



Skyline

EARTHLINES

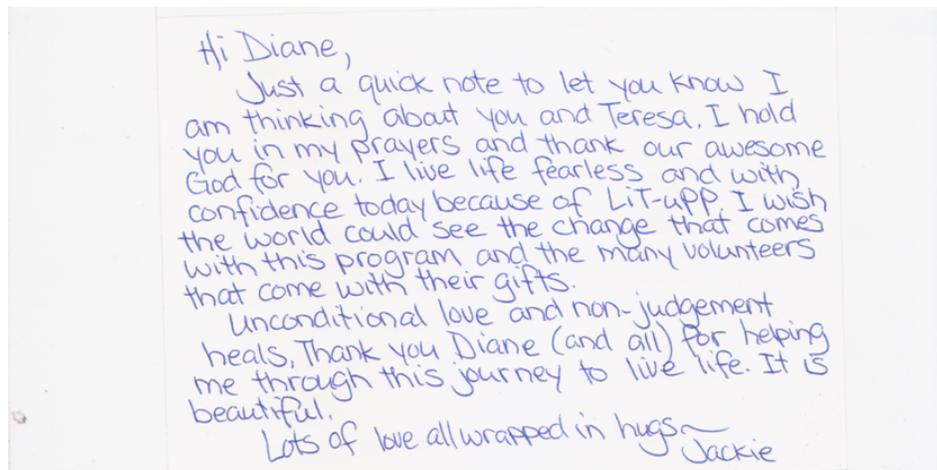
Fall 2018

By Diane Pendola

Dear friends and supporters of LiT-uPP,

I admit, this update has been far too long in coming to you! Many good things are happening for The Lioness Tale Prison Project and for the many people involved.

One of our core group members, Jackie, paroled last January after 33 years of incarceration! She is thriving and credits much of her self-confidence and ability to navigate these new and unknown waters of the free world to the skills she learned through LiT-uPP. Here is a note that she sent to us soon after her release:



We are hoping that Jackie will continue to work with us an ambassador for our program, sharing her experience with others, both inside and outside prison walls.

This leads me to another wonderful development for our program. Skilled professionals from NPC Research are generously donating their time to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of our program. After nine years at the Central California Women's Facility, LiT-uPP has touched the lives of hundreds of women. The study data that NPC is collecting will provide the kind of information necessary to scale the program to other institutions and to attract the financial support necessary for LiT-uPP to continue to grow. We hope, with a substantial

grant, Jackie could be employed as a strong and genuine voice for so many women silenced and forgotten within our prison system.

For the last 18 months we have had people from the outside, mostly people who have been engaged in advanced work with Gestalt Awareness Practice (GAP), coming into the prison to be trained by, and alongside, the inmates. This has been an incredibly rich experience for all involved. We call these people from the outside PAX (Panther Awareness Community Support) and recognize that they are indeed bringers of peace and good will.

Two of these people recently graduated our Panther Awareness Development course (PAD) which prepares inmates, (and now some outside PAX members) who have gone through the introductory LiT-uPP program, to facilitate LiT-uPP groups. We are so heartened to be building an effective team from both inside and outside to sustain the long-term growth of LiT-uPP at CCWF and beyond.

There were many touching moments at our last graduation. I want to share one of them. Brittany who is a young woman, now in her twenties who was sentenced at 16 years old to a life without possibility of parole sentence, has emerged as one of our inmate leaders. She courageously sang at our graduation, with the warden and other prison staff present, along with outside guests and many LiT-uPP graduates from former programs. She sang acapella, alone without accompaniment. She sang from her own experience of being a Silent One and a Broken One, as well as from someone who has found her empowered voice. She sings to the new people coming into the LiT-uPP program, offering them the hope, light and healing that she herself has found. Here is her song:

*I see you sitting there
Hiding behind your mask
Surrounded by so many
Yet so alone inside.*

*Throwing up walls
To any who come near
Gates securely closed
Locked by consuming fear.*

*Silent one, can you feel the pain
Holding you captive in a cage of shame
Silent one, how far will you go searching
For something that will make you whole.*

*You're trapped inside a prison
Created from your past
Your visions colored by
Hurt that forever lasts.*

*You believe no one understands
These emotions you feel
Beaten and broken by waves
That are all too real.
Broken One, we hear you cry
Uttered from the depths of a sea run dry
Broken one, take our hand
Let us guide you to a healing land.*

*Release yourself from those constricting chains
Stand up and face the pain*

*Oh forgotten one, remember once more
The fullness of who you truly are
Oh forgotten one, open your heart
Let forgiveness heal those old scars.*

*Let light come in
Clean out the smoke
We'll light up this world
One heart at a time
we'll light up this world
'til the whole world shines.*

*Written and sung by Brittany
-August PAD graduation, 2018*

I only wish we had a video of her gutsy performance. But because the prison will not allow any kind of recording equipment we are dependent on these written words.

And we are dependent on your continued support: financial, emotional and prayerful.

Thank you,

Diane on behalf of our entire LiT-uPP community



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