t go out on that road alone.”

When they stop at a red light, John turns to Dave, still waiting for him to promise.

“Okay, okay, I promise! Jeez, you don’t have to be so serious,” Dave exclaims.

“No, Dave, I do, because nightmares are real.”

The light turns green, and they pulled off into the night with thoughts of things in the world that go beyond explanation.

“Do you really think there are beasts out there that we can’t find or know about, that have been killing people in those hills for the past 50 years?” Dave asks, looking out the side window.

“Dave, I do believe,” John says, and he takes the turn to enter forsaken Devil’s Road. €



EVERY STORY MATTERS



The ECHO's Newest Members Expand Coverage in Texas

Writing a New Chapter
 In the past, women have contributed to The ECHO in a plethora of ways. However, there was no office established on a women's unit to collaborate with the team at the Wynne Unit. This change with a new office staffed by three women at the Wynne campus.

This new chapter in the partnership between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and Windham School District (Windham) allows for an energetic blend of ideas, perspectives and talents.

"This endeavor creates new opportunities for women residents to create content and provide different perspectives, which will allow readers to learn more," ECHO Assistant Managing Editor Ilana Dager said. "The staff will be new to the new ECHO office preparing for upcoming coverage, and we are looking forward to the ground running."

Priscilla Maumalanga, Ashley Morrison and Kelly Rocky were selected from among several qualified candidates to become the first women serving as resident staff members of The ECHO. They are eager to be part of this exciting undertaking while working long distances with the Wynne Unit team. ☐

Looking for the Future
 Without the partnership between Windham and TDCJ this opportunity would not be possible, according to the team's supervisor. "I am grateful for the support of Brenda K. Cox, managing editor of The ECHO and her staff at the Wynne campus, the communications team at Windham, Murray Worken, Karriah Cooper, Murray Principal S. Claxton and all of the Lane Murray, Windham and TDCJ staff," Dager said. "Their efforts and support have laid the foundation for us to be successful in making The ECHO even better." ☐



"This endeavor creates new opportunities for women residents to create content and provide different perspectives, which will allow readers to learn more."

— Ilana Dager, ECHO Assistant Editor



Priscilla Maumalanga
 Maumalanga has accomplished numerous achievements as a TDCJ resident. Through Windham, she has learned skills in Introduction to Graphic Arts and Introduction to Construction. She has also received certificates of completion for many fundamental classes, including Cognitive Life Skills, Overcoming, Strategies and Resilience to Life. Maumalanga has grown personally as the result of serving as a member of the Lane Murray band, learning to play the drums and overcoming her fear of singing and writing music.

She credits the late R. Green, who taught Introduction to Graphic Arts for Windham, for supporting her through his Graphic Arts curriculum and believing she could be one of the first chosen to work for The ECHO.

"Mr. Green was a positive influence and was absolutely brilliant in his field," Maumalanga shared. "He believed we could be transformed and we could get after anything we wanted, but we had to start the change to learn."

Training and teaching her how to edit and create different page layouts, Green became a vital part of Maumalanga's journey to The ECHO. After a visit from Murray Principal S. Claxton to Mr. Green's classroom to share the news of the new ECHO office, Maumalanga grew excited about the opportunity.

"I wanted this job because it was one of my dreams before it even became a possibility," Maumalanga said. "To get to contribute in the same way the Wynne staff members do, and it is revolutionary to be part of an event that could really change the world on a macro-level, starting at this campus. Some people plant the seeds and others water them, but we are lucky to harvest the fruits with the support of TDCJ and Windham."

"We get to contribute in the same way the Wynne staff members do, and it is revolutionary to be part of an event that could really change the world on a macro-level, starting at this campus."

— Priscilla Maumalanga, Wynne Unit ECHO staff member



First Women Field Ministers Graduate



The Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry celebrated 20 graduates in the first ever women's cohort of field ministers at the Hobby Unit on Dec. 10, 2025. Several distinguished guests from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), college faculty members, friends and family showed their support in the commissioning of Texas' newest field ministers.

"This is a historical day," said Sydney Zunker from the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. "You are the first ever to walk this stage and carry the title of field ministers. Each graduate earned a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Ministry, completing 45 hours of general education core courses, 45 hours of biblical and theological studies and 36 hours of applied ministry."

— SEMINAR continued on p. 4

One Man's Treasure Provides Clothing, Services For Men Returning to DFW Metroplex, Tyler Area



One Man's Treasure (OMT) is a reentry resource based in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Its primary service is leaving incarceration and reentering society in the DFW metroplex and Tyler area.

The organization provides clothing for approximately 5,000 men per year that includes several items, two pairs of pants, a tee, one pair of shoes, new socks, underwear and t-shirts — and there is no cost for these clothing items. OMT has built up a network of corporate partnerships that enable them to provide a mixture of clothing that includes brand new items. Once a man is released from a state prison and contacts OMT, these items are delivered to him by a male volunteer, known as a "shepherd."

The support does not stop at clothing. OMT has also formed partnerships to meet critical needs such as health and dental care, as well as mental, work with housing or work with food needs.

Clients can be referred to other organizations which provide classes teaching them how to interview for a job or help them with job and resource searches, such as Miles of Freedom, The Way Back and Unlocking Doors. The Residents may write OMT for an application at 519 E. 30 E, PMB 211, Rockwall, TX 75087 or check with a chaplain or reentry worker for an application. Once a person knows their reentry date and where they are going to live (Dallas-Fort Worth, Tyler areas), they can send the application. The only information and name of the city within OMT's service area to which they will be returning.

— TREASURE continued on p. 5

My Journey at MI City Radio



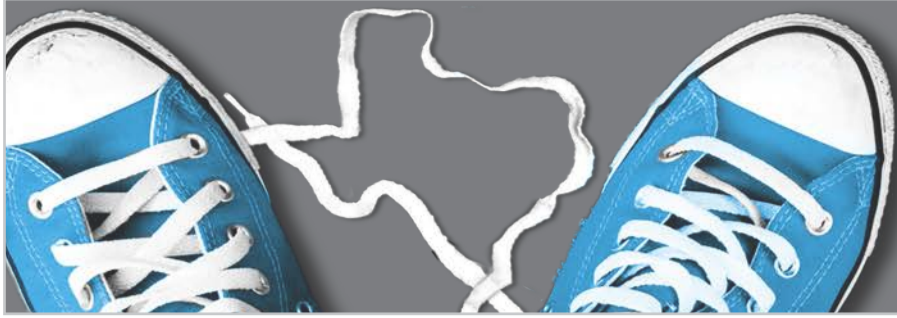
By Brandon Dale Woodruff, Michael Unit

I was blessed with an opportunity I never imagined would come my way. After volunteering in the Michael Unit's Chapel job assignment as a radio station operator at the same facility. When asked if I wanted the job, I didn't hesitate for even a second. I knew this was something special I could pour myself into and something that could be even bigger than myself.

— FREE continued on p. 4

PUBLISHED FOR 98 YEARS, SINCE 1928

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WSDTX.ORG AND ON TDCJ TABLETS



Lace Up

Brief News, Big Achievements

BARTLETT CAMPUS

Bartlett Culinary Arts Students Prepare Cookies for Governor's Awards Ceremony

Culinary Arts students at the Bartlett campus showcased their skills by baking cookies for the 31st Annual Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Awards Ceremony. Culinary Arts is a career and technical education (CTE) class offered by Windham, which provides meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.



CLEMENTS UNIT

Prison Fellowship Academy Donates to HOPE Squad

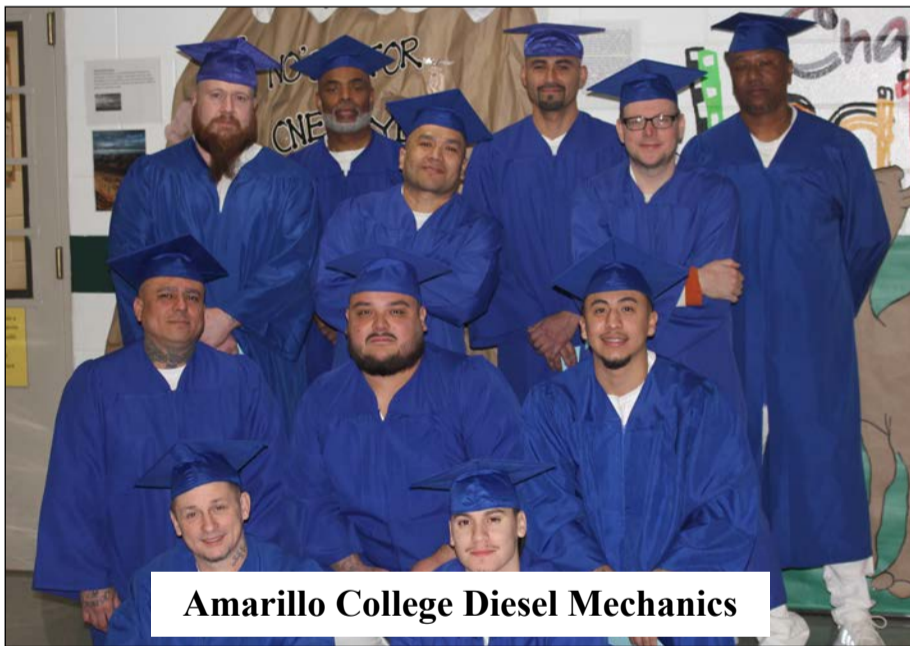
By Johnny Wooten | Clements Unit Reporter

The Prison Fellowship Academy (PFA) located on the Clements Unit recently began a book donation drive, with members of the HOPE Squad handing out reading materials to residents in select programs. PFA mentors Gilbert Rubio, Jessie Gibbs and Anthony Torres presented the first donations to HOPE Squad facilitators Bradley Newman and Santos Cervantes.



Clements Campus Students Graduate

The Clements campus honored a combination of 71 graduates from Windham and Amarillo College during a recent ceremony. Certificates and degrees awarded included high school equivalency (HSE); Amarillo College Diesel Mechanics; Apprentices; Culinary Arts; Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC); Auto Fundamentals and Finish Carpentry.



CLEMENTS UNIT

Texas Veterans Commission Holds Meeting

By Johnny Wooten | Clements Unit Reporter

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) recently held a meeting attended by over 100 veterans located on the Clements Unit. Jason Bednar, Northwest Texas representative for TVC, and two representatives of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs answered questions from residents about their benefits as veterans in incarceration.



CRAIN UNIT

Cognitive Life Skills Graduates Gather for Reunion

By Rhonda Orr | Crain Unit Reporter

The Crain Unit recently held a Cognitive Life Skills (CLS) reunion, bringing together all graduates for a time of fun and fellowship.

“Having them follow up with me made me feel like more than just a student,” graduate Kandasha Byers said. “It’s obvious they really care about my success.”

The day was full of games, skits, speakers and music all while revisiting concepts learned in class.

“It was a great opportunity to check in with all the ladies and see the progress they’ve made since graduating,” Life Coach Vanessa Zuniga said. “At the same time, we’re encouraging them to keep going.”



DIBOLL CAMPUS

Students Conduct Science Experiment

Students in S. Davis’ class at the Diboll campus learned about using the scientific method. Students also learned about acidity and alkalinity by testing the pH levels of different liquids that can be purchased from their commissary. Items tested included soda, mouthwash, coffee, ketchup and baby shampoo.

FERGUSON CAMPUS

Ferguson Campus Celebrates Graduates



The Ferguson campus celebrated over 100 graduates during a recent graduation ceremony. Fourteen graduates earned their high school diplomas through Matthew Gaines High School, 19 earned their HSE certificates and 81 CTE graduates were awarded certificates in Culinary Arts, Electrical Trades, Welding I and/or Welding II.



GOREE CAMPUS

HSE Students Graduate at the Goree Campus

The Goree campus honored 17 graduates as they walked the stage to receive their HSE certificates. This achievement puts the graduates on the path to continuing their education and creating a better tomorrow.



HODGE CAMPUS

Students Complete Introduction to Culinary Arts

The Hodge campus recently celebrated 14 graduates who procured their craft to earn their Introduction to Culinary Arts CTE certificates. This achievement highlights the dedication these graduates put forth to fostering personal and professional growth.



HOLLIDAY CAMPUS

Residents Complete 8 Dimensions of Wellness

Windham's Recreation and Wellness department taught the 8 Dimensions of Wellness course to residents at the Holliday campus with a total of 45 completers.

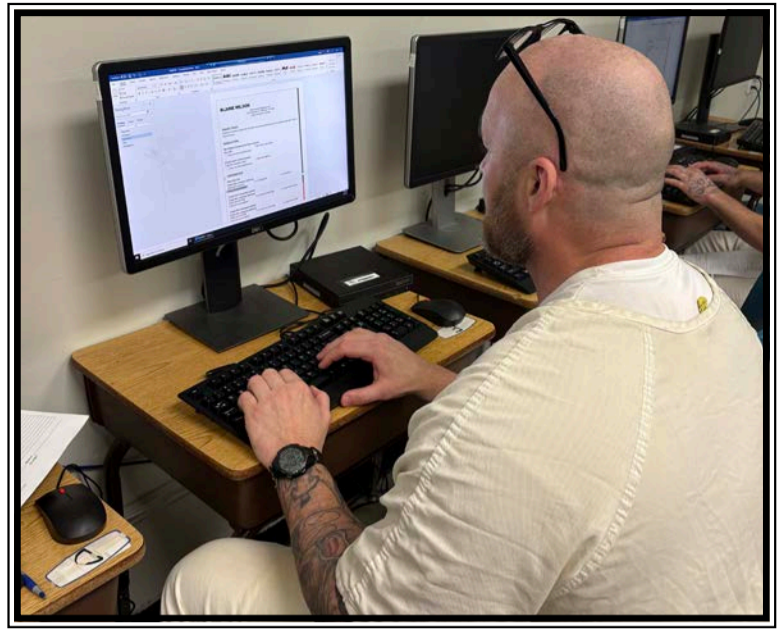
After the final class, graduates participated in a bean bag toss tournament, practicing what they learned by developing an awareness of efficient use of leisure time to enhance personal, physical and mental well-being, with both current and future values.



KYLE CAMPUS

Students Prepare for Careers

Students at the Kyle campus participated in a career preparation class, led by Library Assistant D. Branch, where they discussed successful reentry. The class focused on developing positive discussion, resume building and interview skills.



MIDDLETON CAMPUS

Students Participate in First College and Career Day

Students at the Middleton campus recently participated in their first College and Career Day. Participants listened to guest speakers including Windham alumnus Hayden Harris, who shared his journey to success, as well as A. Shows and T. Daniel with Goodwill West Texas. Windham extends its appreciation to all partners who helped make this event a valuable experience for students.



MURRAY UNIT

Residents Graduate Cognitive Life Skills Program

Residents celebrated completing the CLS program during a graduation ceremony at the Murray campus. CLS uses a peer-led approach to rehabilitation for residents.

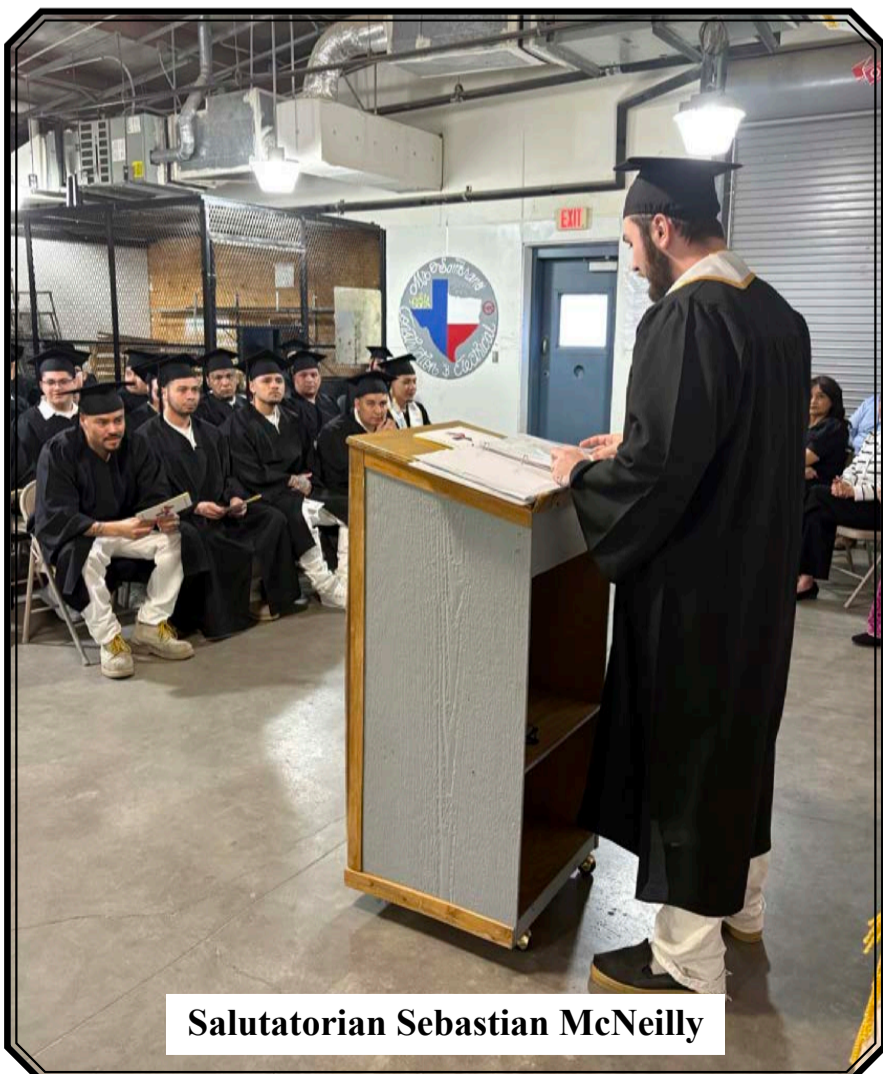
The graduates describe CLS as a program that aims to combat problematic thinking and behavior by helping them identify, challenge and address their 'triggers,' addictions and maladaptive thought patterns.



SANCHEZ CAMPUS

Students Receive HSE, CTE certificates

The Sanchez campus celebrated 40 graduates during a recent ceremony. Twenty-one students received their HSE certificates. Eleven received their HVAC certificates and eight received their Electrical Trades certificates.



Salutatorian Sebastian McNeilly



Valedictorian Ian Bueno



WYNNE CAMPUS

Residents Participate in Family Literacy Day

Twenty-one fathers at the Wynne campus spent time with family during the fourth annual Family Literacy Day. Fathers and their children experienced an afternoon of connection through science-themed activities focused on physical change, engineering and critical thinking.



Game-Changing Tournament

World Cup Comes to America

This sports column represents the viewpoints of sports fan and sportswriter Will Hill, reflecting his opinions and observations. These opinions do not represent official opinions of TDCJ or of *The ECHO*. Enjoy them; respond to them. *The ECHO* welcomes your letters and input!

By William E. Hill | ECHO Staff

The question I have been asked the most during my time at *The ECHO* is why I do not write about soccer. My response to this inquiry has always been, should soccer ever become a sport, I'll write about it. Yes, I know it is a sport; it is just the most boring one ever. Let me put it this way: if watching the grass grow was a sport, it would be more exciting than soccer. Regardless, since the World Cup is coming to America in 2026, I have decided to write about its history, along with a brief preview of this year's tournament for all of the soccer fans out there. You are welcome.

There are records of the Romans playing a game similar to soccer in the second century, where players attempted to kick a ball across a line in the dirt to score. That seems like tame entertainment for the Romans, accustomed to an afternoon watching gladiators duel in the Colosseum. There is also evidence that the game's roots date even further back than that, to fourth-century B.C. China.

The version of soccer that is the world's most popular sport, adored by millions worldwide, began in English schoolyards during the 1800s, spreading quickly to many other European countries. However, there was

no uniform set of rules, so each school simply made up their own; kind of like Tom Brady and the New England Patriots. In 1848, a group of representatives from various schools met at Trinity College in Cambridge, England to draw up a standard set of rules that everyone could agree on.

In 1904, the national football associations of Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland founded the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). In 1930, the first World Cup was played in Montevideo, Uruguay, with only 13 countries participating. In case you are wondering, Uruguay won that tournament with a thrilling four goals to two victory over Argentina. Don't cry for Argentina, as they would exact a measure of revenge by winning in 1978 and 1986.

The World Cup has been held every four years except for the years between 1939 and 1945, when World War II interrupted the soccer schedule. When the competition returned to Brazil in 1950, Uruguay proved that it was not a one-time champion as they stunned Brazil two goals to one to win the title.

The 1954 World Cup expanded to include 16 nations and introduced a new format that won over both fans and players: 16 teams split into four groups of four, with the top two teams in each group advancing to

the next round. However, not all of the teams in a particular group played each other. That small flaw was eliminated at the next World Cup in Switzerland, when it was decided that during the group stage, every team in a group would play each other to determine who advanced.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pelé, earned his three medals during the 16-team format (1958, 1962, 1970). Those victories on soccer's biggest stage transformed him from a star in Brazil into a worldwide legend. It also saw the English win their only World Cup title in front of their home fans in 1966.

The 16-team format lasted until the 1982 tournament, when the tournament expanded to 24 teams. In Spain in 1982, 24 countries from five continents battled for the iconic silver trophy. In 1986, Diego Maradona and Argentina emerged as the victors; albeit not without controversy. Maradona scored the deciding goal against England in their quarterfinal matchup on what appeared to be a handball. For those not familiar with soccer, touching the ball with your hands is a no-no except for the goalkeeper — and Maradona was no goalkeeper. When asked by reporters after the game if he had touched the ball with his hand on the winning goal, Maradona replied, "It must have been the hand of God." Not exactly a denial per se, but ever since then, the contest has been known as the "Hand of God" game.

As soccer became more popular and the World Cup became more competitive, the field expanded to 32-teams in 1998. The eight-group format was used longer than any other in World Cup history. This setup appeared to favor some countries more than others as France won twice (1998, 2018) and was runner up in two others (2006, 2022). During this era, Cameroon, Nigeria and Tunisia became powerhouses with five appearances each. Morocco also appeared in three World Cups and made it all the way to the semi-finals in 2022; the furthest any team from the continent of Africa has ever advanced.

In addition to the growth of the sport in Africa, Asia has become a regular on the World Cup stage with South Korea making seven appearances, including a semi-final game in 2002. Japan also made its debut in 1998. In 2022, the Samurai Blue made it past the group stage for the first time.

Here are some more numbers from the 32-team era: the number of teams from Africa that have qualified for a World Cup doubled from six to 12. Thirty-one European teams have qualified for at least one tournament, that is more than half of all the members of the Union of European Football Association (UEFA). The only two South American countries to not qualify for a World Cup from 1998 to 2022 were Bolivia and Venezuela.

In 2026, the World Cup returns to North America for the second time, with games being played in state-of-the-art stadiums in Vancouver, Canada, Mexico City and Monterrey, Mexico, and all across the United States. Dallas will host more games than any other city, including one of the semi-final games. Oh yeah, lest I forget, Houston will host seven games, although not a semi-final. The final will be played in MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. Not to be outdone, Kyle Field, in College Station, Texas, will host a World Cup warm up match between Argentina and

Honduras. This might be the most exciting football Aggie fans have ever seen.

Purists have claimed that the expansion of the World Cup field will result in a product that is not as exciting. I would argue that it would be really difficult to make soccer any more boring than it already is, but I digress. FIFA states that the 48 countries competing in

the 2026 World Cup represent less than 25% of FIFA's 211 member nations.

"The most inclusive and impactful FIFA World Cup ever is no longer a dream but a reality that will take shape in the form of 104 matches in 16 state-of-the-art stadiums across Canada, Mexico and the USA. From the opening match at the iconic Mexico City Stadium to the spectacular final in New York/New Jersey, players and fans have been at the core of our extensive planning for this game-changing tournament," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said.

In a perfect world, Team USA would shock the soccer universe and win its first ever World Cup. However, as everybody knows, this is far from a perfect world. I have a better chance of winning the title of Mr. Universe than the United States does of winning the World Cup — I'm just saying. Beware, this prediction is from someone who knows absolutely nothing about soccer, and who is not going to watch even one minute of the World Cup, but I am going out on a limb and saying that France will add another star to its national jersey. Oui, oui. €

“The most inclusive and impactful FIFA World Cup ever is no longer a dream, but a reality...”

A NOD TO NORRIS

Honoring a True Hollywood Legend

By Will Hill – Staff Writer

Carlos “Chuck” Ray Norris, champion martial artist and actor known for his roles in “The Way of the Dragon,” “Missing in Action,” “Delta Force” and “Walker, Texas Ranger,” died on March 20, 2026, a week and a half after his 86th birthday. Norris began studying martial arts in South Korea while enlisted in the United States Air Force in the 1950s. Before he became a marketable movie star, Norris was an accomplished martial arts champion. His accolades include winning the 1965 All-American Karate Championship and being a six-time undefeated World Professional Middleweight Karate Champion (1968-1974).

Norris incorporated aspects of Tang Soo Do, Taekwondo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu into his own style, known as Chun Kuk Do. The United Fighting Arts Federation has awarded more than 3,300 Chuck Norris System black belts worldwide. The martial arts magazine, *Black Belt*, inducted Norris into its hall of fame and credited him with holding a 10th degree black belt, the highest possible honor.

In addition to competing in martial arts competitions, Norris also owned a chain of 30 karate studios. He taught several celebrities, including Bob Barker, Steve McQueen, Donny and Marie Osmond and Priscilla Presley. It was McQueen who urged Norris to pursue acting.

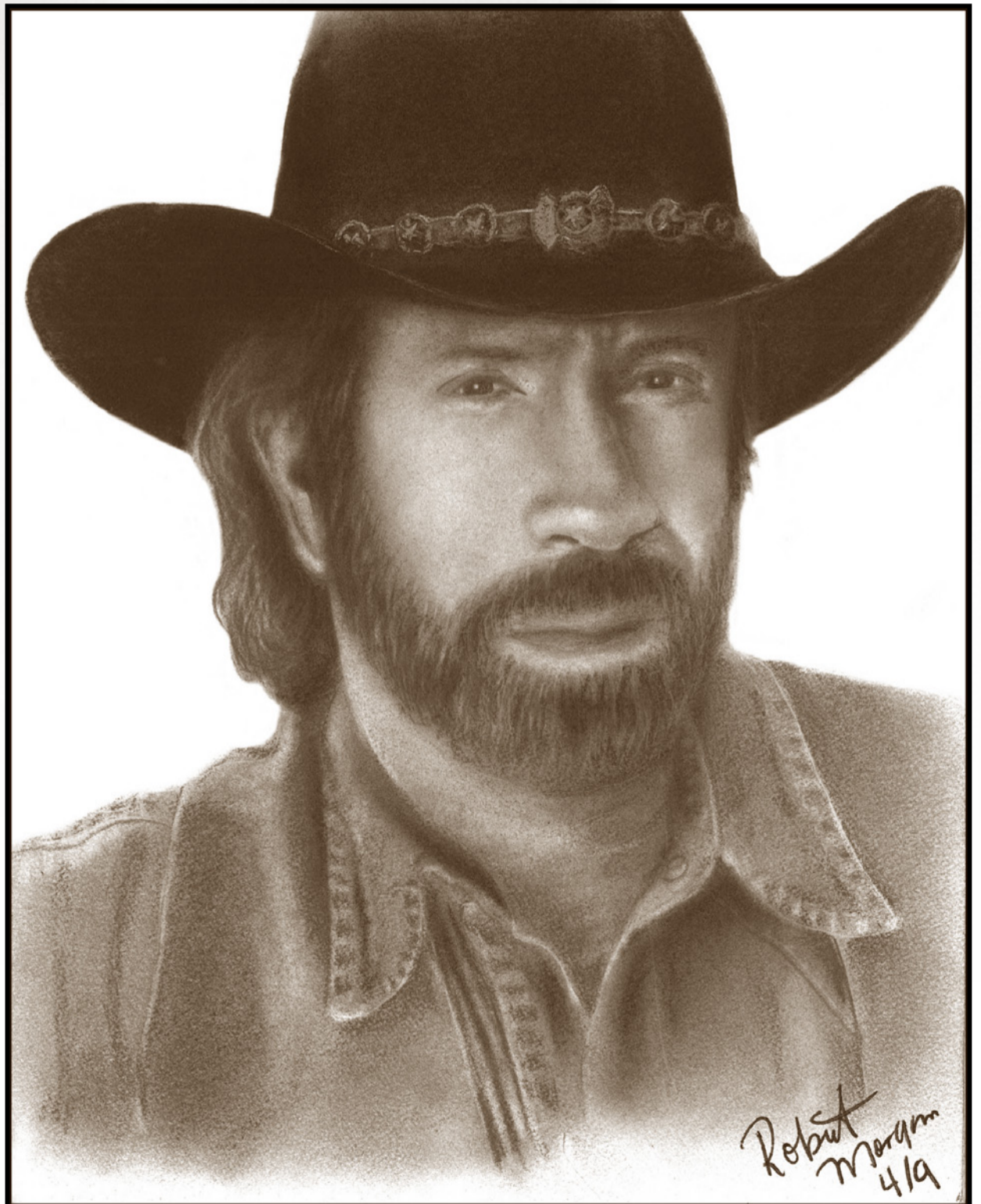
Norris’ film debut came in the 1968 movie “The Wrecking Crew,” where he fought Dean Martin. His big break came when his friend and occasional sparring partner, Bruce Lee, helped get Norris cast in the 1972 “Return of the Dragon,” with its climactic fight scene in Rome’s Colosseum.

In 1982, Norris said portraying a bad guy was not something that appealed to him. “I wanted to project a certain image on the screen of a hero,” Norris said about the roles he chose to play. “I had seen a lot of antihero movies in which the lead was neither good nor bad. There was no one to root for.”

That chance to paint martial arts

and martial artists in a positive light came about in 1993 in the form of a crime-fighting lawman, “Walker, Texas Ranger.” The show ran for nine seasons.

In 2010, then Texas Governor Rick Perry awarded Norris the title of honorary Texas Ranger, and the Texas Senate named the Oklahoma native an honorary Texan. €



FROM MEMES TO MYTHICAL SUPERHERO

It was around the time of Chuck Norris' appearance in the movie "Dodgeball" that his tough-man image began to take on a legendary quality. "Chuck Norris Facts" went viral online with such wildly inflated statements as, "Chuck Norris had a staring contest with the sun — and won," and, "They wanted to put Chuck Norris on Mt. Rushmore, but the granite wasn't tough enough for his beard."

Norris ultimately embraced the absurdity of the meme craze, putting together "The Official Chuck Norris Fact

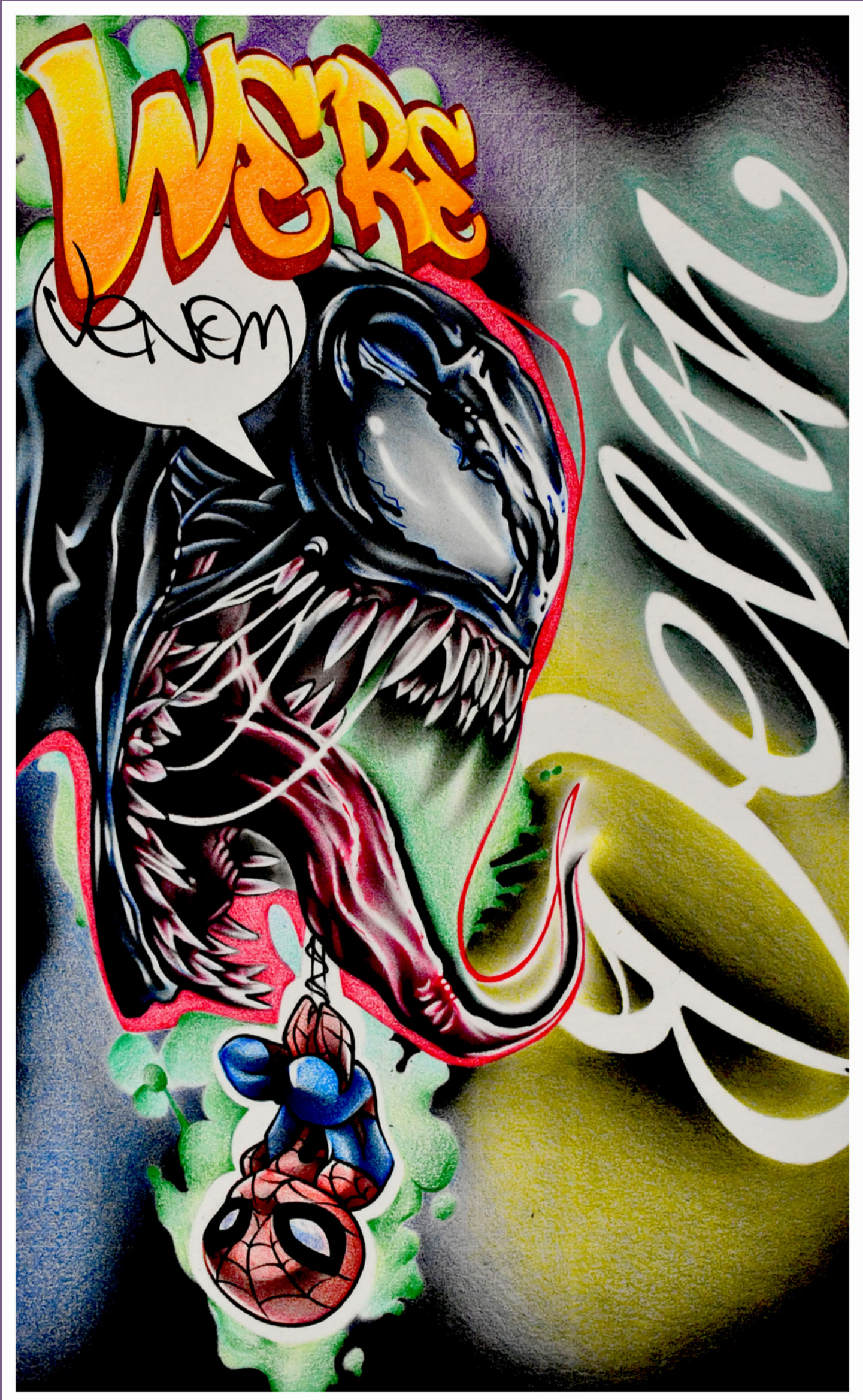
Book," which combined his favorites with supposedly true stories and the codes he aimed to live by. He would also go on to write books on martial arts instruction, a memoir, political takes, Civil War-era historical fiction and more.

"To some who know little of my martial arts or film careers but perhaps grew up with 'Walker, Texas Ranger,' it seems that I have become a somewhat mythical superhero icon," Norris wrote in the forward to the fact book. "I am flattered and humbled." €

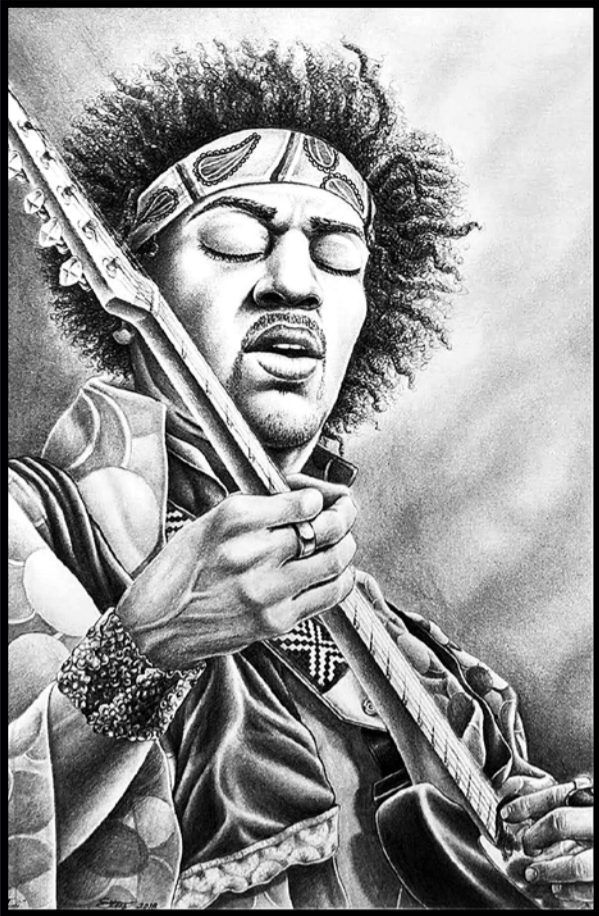
The following is a list of some of *The ECHO's* favorite Chuck Norris memes:

- 1. Chuck Norris doesn't read books. He stares them down until he gets the information he wants.**
- 2. Time waits for no man. Unless that man is Chuck Norris.**
- 3. When God said, "Let there be light!" Chuck Norris said, "Say please."**
- 4. The dinosaurs looked at Chuck Norris the wrong way once. You know what happened to them.**
- 5. If paper beats rock, rock beats scissors, and scissor beats paper, what beats all three at the same time? Chuck Norris.**
- 6. Chuck Norris has never blinked in his entire life. Never.**
- 7. Chuck Norris' calendar goes straight from March 31 to April 2nd, because no one fools Chuck Norris.**
- 8. Chuck Norris counted to infinity... twice.**
- 9. Chuck Norris can do a wheelie on a unicycle.**
- 10. Chuck Norris once won a game of Connect Four in three moves.**

ART
FLEX
BOOK



Venom | Danny Montez
Color Pencil on Illustration Board



Jimi | Aaron Striz
Graphite on Illustration Board



Joker | Rudy Delacruz
Mixed Media on Illustration Board



Marilyn | Marvin Curry
Mixed Media on Illustration Board

Want your craft shop goods featured in *The ECHO*? Request your unit's craft shop supervisor or the campus principal take a digital photo and email it to: Bambi.Kiser@wsdtx.org.

For regular artwork, send it to: *The ECHO* c/o Windham Admin. Bldg., P.O. Box 40, Huntsville, TX 77342-0040.

Drawing pads and/or illustration boards preferred. Half and quarter boards welcome. Artwork cannot be returned.

A

R

T

E

X

P

O



Dear Mom

*Submitted by Daniel Huffman Jr.
Montford Unit*

*Dear Mom,
I'm sorry you got called to rest,
All I ever wanted was to give you my best.
I cry often when I remember you're gone.
I remember us eating breakfast
before winter's dawn,
And how you did so much for me.
Now from this life, you are free.
I want to cry as I write this rhyme,
but pride stops me,
and holding back the tears is a fight.
I do believe you knew
how much I loved you,
and I know you loved me, too.
I'll see you at time's end,
and remember you'll always be my friend.
Now I cry, Mom.*

I Will See You Again

*Submitted by Raymond Shelton
Jordan Unit*

*The days are long;
the nights are even longer.
Time seems to stand still,
like it's some kind of perfected skill.
What keeps me going
is what I keep on knowing.
I will see you again.
I will see you and hug you again.
When that day will be, I do not know;
but the one thing I do know,
is that the day will come.
And when that day comes,
the day will seem short,
but I promise I will never abort.
As I write these words,
treasured memories are stirred.
My eyes are wet with heavy tears,
but belief relieves me of all those fears.
Faith, hope and love...
because of those, I'm assured of...
I will see you again.
I will see you and hug you again.*

Emotions

Submitted by Charles Mayo
Wynne Unit

Emotions, a man crying inside,
lost as a winter frost on a spring day.
Facing my past, always wearing a mask, can I be me?
A man crying inside, swept away like a tide.
Emotions and pain, I can no longer hide.
Does anyone know how
I've tried to rise above self-hate,
And learn to love again, a man broken?
Emotions, a man crying inside,
time is a reminder of the winter chill.
Searching for what part I have in this life,
a man crying inside. The old has died.
The new is alive. Still, the fear of removing,
the mask of my past.
Tearing down these walls, knowing I'll have
to crawl before I walk.
Brick by brick, tearing down walls,
a rainy day without an umbrella; will I be set free?
Emotions, a man crying inside.
Washing away my old name, taking off the mask.

It's Just Me

By Pricila Maumalanga
ECHO Staff Writer

I refuse to look back anymore,
unless I have to,
I only do repeats now when I shampoo.
The past is the past; I will leave it at that,
I've done what I've done,
and I wear all the hats.
My future is bright,
but I'm here in the present,
I don't have to feel shame,
guilt or resentment.
Taking one foot forward, one step at a time,
There will be mountains,
but I'm willing to climb.
Not a pillar of salt, but the salt of the earth,
My sentence was life; I have been rebirthed.
A second chance in a place
that others see as darkness,
I won't waste another minute
on feeling any regrets.
Look now, at yourself;
bear fruit, it's for others,
Treat every person like a sister or brother.
I've been filled with love,
no more feeling empty,
I look in the mirror
and accept that it's just me.

A Mother's Cry

Submitted by Daniela Baron
Crain Unit

As I lay myself down to sleep, some nights it is impossible not to weep.
My heavy tears soak these thin sheets, the same question on my mind stuck on repeat.
Escaping my lips in a desperate plea, tasting the pain that comes from deep.
A mixture of sweet and sour coming from hope and sorrow, asking God, "How much longer?"
But I dare not doubt; only let myself cry out.
Consumed with thoughts, pulling out memories from my treasure box.
Yearning for their touch and longing for that day to come.
This raw emotion of missing them cuts me like a knife with a rugged edge.
Slowly and rough, cutting through my love and trust.
Still, I hold on to His Word that is sharper than a double-edged sword.
As I'm bleeding out, I cry out...Jesus, my S.O.S.,
to send in the cavalry to once again rescue me from drowning.
Their precious little faces are engraved images of how they looked when I left them.
Even though years and years have passed, them growing up without me
is a truth and reality my heart refuses to grasp.
I know they're hurting more, not fully understanding why Mommy still can't come home.
They don't express the depth of their pain nor speak about the battles they face.
They try to keep it hidden to spare me from any guilty feelings.
But a mother knows...knows her babies, knows to get on her knees
to call her Savior when weak and in need.
Knows to go to her King, seeking his favor when making her pleas.
So, tonight, I come boldly to his throne, not just as a crying mother...
but in surrender, kneeling at His feet and lifting my hands in prayer.

Indigent Fan Program

The Indigent Fan Program will supply indigent TDCJ residents with a Registered Property fan for **FREE** from the commissary. The program runs from January 1 to August 31 each year, and you must submit your request within this time period.

To qualify for a **FREE** fan from this program, you must meet **ALL** eligibility requirements listed below:

1. Have less than a \$5 balance in your Trust Fund account.
2. Be classified with an indigent status for more than 180 days.
3. Have never received a fan through the TDCJ Indigent Fan Program.

Requests should include the following information:

I would like to request a fan from the Indigent Fan Program.

Name: _____

TDCJ # _____

Unit: _____

You must submit request through truck mail or regular mail to:

Commissary & Trust Fund/
Indigent Fan Program
P.O. Box 629
Huntsville, TX 77342

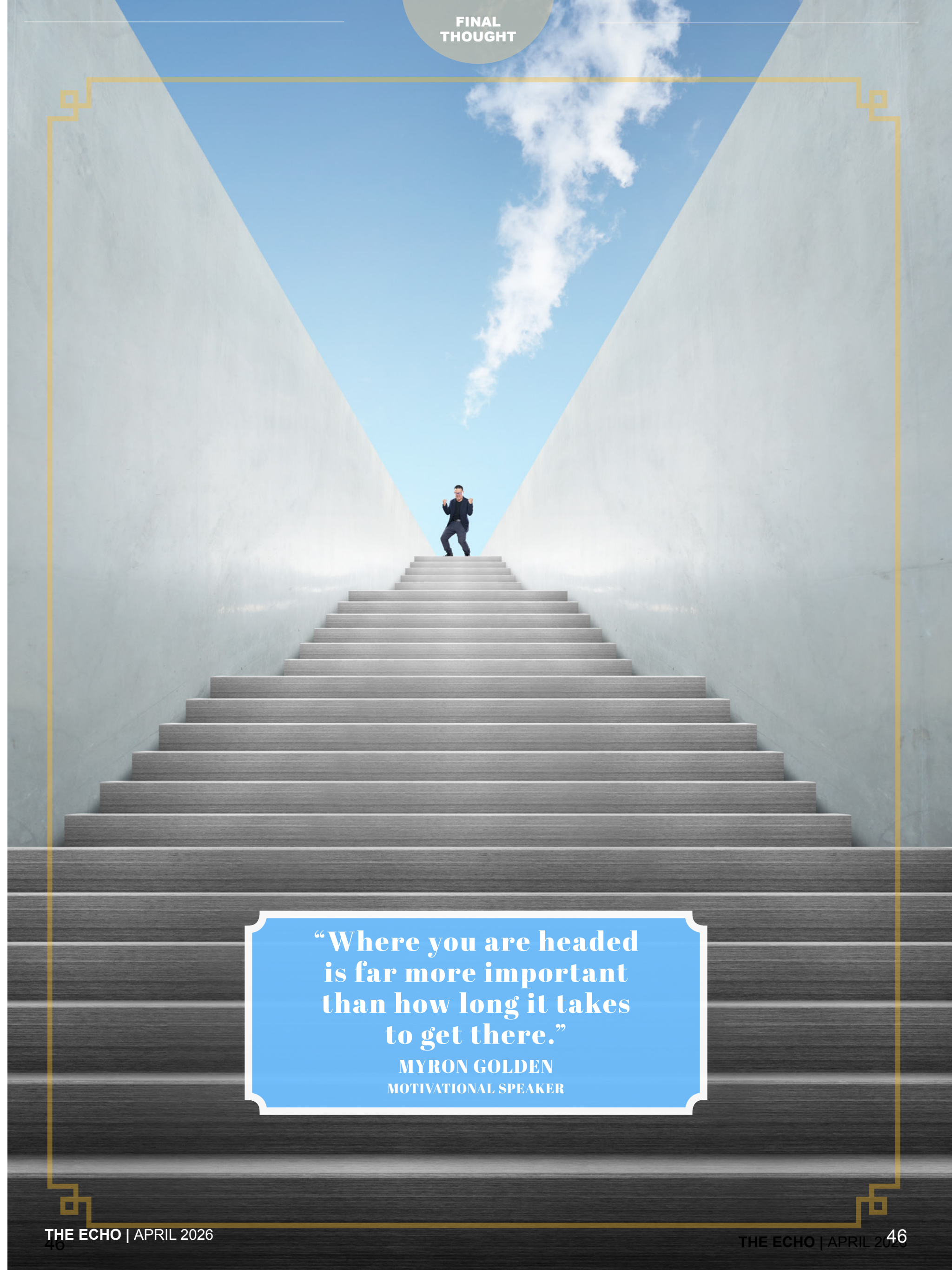


Missing Person

Alyssa McDermed



Missing person Alyssa McDermed (5'0" tall, 105 lbs., blonde hair, green eyes, Asian race and age 26) was last seen in Lubbock, Texas. She was last seen on June 29, 2023, wearing Unknown Clothing. She has multiple tattoos including a blue flower and grim reaper on her right forearm, a dotted lace tattoo on her chest, a Hawaiian woman with "1997" on the inside of her left calf, and a Koi fish on her right thigh. If you have any information on the following missing person, please contact the TDCJ Crime Stoppers Office at P.O. Box 1855, Huntsville, TX 77340. TDCJ Crime Stoppers will pay \$50 up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest, filing of charges or indictment of person or persons that committed a felony crime or is a wanted fugitive. Crime Stoppers guarantees your anonymity.



**“Where you are headed
is far more important
than how long it takes
to get there.”**

MYRON GOLDEN
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER