

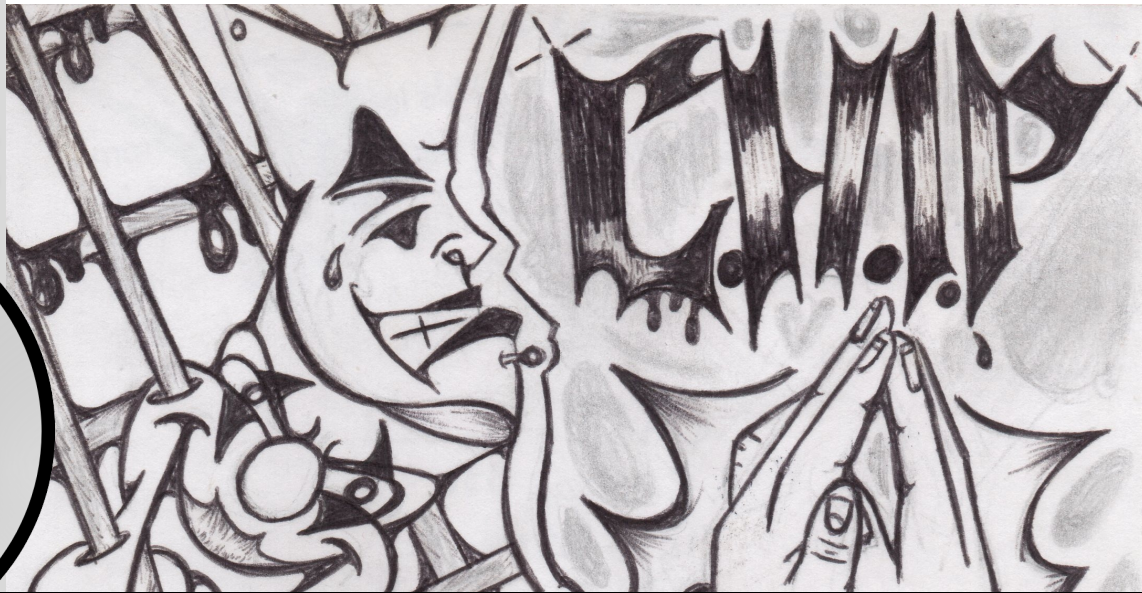
03:01

VOL 3 NO 1 FEBRUARY 2023

liberation blooms with
the spring



TEARING DOWN THE WALLS



Original artwork by Ivan Mandel 2023

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Bending the Bars - Project Update
- Seeking Input
- Letters to CHIP
- Hip Hop and Jail
- Feature: Mental Health
- About CHIP & Hours

CHIP PO BOX

Want to write to us directly?

Contact us at the address below.

We try to ensure that everyone is responded to within a month.

PO Box 851

Lake Worth, FL 33460

BENDING THE BARS - PROJECT UPDATE

The Community Hotline for Incarcerated People (CHIP) is working on collecting art, stories, poems, lyrics, songs, and more from Broward County jails to document the experiences of people incarcerated in the jails and amplify your voices. The project is going well but the hurdles of communication between inside and outside are slowing things down more than we would like. We still hope to exhibit art and share demos of the album in June 2023. Thanks for your patience!

Podcast: edited by Ruddy, 10 episodes of the podcast have been released with an 11th in production for February 2022. The podcast is called "Tearing Down the Walls" and is available on Spotify and Soundcloud. It features news, updates, and interviews with folks inside BSO jails. **February focuses on Black History.** Please tell your family and friends on the outside about the podcast, and share your stories, poetry, and perspectives with us. Give us a call!

Postcard Exhibit: we've received **over 100 postcards** with stories, art, poetry, and other information about the postcard-only policy and we're working on a digital exhibit to document how harmful this policy is. We are working on getting carepacks to all those who contributed to the project by February 1, but that budget has been used up and no more carepacks are available.

Interactive Storytelling: researcher Amelia is working to create an interactive storytelling game that imagines **how the grievance process could be different**. If you have ideas for a better, more effective process -- one that is actually just -- please contact us by phone or postcard! We want your ideas/visions/dreams.

Album: over 15 people have recorded demo tracks for the album, tentatively titled *Bending the Bars*. We're working on getting contracts and other legal paperwork to everyone who we hope will be on the album. We are committed to protecting the copyright of all artists and are working with an agent in LA to ensure that everyone owns their songs and the masters. We're (slowly) matching inside and outside collaborators to bring these tracks to life! **The biggest challenge right now is recruiting more producers and beatmakers on the outside.** If you know folks who might be interested in working on this project, please share their contact info with us.

SEEKING INPUT

What would make a productive, meaningful, and just **grievance process**? Who would run it? How would you access it? How would it be different from what now exists? Tell us your ideas!

Inmate banking over charges and the records are often inaccurate, including errors and double/triple dipping. Send us your stories!

What **resources (books, music, shows, etc.)** should people know about to learn more about mass incarceration? Send your tips!

YOUR LOVED ONES CAN FIND US ONLINE:

CHIPSOUTHFL.ORG

FB: CHIPSOUTHFLORIDA

IG: CHIP_SOUTHFLORIDA



CHIP and friends from Miami, Chicago, and Boston outside Broward Main Jail New Years Eve

MENTAL HEALTH AND INCARCERATION

According to BSO Sheriff Gregory Tony, there has been a nearly 70% increase in the number of people in jail receiving mental health services over the past 10-plus years. That's about 42% of people in BSO custody, yet only a small fraction of those receiving treatment are going through mental health court. As CHIP organizer Gary Field asks: "what is the story with those who aren't receiving that help? Basically, they've criminalized mental illness and treat addiction as a crime." Field notes that since many people self-medicate when they can't access other mental health treatment, the relationship between mental illness and incarceration is also connected to the racist and imperialistic history of the US War on Drugs. CHIP receives continuous reports of people being unable to access mental healthcare and medication while incarcerated, and the North Broward facility has a documented history of severe mistreatment of incarcerated individuals with mental illness, including the murder of Kevin Desir in 2021. As Broward Public Defender Gordon Weekes has said, the problems faced by people with mental illness in BSO custody demand transparency. Marq Mitchell of Chainless Change insists that BSO can't be trusted to investigate itself; a new system is needed. Irish shares his experience of mental illness while incarcerated. He says that people with PTSD are triggered by the jail itself, making it vital to cultivate positive interactions and productive outlets. If you can't help someone, he says, make sure that you don't harm them. Being intentional about having short, positive conversations with others regularly can help both people to survive. Meditation and inspirational readings can ground someone and help them be sympathetic and present to others, or even to step outside of themselves and be of assistance to others. A slogan he relies on is: *Each one reach one teach one*. He adds: "What is the meaning of life if not to learn from everything we've been through and help others?" What's your perspective on this issue? Send us a postcard to share.

About CHIP & Hotline Hours: Sun 12-6, Tues 9-3

The Community Hotline for Incarcerated People (CHIP) is an all-volunteer prison abolition group. We document the conditions in the jails, connect incarcerated people with family members and other resources, do direct advocacy, and agitate for systemic change. In January, we held a volunteer training and volunteers XI, Nafisa, and Cindy joined Ruddy, Noam, Alexis, Margie, Zack, Sarah & Nikki. We continue to recruit volunteers and if you can't get through, please keep trying.

CALL 954-866-0555 TEXT 561-486-9099 CHIP_HOTLINE@RISEUP.NET
OUR PODCAST ON SPOTIFY: "TEARING DOWN THE WALLS"

LETTERS TO CHIP

Have something to say that you want published in our newsletter? Send a postcard addressed to "Letters to CHIP" with your thoughts! We can't guarantee that all will be published, but we'll include what we can with first names only. We look forward to hearing from you!

HIP HOP AND JAIL

Bending the Bars builds on a history of rap artists producing music while incarcerated, including the radical work of Die Jim Crow Records (DJCR). DJCR works in a number of prisons across the country and produces albums that challenge the criminal punishment system. They are responding to the history of racist mass incarceration and the way it is reinforced by racist cultural products like the original minstrel song "Jim Crow" with the weapon of music. Unlike DJCR, which has been able to go physically into prisons to record, we're recording demos and doing a lot of work over the jail phone lines, which is technically challenging but has a history in hip hop. The track "For the Record" from Shyne's 2004 album *Godfather Buried Alive* features the artist's voice recorded over a prison phone line. The 2020 album *Thank You for Using GTL* by Drakeo the Ruler was entirely produced using vocals recorded over the jail phone lines and features an intro that reproduces GTL's automated menu. The album includes interruptions such as "this phone call is being recorded," and criticisms of private prison profiteering companies like GTL. We're excited to work with you to add *Bending the Bars* to this musical tradition.