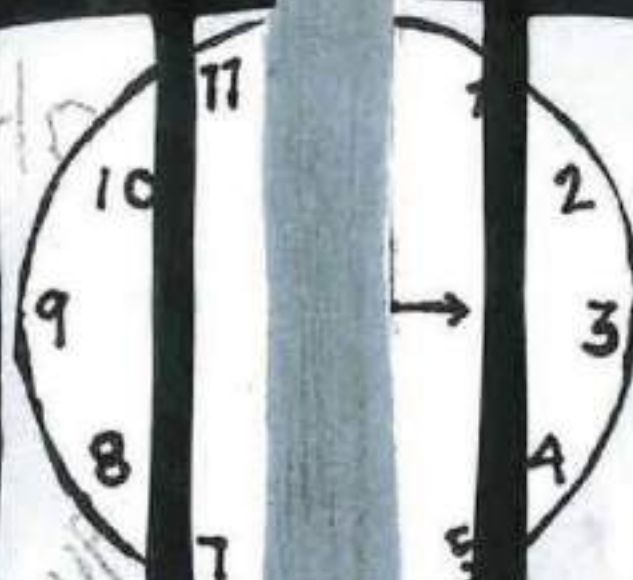


# EMERGENT VOICES



PSU Capstone class 2021



# Emergent Voices

On any given day in the United States, there are roughly 48,000 youth that are incarcerated in one form or another. In the State of Oregon alone, there are about 1,112 youths involved with the Oregon Youth Authority, with generally about 490 youth incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities. This is higher than the national average, which is close to half of the number of juveniles detained in Oregon. Although this number has been in decline since the mid 2000's, the higher-than-average number of detained youths in Oregon is still an issue that needs to be addressed, and we hope this zine will bring light to the issue of children in lockup.

Within juvenile corrections facilities, many youths feel that they are 'lost' or 'forgotten' within the system, and sometimes even that they have no one advocating for them. This has been compounded by the Coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions on State facilities, meaning that even more detained juveniles are cut off from the families and communities they left behind. As a result, many of these children feel that they are left without a voice, or that no one is listening. With Oregon's higher-than-average number of detained juveniles, that means that even more children are stuck within the system without a means of sharing their feelings and experiences with the outside world. To that end is our inspiration for creating this zine- to give the children in lockup a voice, and a way to express and share their individual experiences with the community. By giving the juveniles the freedom to create a piece of art or a written piece, we hope that it will allow for introspection by the children in lockup and that it will also bring light to the experiences and struggles of children in juvenile facilities.

We are grateful for this opportunity for collaboration with the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Justice Division through the Juvenile Justice Capstone at Portland State University. Our program has provided an outlet for detained children to express themselves for nearly two decades; two decades of continued work that proves there is value in programs that focus on art and expression in many forms. The professor of the capstone program, Deborah Arthur, initiated this program and has adapted throughout the years to maintain its success. Most recently, the coronavirus pandemic has stifled relations between incarcerated children and the outside world, and has also created a roadblock in this particular capstone, in which students at PSU would normally visit the detention center and gain invaluable facetime with the adolescents inside. This summer, Professor Arthur expanded the reach of the program and introduced the idea to create a "zine" that generates the same artistic passion as would in person contact. Our Summer 2021 class is proud and honored to introduce PSU's pilot zine, a way for all of us, PSU students and juveniles, to share our combined experience through the program. We hope that there will be editions to follow, so that the communities in Portland can become enlightened to the Juvenile Justice system and the stories shared by the very real and capable children that become swept up in the system, hidden and forgotten. Featured are merely a fraction of the "Emergent Voices" within the juvenile justice system.

*\*\*Some pieces of work are censored due to restrictions in place. None of the artwork or written pieces are censored in a way that detracts from the message or story any juvenile shares.*

1. Oregon Health Authority: Incarceration. Oregon.gov. <https://tinyurl.com/3psn9nkr>

2. Oregon Youth Authority Quick Facts. Oregon.gov. <https://tinyurl.com/4udy5ka>

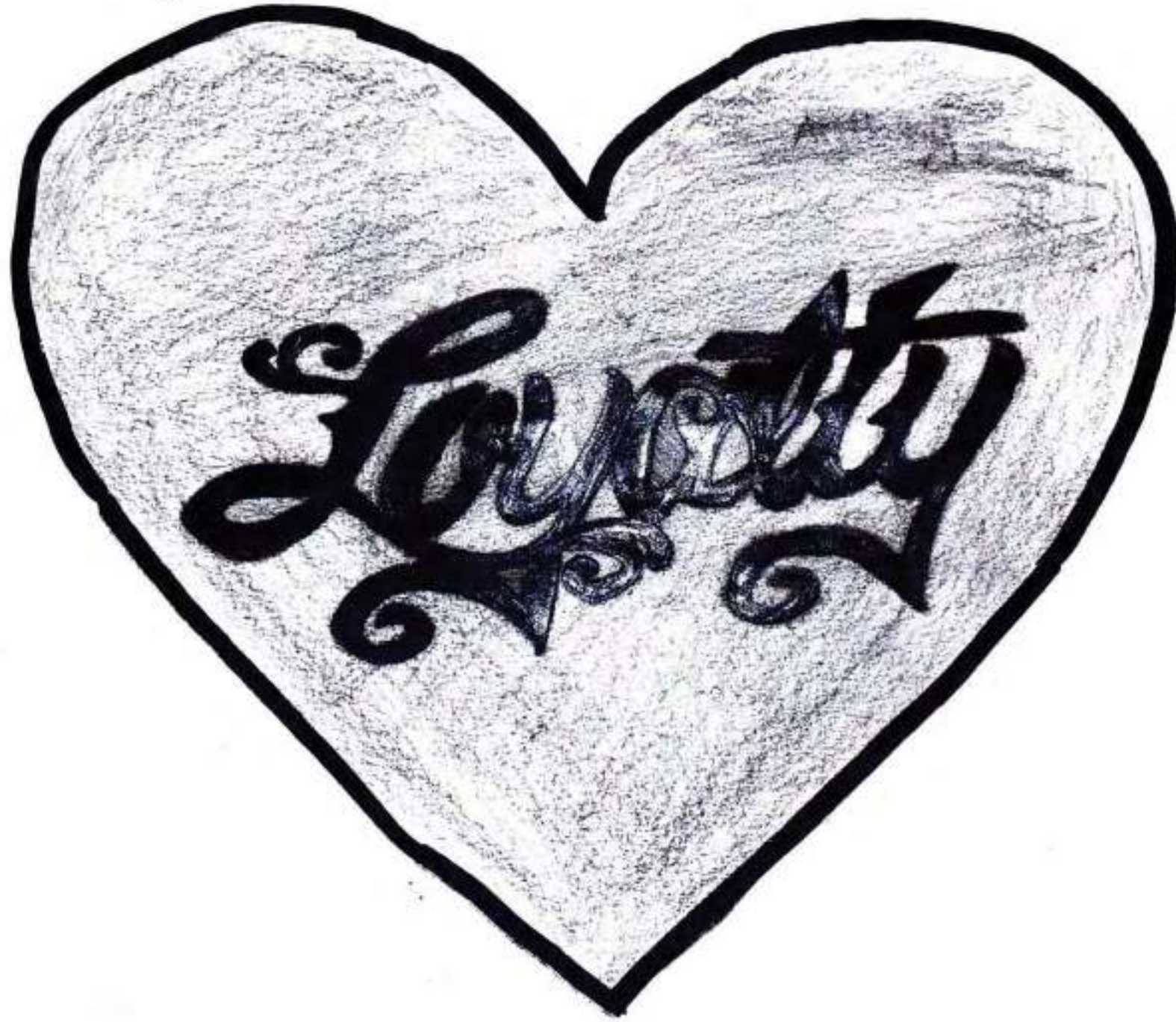
3. Oregon Youth Authority: Secure Facilities: State of Oregon. <https://tinyurl.com/2mb9djzu>

4. Portland State University: University Studies: Senior Capstone. <https://tinyurl.com/6xesmcz>

5. Sawyer, W. (2019). Youth Confinement: The Whole Pie 2019 | Prison Policy Initiative. <https://tinyurl.com/wvrhm7a3>



Loyalty means Everything to me If your not Loyal  
then you're not respectful





# What has your experience been like?

"Being a long-term youth in short-term detention has been difficult and stressful. It's been nine months for me, waiting for trial in a place where kids come in for 2-14 days at a time, so activities are limited. On the flip side, this time in custody has been a good place to regroup and slow down. Gaining good weight, getting good sleep, studying, and just getting things done without the threat of getting shot at is nice."

"It's been good, has helped me a lot, and it's also relaxing to be away from the streets. Being in here has overall been really helpful in realizing I needed to change my ways and become a good person."

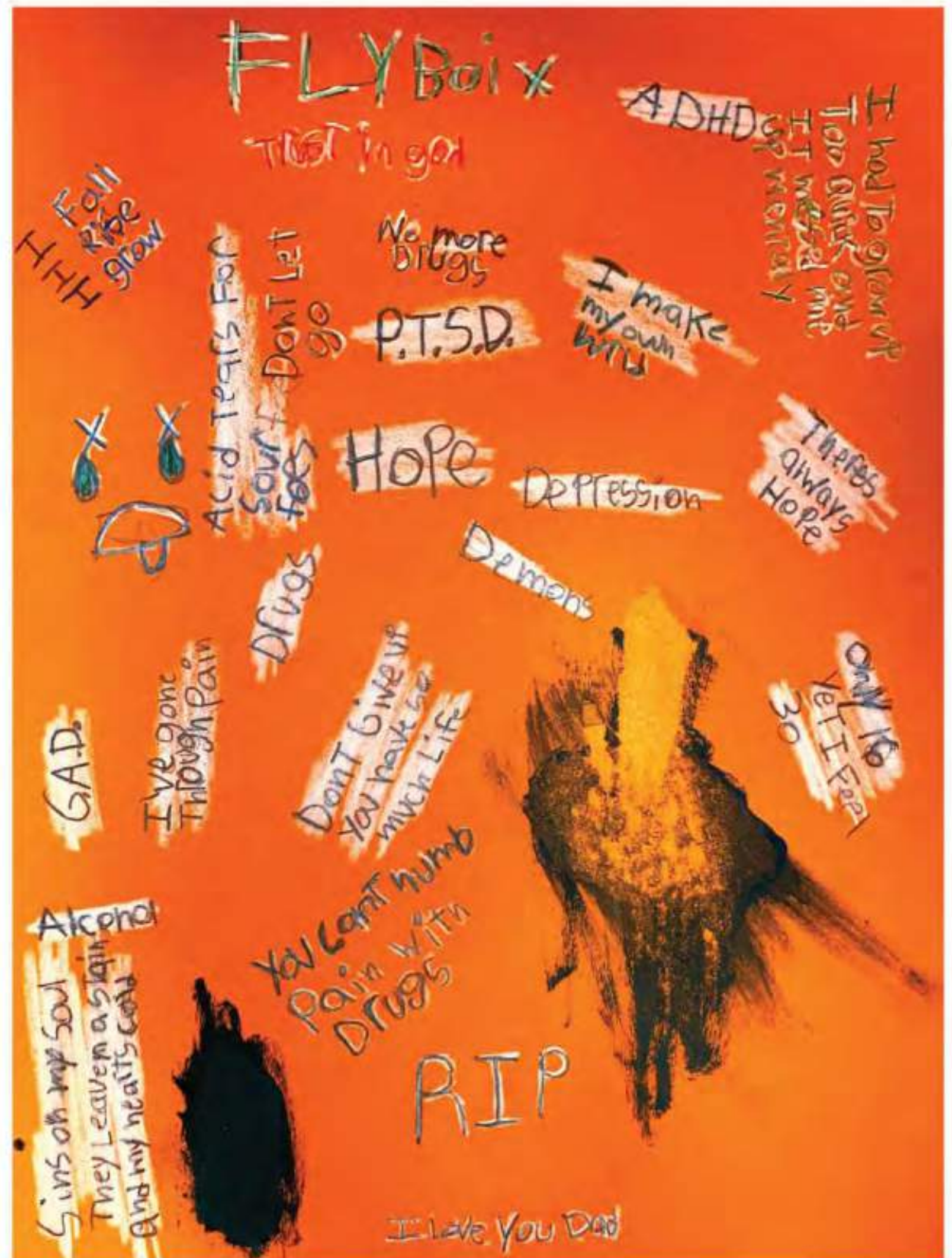
"Not bad actually, a lot of staff here are helpful. I want to be free though."

"Rough- I had to get used to people having authority over me. I never really had my parents around so I paved my own path."

"Corrections are very strict and scary at first, but it's not as bad as people make it seem. It helps you see why you did what you did and what you could have done differently. The people who work here really care and want you to do good."

"It's been a whole trip being in juvenile detention for this long. I had never been so far from home like this. It's crazy- a whole different experience in my life. I miss home and I miss Momma, but it's my fault life is hard. These streets made my heart cold."

"I have been in JDH 4 different times and the experience has been different pretty much ever time. First two times I was younger, trying to prove myself, so quite a bit of fighting with staff and other inmates. They feed you enough and you get showers and a bed, so it's not too bad. Not where you wanna be though."





The only 2 endings for living a "fast life."

Are the guns, money, and drugs really worth it?



AND  
MY MOM  
NAMED ME  
CESAR



"Life is full of all kinds of challenges that you have to fight and overcome. I used to wanna be in the NFL ever sense I was young. But in order to play football you gotta do good in school which I could never could. My first fight was in 3rd grade. I felt so good after, I remember the feeling, so I kept doing It in the streets. My older brother is training with Antony Smith (UFC Fighter) and I was too for a little. We will both make it to the UFC. I also love music. Making it, listening to it, all of it. I thought that was my calling until I realized it was just a hobby. I am 16 facing 3 years and I know in my heart I will still make the UFC. Music and Fighting is who I am. I don't want to fight in the streets anymore. I want to apply my skills to a sport that will make me \$ and stay out of jail."

- Anonymous



Life gone drop bombs on you, till the day you die.  
Learn to survive fuck that, push the limit we gone thrive.

Good bank bags an' good will clothes wasn't no life.  
Granny Sick she got cancer but still work to pay the rent.

I could neva sleep at night tryna ask her for a cent.  
Hard times hard choices, now I gotta represent,  
Started dealing with the devil moving his product in my city.  
Vaid from the world smokin' packs to the neck.  
Watch yo pockets if I see it ima turn the tick.  
Scheamit turned demon, the cards I was dealt had me sick.  
A life full of pain common when you grow up in the bricks.

Love what's love? a word used to cover up pain an' abuse,  
Or is it really magical like people say it is...

I come from the struggle we aint smiles and hugs.  
Especially these bitans man, sure she has my back but now shits bad  
gone like wind baby Imma!

Fuck all the romantics, this Street Shits REAL  
Mallockas dying, stravin' losin' they life to system before they hit!

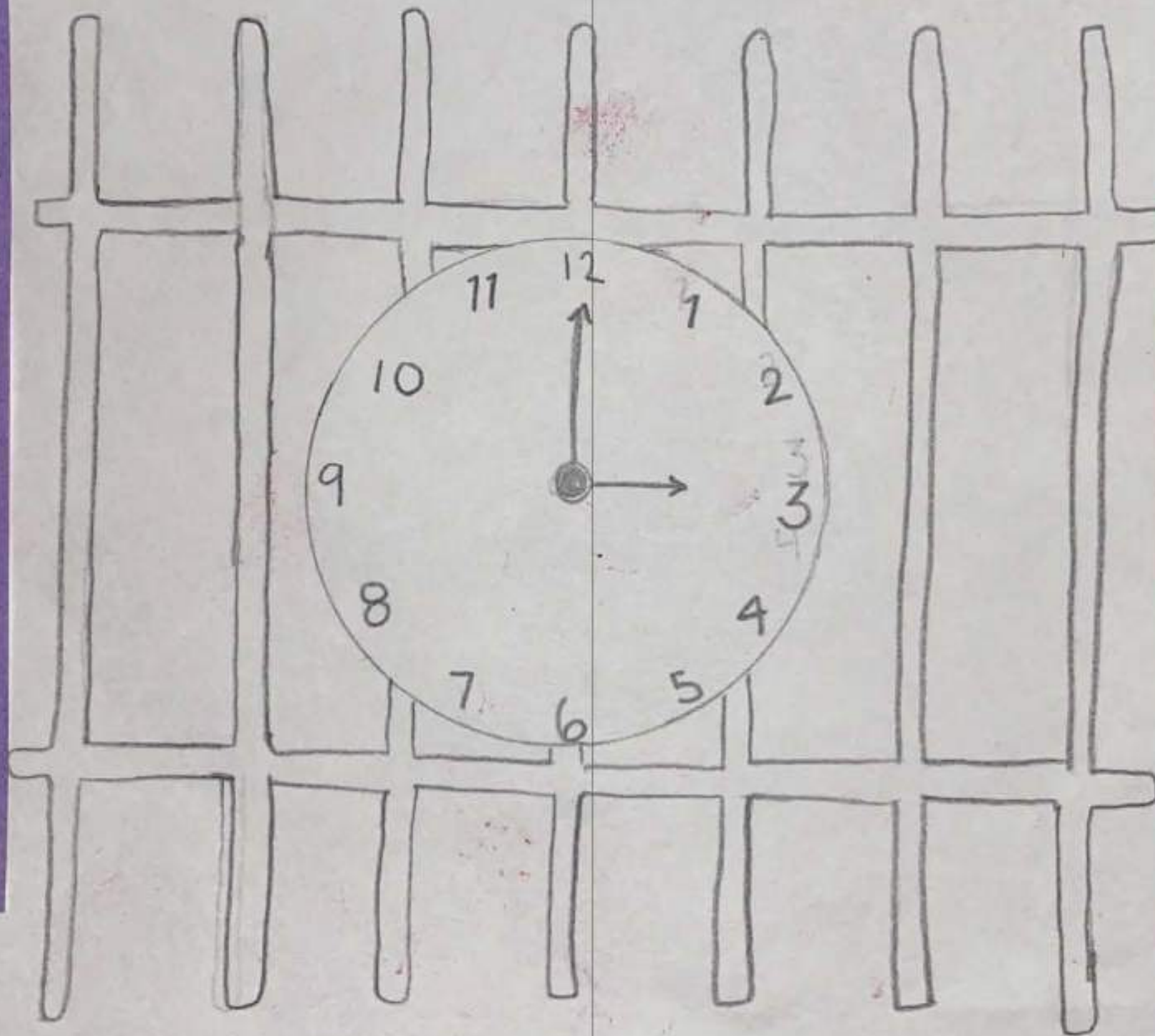
I'm a good guy for sure but force my hand... god forbid.

We came in for life (flawless as a diamond  
but as time goes on we get accustomed to funky ass  
life we been in). I an no bad person but had to live like  
Feel me or don't jus know this shits 100 proof





Most people think  
kids who get locked  
up are just delinquents.  
But has anyone ever  
thought about our home  
lives? The way we grew  
up? I was always  
around abusive people  
so I became violent at  
a young age. Not for  
no reason but any person  
I feel threatened by. I  
have to protect myself.  
By ten y/o I was already  
doing things on my own.  
My mom was too busy  
drinking to watch me.  
Things weren't good at  
home, so I had to make  
myself happy some how.  
Things to make my  
adrenaline rush. Stupid  
and scary things....



It all fun and  
games till someone you  
love gets hurt, or even  
yourself! How are you gon  
explain it? Most of the  
time you cant. You know  
how the streets work.  
Snitches get stitches. So  
its better to just stay  
away from it all. Trust  
me. I spent a lot of time  
just for covering for  
people. I've been in and  
out of JCH and corrections  
since 12. Im 17 now and  
still getting caught up.  
Deference is this time  
I messed up big time  
I cant take back what  
I did. All I can do is  
stay strong and push  
through because I know  
in the end if I keep  
doing the same things  
people get hurt. Time  
is precious spend it  
making a difference for  
the better good. No + time  
Behind Bars....



# How are you envisioning your future?

"Being 17 and hopefully getting out at 25 years old, I hope and am working towards getting my high school diploma and taking advantage of the free college to get a degree and be as ready as I can education-wise when I get out. I want a good job and to be able to make up for all the years lost and provide for my little sister and maybe my own family."

"After corrections, I want to work in mentoring or something similar in order to help people understand that all the street stuff is temporary and won't get you anywhere but jail or 6 feet under."

"I want to get my own apartment. I've always loved independence and go to beauty school after I get my GED."

"Nun' but the best. \$"

"I wanna find a whole different lifestyle, but changing and taking the decisions of living a lifestyle that's not yours is really hard. But it is what it is. Life's a trip."

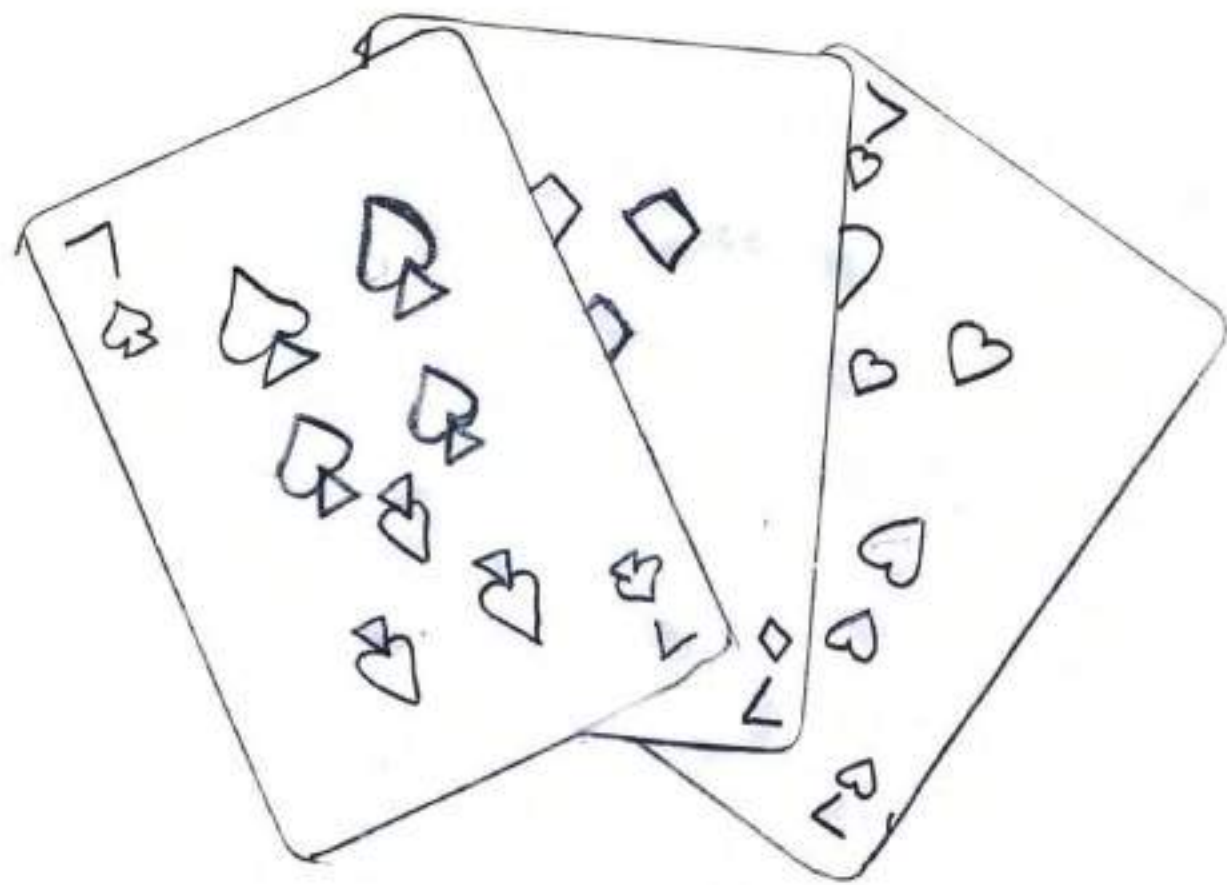
"Better than [sic] before I was locked up. I've matured more being here I feel."

"Right now, I am gonna work for a GED or high school diploma. I turn 18 in 14 months and by then I wanna have those, a license or permit, then get into a trade school for mechanics or welding."





LIFE'S A



GAMBLE



2021







# FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

"For anyone and everyone who reads this, follow your dreams. Life is long but so short, have fun, but stay humble. Words I wish I thought of a couple of years ago. I am still young enough to chase my dreams, and I don't want anyone to be in a position in life where you think you aren't good enough or you need to give up. Everyone has a purpose, and you will find yours. I heard some big words today, "Everyone is themselves until you go outside, you put a mask on. The reason there are so many shootings, deaths, riots, etc, it is because everyone copies someone you look up to, and they did the same thing." The point is, be yourself, love life, live life. YOU ARE WORTH IT!!!"

-Anonymous



# Acknowledgments

Our work in creating this zine would not have been possible without the participation and assistance of the juvenile justice facilities, the Capstone course staff at Portland State University, and most importantly- the juveniles in this facility. In order to recognize those groups, we would like to list them here:

## *Donald E Long Juvenile Detention Center*

Without the participation and support of the staff and youth at the Donald E Long Juvenile Detention Center, we would not be able to bring you the work of the youth in detention, and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with all of them at this facility.

## *Portland State University Capstone Program*

This program has been providing students the ability to experience work within the community and see through the eyes of those that are impacted by the juvenile justice system. We would like to thank Portland State University for the opportunity to experience this work.

## *Professor Deborah Arthur*

Professor Arthur has worked extremely hard over the years to coordinate with juvenile justice professionals and PSU students, and we are grateful to her for her work and assistance with this project.

This zine is a collaborative project between the students of the Portland State University Juvenile Justice Capstone Course and the young people in detention at the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Center. As such, we want to thank the youth that participated in this zine program, as their stories and experiences are extremely powerful and difficult to share. We would like to dedicate the end of this acknowledgment page to the individuals in detention, as they are the focus of this project and we appreciate their contributions immensely. Thank you for reading, and we hope that this project brings light to their experiences.