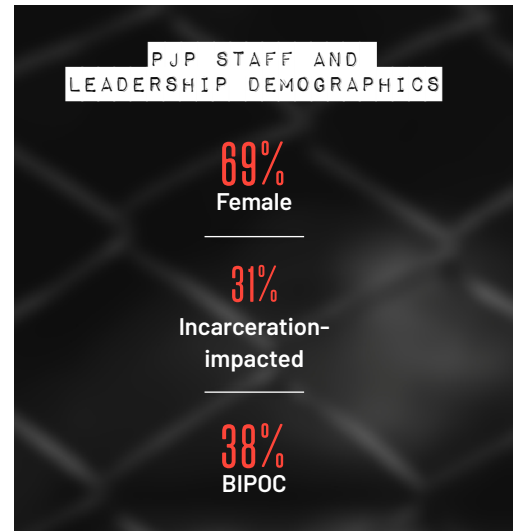




FISCAL YEAR 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Board of Directors and advisors at PJP's inaugural in-person meeting, Washington, D.C., Sept. 2023.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wesley Lowery Chair | Journalist and author
Melody Drummond Hansen Secretary | Chief Counsel, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Administration
Jennair Rennie Treasurer | Head of Finance and Accounting for Colture Holdings
Lawrence Bartley | Public speaker, Founder and Director of "News Inside," The Marshall Project
Mei Fong | Chief Communications Officer at Human Rights Watch
Emily Galvin-Almanza | Lawyer, Co-founder and Executive Director of Partners for Justice
Cristi Hegranes | CEO of Global Press and publisher of Global Press Journal
Yukari Kane | Founder and CEO of Prison Journalism Project
Lynn Oberlander | Counsel with Ballard Spahr LLP
Shaheen Pasha | Founder and Chief Education Officer of Prison Journalism Project, associate teaching professor at Penn State University
Steve Seleznow | Community-centered chief executive
Louise Story | Journalist, media executive and filmmaker, instructor at The Yale School of Management
Aly Tamboura | Criminal justice advocate and Co-founder of San Quentin News
Daveen Trentman | Co-founder and Co-owner of the Soze Agency
Cindy Wenig | Co-founder, Wenig Family Charitable Fund

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Bill Keller Chair | Founding Editor-in-chief, The Marshall Project
Reginald Dwayne Betts | Poet, lawyer, and Founder and CEO of Freedom Reads
Nikole Hannah-Jones | Knight Chair in Race and Journalism, Howard University
Marie Hardin | Dean, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Penn State University
Freda Kong | CFO, Bone Health Technologies
John J. Lennon | Incarcerated journalist
John X. Miller | Media executive and nonprofit leader
Alexander Papachristou | Executive Director of the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice
Elizabeth Share | Vice President of Strategic Relations, Solutions Journalism Network
Charles Whitaker | Dean, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications

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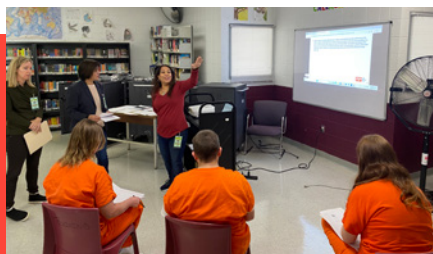
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INSIDE



I LOVE THESE
RAW STORIES
AND INSIGHTS

WE WOULDN'T EASILY
FIND ANYWHERE ELSE!

THANKS FOR GIVING
PEOPLE A VOICE

AND CREATIVE OUTLET.

— Social media comment

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

OUR PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

As Chairman of the Board for Prison Journalism Project, I am honored to reflect on our progress and achievements in 2023. News plays a crucial role in informing the public and helping us understand our world. And by directly empowering incarcerated people to report and tell their own stories, we are able to equip the public with a more detailed, nuanced and accurate understanding of our criminal legal system and the effects of our public policy decisions. Supporting prison journalism is a means of equipping ourselves with better information, allowing us to make better-informed decisions.

Since its inception in 2020 through the end of 2023, PJP has worked with over 710 writers in 230 prisons across 41 states, publishing more than 2,200 stories. Our writers have been featured in esteemed outlets like The New Yorker, The New York Times, Al Jazeera English, The Guardian and The Marshall Project. Each story amplifies marginalized voices and ensures their participation in vital public policy conversations.

Thanks to our generous donors, we achieved significant milestones last year. We developed a comprehensive handbook and certificate training program to offer training, editing and mentorship to writers at all stages. We also revamped PJP Inside, an award-winning newspaper that empowers incarcerated writers. This publication combines our writers' best stories with instruction and tips on writing and reporting, fostering a culture of learning and collaboration.

INVESTING IN THESE STORYTELLERS
EMPOWERS INCARCERATED
INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE IN
CONVERSATIONS THAT DETERMINE
THE BALANCE BETWEEN JUSTICE,
LIBERTY AND SAFETY.

Equipping our writers with journalism skills enables them to effectively communicate their experiences. Investing in these storytellers empowers incarcerated individuals to participate in conversations that determine the balance between justice, liberty and safety.

Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding our reach. Your continued support will enable us to empower even more incarcerated individuals in public policy debates.

On behalf of the entire board, I extend my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of those impacted by incarceration.

Thank you for your commitment to justice and empowerment.

Warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wesley Lowery'.

WESLEY LOWERY

PJP Board Chair and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist

As co-founders, we're thrilled to share PJP's progress and achievements over the past year. We embarked on this journey to amplify the voices of incarcerated writers, recognizing the importance of every unheard story. Thanks to your dedication and support, we made significant strides in 2023.

The U.S. houses nearly 2 million people behind bars, yet there is virtually no reporting from within prisons. Most stories about mass incarceration come from outside writers with limited access. PJP aims to change that by changing the storyteller. Our writers have published impactful stories on topics ranging from death row realities to the generational cycle of incarceration.

In 2023, we focused on building a pipeline of prison journalists and helping to create space for more prison stories in the media as we learned about our writers' needs and how they can do impactful journalism in a restricted environment.

Our training and coaching programs have evolved, culminating in our core curriculum – a self-directed, three-certificate program based on our handbook, "A Prison Writer's Guide to Media Writing," published in March 2024. This, along with our revamped award-winning quarterly training newspaper, PJP Inside, and the soon-to-be re-launched PJPost, a digital training newsletter,

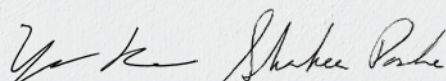
empowers our writers to participate in the broader conversations around the criminal legal system.

Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding our impact and reach. We are exploring partnerships with local and national publications to connect incarcerated individuals' experiences with broader societal issues and expanding the distribution of PJP Inside to more prison libraries and education programs. We also see opportunities for journalism training that supports literacy and workforce readiness training.

We are deeply grateful for the overwhelming support and encouragement from every corner of our work. Your contributions have been instrumental in enabling us to make a tangible difference in the lives of incarcerated individuals.

We envision a more inclusive world where everyone's story matters. We invite you to explore our website, sign up for our newsletter and consider partnering with us in this vital work.

Thank you for your continued support,


YUKARI KANE AND SHAHEEN PASHA
Co-founders, Prison Journalism Project



1. Yukari showcasing PJP's LION Operational Resilience Award.

2. The team wears their PJP hoodies on a video call.

3. PJP staff in the Marin Headlands above the Golden Gate Bridge.

4. Yukari and Shaheen proudly wear "The world needs prison journalists" t-shirts in Philadelphia.

5. Shaheen and Ryan Moser at Penn State University's TEDxPSU event.



"Since I have been a part of PJP's writing program, I feel more like a human being. I feel like I have a voice that can be heard and not silenced. ... I believe that the light PJP shines on this dark place called prison allows me to do better and be better and to be a better person."

Summer Breeze

Incarcerated in Missouri



Prison Journalism Project is an independent, national nonprofit initiative that trains incarcerated writers to be journalists and publishes their stories, so they can shift the narrative and serve as powerful voices in the broader conversation about the criminal legal system across the U.S. and in their local communities. We aim to create a pipeline of prison journalists and help build an ecosystem for prison journalism in a way that amplifies these critical voices and also supports our writers' successful return to society.

We offer a five-stage training and professional progression grounded in strengthening literacy skills and other workforce readiness skills that can be applied directly to future employment. We train writers via a self-paced certification course; our educational newspaper PJP Inside; correspondence-based advanced workshops; in-person training; and partnerships with local prison education groups. Our editorial staff works with writers to publish their stories on our online publication and in

OUR MISSION

partnership with other news organizations. We serve as moderators of a constructive public dialogue vital to a strong democratic society. Our stories aim to bring more diverse and different perspectives, reflecting the world inside the criminal legal system in all its complexity, countering oversimplification and polarization.

The deep reforms that are necessary to fix the U.S. criminal legal system can only happen through informed public discourse. People in prison must be a part of this conversation, but not enough of them have the training to bring transparency to an opaque system nor the opportunities to participate in the conversation. We see an opportunity to make a systemic impact with hands-on journalism training grounded in literacy development and workforce readiness. We hope that training, the impact of our writers' stories, and their successful return to society will contribute to creating more inclusive, equitable and resilient communities.

PJP THEORY OF CHANGE

At PJP, we believe in the power of journalism to effect meaningful change in the criminal legal system. PJP's Theory of Change demonstrates how we aim to support writers so their voices and experiences contribute to discussions about the criminal legal system. Our goal is to shed light on the issues of incarceration by providing the training, newsroom support and publication opportunities that in turn lead to more opportunities for our writers during and after incarceration.



After 21 years of incarceration, my views of the criminal justice and prison system have taken a complete turn. I have witnessed horrific tragedies and some of the kindest acts of humanity, neither of which were accurately reported (or not reported) by the mainstream media.

PJP has provided the outside world unique insight into America's prisons that no other media outlet has been able or willing to."

— Jeffrey McKee, incarcerated in Washington state



Photo by Peter Merts

ENSURING WRITERS' SAFETY AND DIGNITY

At the heart of PJP's mission lies a profound commitment to Duty of Care, our ethical obligation to prevent foreseeable harm to those who dare to tell their stories from behind bars. Duty of Care is a principle that guides every facet of PJP's interactions with incarcerated journalists and ensures their safety and dignity.

The PJP team understands that no one is taking a bigger risk than the writers inside. No matter how much experience we have teaching inside prisons, no matter how much we might think we know about their environment, no matter how long we've been doing this work, we keep in mind that we can never know their world.

The First Amendment gives people inside the right to express themselves, but because they are not free physically, they may face reprisal and severe consequences for their work. Ultimately, it's not our place to make choices for them. However, we see it as our responsibility to make sure they understand and accept the risks they are taking, and that we do our work with care, so that we don't unintentionally bring them harm.

PJP's **Writer Relations team**, staffed by formerly incarcerated individuals, are the stewards of PJP's Duty of Care. Through trauma-informed communications, the team encourages writers to balance their desire to tell their stories with the reality of their circumstances while ensuring that PJP's interactions are respectful and centered around the writers' needs and safety.



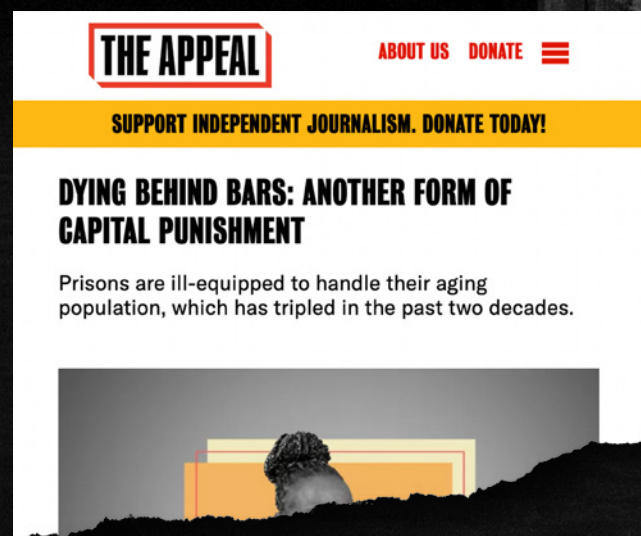
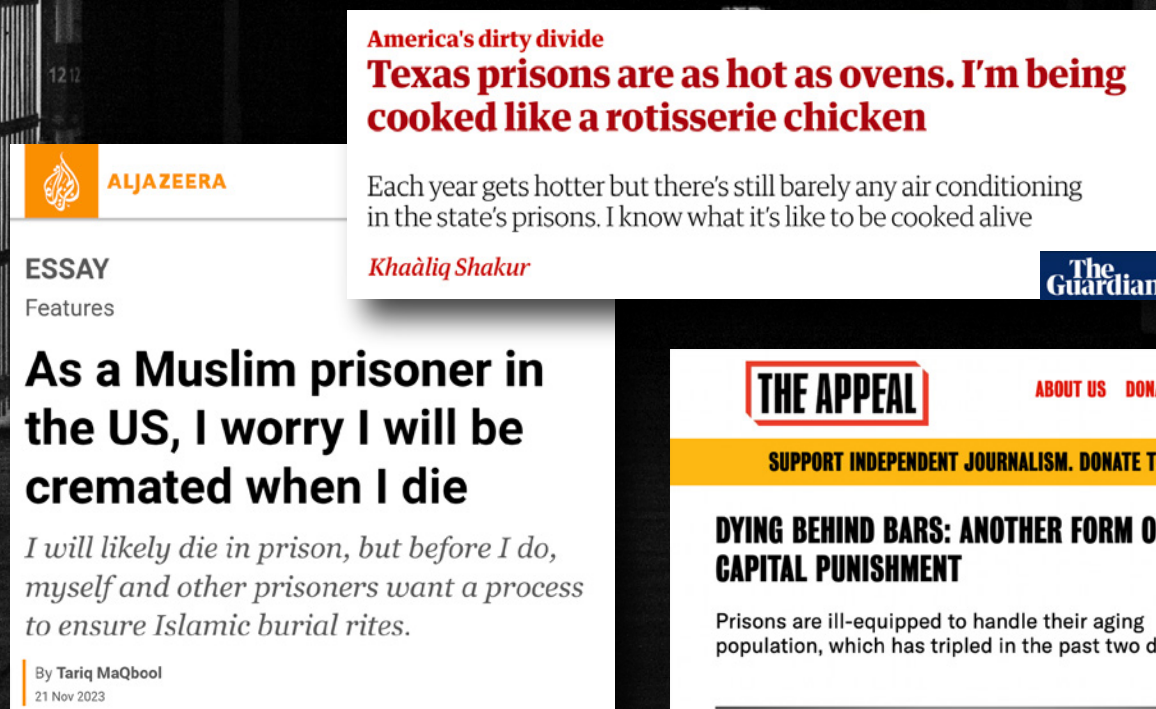
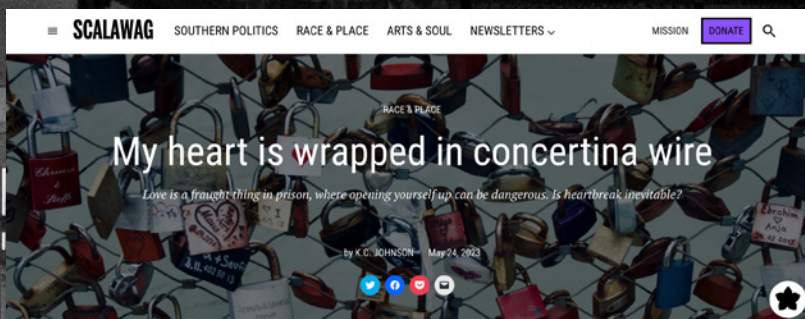
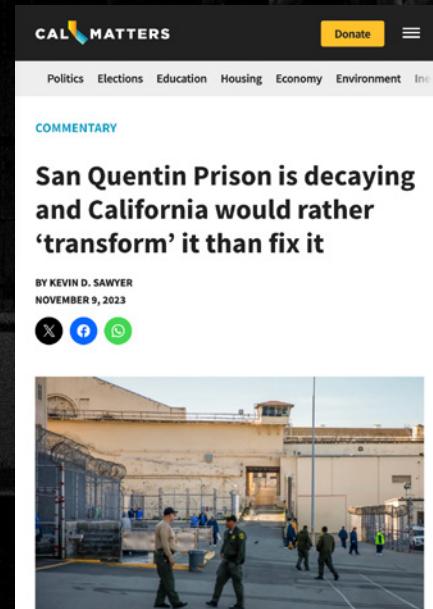
ANOTHER WELL WRITTEN
PIECE OF JOURNALISM
THAT GIVES THE READER

PAUSE TO REFLECT

ON WHAT IS TAKING PLACE

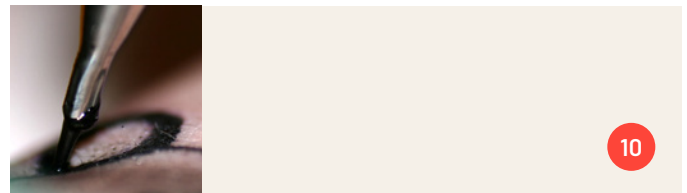
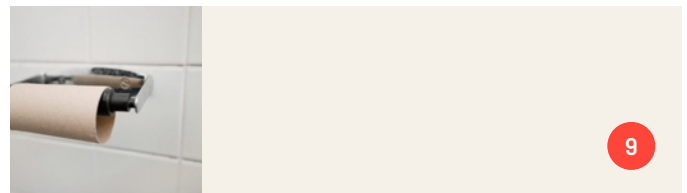
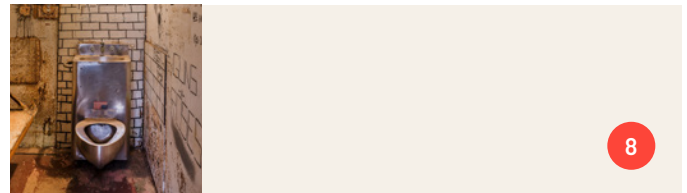
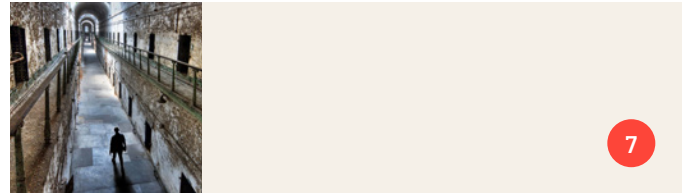
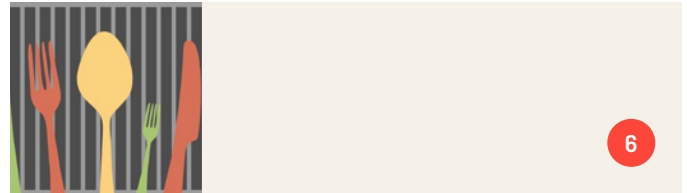
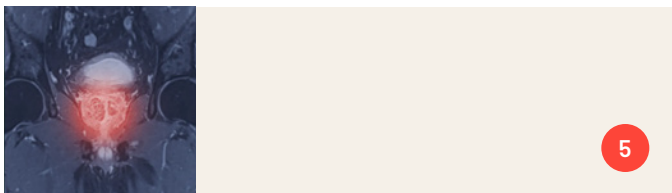
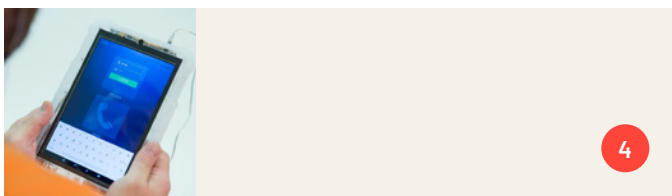
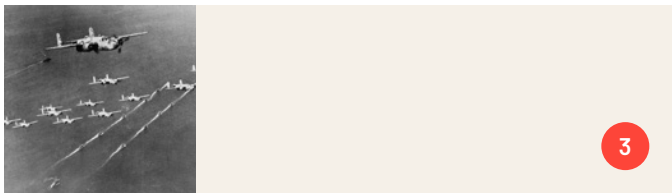
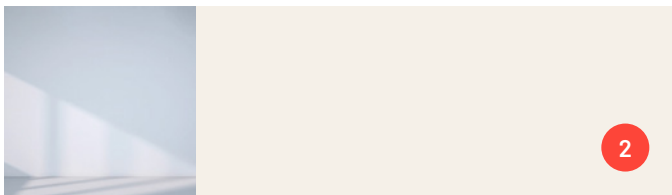
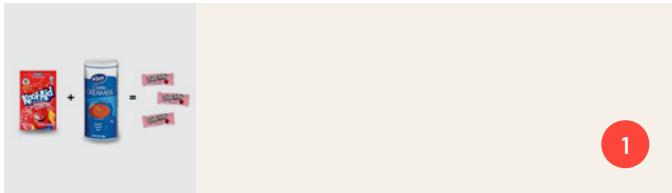
WITHIN THE PRISONS AROUND US.

— Social media comment



Top 10 STORIES of 2023

*Based on number of views from
March 2023 to December 2023.



452

Stories published in 2023




2023

BY THE NUMBERS



246

Writers published



466,832

Website views

41	3	230	710+	2,200+
STATES (incl. D.C.)	COUNTRIES	PRISONS	WRITERS	STORIES

As of December 22, 2023


48

Newsletters produced
The Inside Story

60%

Increase in subscribers,
February to December 2023
(TO 3,923)*

*In July 2024, The Inside Story newsletter reached 5,000 subscribers.



2.4 MILLION, UP 144.7%

Social media impressions



1

IMPACT

A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENT



2



3

1. Yukari with the 2023-24 cohort of the CUNY Executive Program in News Innovation and Leadership.
2. Yukari showcasing PJP's LION Operational Resilience Award.
3. SPJ Excellence in Journalism Award won by Washington state-based contributor Jeffrey McKee.

THE NEW YORKER

The article "[Listening to Taylor Swift in Prison](#)" (Sept. 2, 2023), written by PJP alum [Joe Garcia](#), was published by The New Yorker. The story went viral and helped increase awareness of PJP and its work with incarcerated writers.



The article "[As a Muslim Incarcerated in New Jersey, I Worry I Will Be Cremated When I Die](#)" (Nov. 21, 2023), written by PJP correspondent [Tariq MaQBool](#), was published in partnership with [Al Jazeera English](#). Following publication, the New Jersey Department of Corrections adopted a new policy regarding religious burials in its facilities.

The Guardian

The article "[Tales From a Cell Below 'The Crazy Unit'](#)" (Dec. 20, 2023), written by PJP contributor [Kory McClary](#), was published in collaboration with [MindSite News](#) and [The Guardian](#). As part of that partnership, a reporter with MindSite News [investigated the death](#) — and life — of the man who had been incarcerated above McClary.



TEDxPSU: Why We Need Prison Journalism (February 2023)

Shaheen presented a TEDx talk at Penn State University's TEDxPSU 2023 event on the importance of prison journalism and why incarcerated people deserve their stories to be just as loud as everyone else's.

Collaborative Journalism Summit's Lightning Talks (June 2023)

Yukari showcased PJP's [House of Milo video](#) and participated on a panel about duty of care at the summit.

"The Prisoner and the Pen" (Sept. 29, 2023)

Incarcerated PJP advisor John J. Lennon mentioned PJP, its co-founders and its writers [Robert Lee Williams](#) and [Ryan Moser](#) in this article for Esquire.

"Changing the Narrative by Changing the Storyteller" (October 2023)

Yukari joined PJP board member Cristi Hegranes and Capital B's Akoto Ofori-Atta on a panel in the SPARK series at Columbia University School of Journalism, sponsored and hosted by the MacArthur Foundation.

"Prison Journalism: Being Seen Through Storytelling for the Masses" (October 2023)

Shaheen spoke at Houston Community College's psychology department's Psi Kappa society, many of whom were incarceration-impacted.

LION Operational Resilience Award

PJP was awarded the 2023 LION (Local Independent Online News) Operational Resilience Award, which celebrates an organization's transformational impact via the establishment of processes and policies, and a company culture designed to support staff and manage growth.

SPJ Excellence in Journalism Award

Washington state-based contributor Jeffrey McKee received a 2023 Society for Professional Journalists Northwest Chapter Excellence in Journalism Award for his article ["Inside the Mental Health Unit at Washington State Penitentiary."](#) Co-published with Public Health Watch, Jeffrey's story shed light on the experiences of mentally ill incarcerated patients and the staff who oversee them.

CUNY Executive Program in News Innovation and Leadership

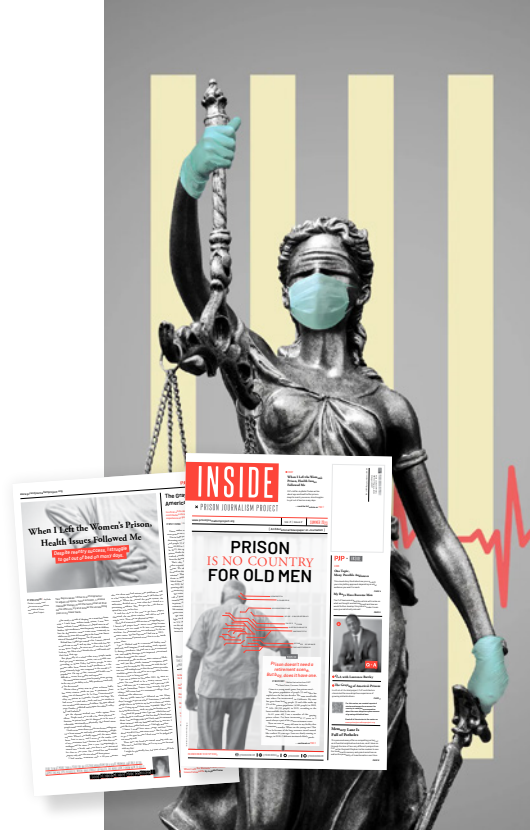
Yukari was one of 20 leaders selected for the 2023-24 cohort of the CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism Executive Program in News Innovation and Leadership.

INN Innovative Donor Recognition Strategy

Featuring more than 100 songs selected by the organization's incarcerated writers — rap, pop, gospel and soul — PJP's ["Favorites From Inside Prisons"](#) Spotify playlist was gifted exclusively to all donors who participated in PJP's 2022 end-of-year fundraising campaign.

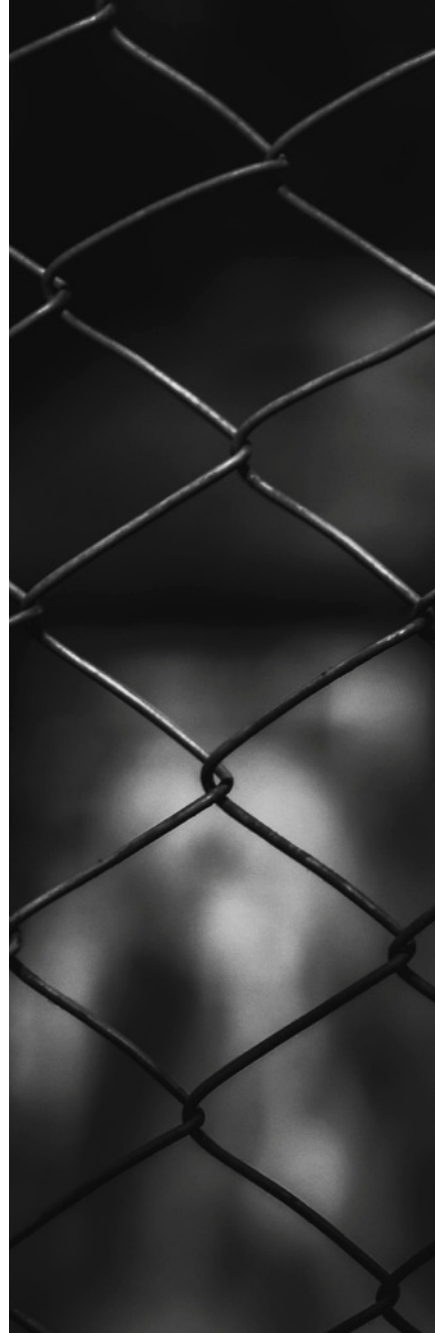
The campaign was lauded by Institute for Nonprofit News as an innovative donor recognition strategy.





Aging in Prison Series

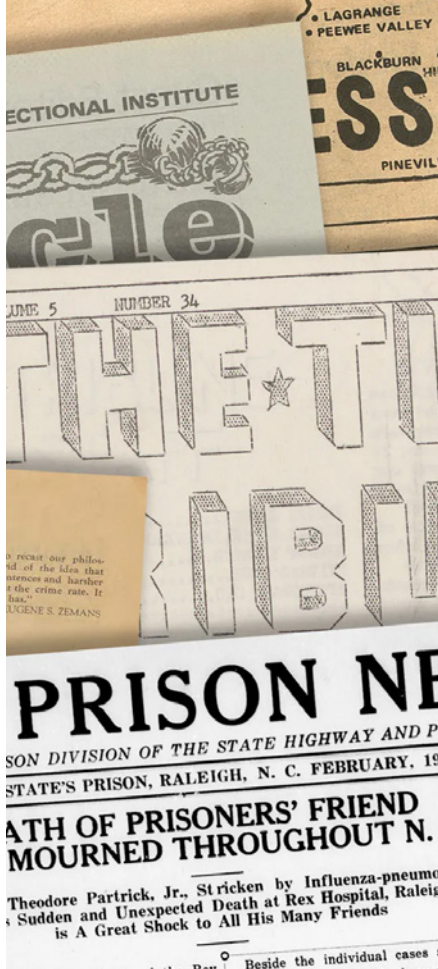
Launched in January 2023, PJP's special project on America's graying prison system is a collection of stories that explores the challenges of growing old behind bars. These stories cover such topics as inadequate health care, the emotional and physical toll of aging in prison, the lack of resources for elderly inmates, and personal accounts of enduring prison life as an older adult. The series aims to shed light on the harsh realities faced by elderly prisoners and the systemic issues within the prison system. The article "Dying Behind Bars – Another Form of Capital Punishment" (May 4, 2023), written by PJP deputy editor Wyatt Stayner, was published in partnership with The Appeal.



The Inside Story

PJP's weekly newsletter, The Inside Story, includes featured articles written by incarcerated journalists, news about PJP's initiatives, and insights into the criminal legal system. The newsletter provides subscribers with perspectives from inside prisons, highlighting important issues, and promoting awareness and advocacy for prison reform. We revamped our design in February 2023, and the first issue featuring the new design received the most clicks of any issue in the newsletter's recent tracked history.

 [Sign up](#) to receive The Inside Story.



Prison Newspaper Project

Launched in March 2023, the [Prison Newspaper Project](#) tracks and amplifies prison publications. The database is believed to be the first formal tally of existing newspapers. As of February 2023, there were 24 operational, prisoner-run news publications at work across 12 states.



PJP Inside

[PJP Inside](#), partially underwritten by the Eugene M. Lang Foundation, is PJP's award-winning quarterly print newspaper that focuses on educating and inspiring incarcerated writers. Each issue includes news reports, commentary on current events, and stories on topics like mental health and family relationships, while also providing lessons with annotations and other tips.

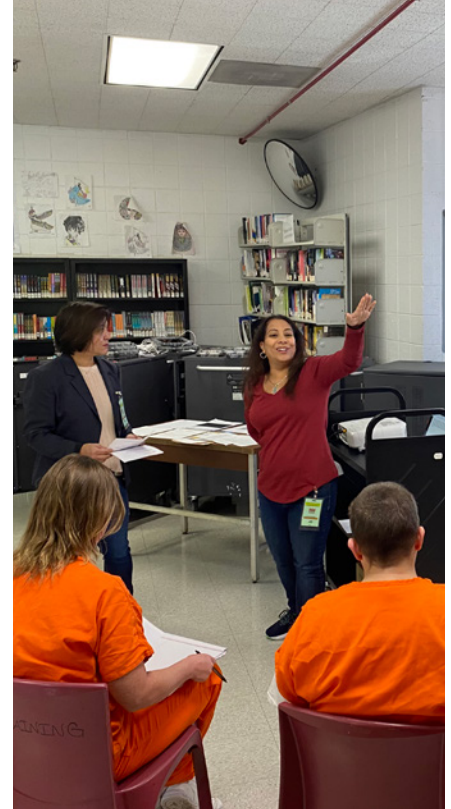


Photo by Danielle Zoller

PJP Workshops

Bill Keller, founding editor-in-chief of The Marshall Project and chair of PJP's board of advisors, and PJP Chief Education Officer Shaheen Pasha led the Advanced Nonfiction Writing Workshop, a year-long correspondence course. Eight students were chosen for the program, and five students earned a certificate (a completion rate of 62.5%).

In June, the co-founders and board Chair Wesley Lowery conducted an Op-Ed Writing Workshop at the DC Jail, hosted by the DC Public Library. The success of this session led to a follow-up workshop in September, where the co-founders and PJP board member Louise Story trained incarcerated women.

In October and November, PJP ran a two-part online Op-Ed Writing Workshop for California Justice Leaders, Impact Justice's AmeriCorps program.

In October, PJP facilitated a virtual journalism workshop as part of a writing program at Mississippi State Prison, also known as Parchman Prison.



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LOOKING
 **AHEAD**

24

LOOKING AHEAD

LITERACY AND WORKFORCE READINESS

In May 2024, PJP completed extensive research into literacy for people incarcerated in the U.S., and confronted a staggering reality: As of 2016, a majority of people inside were functionally illiterate.

Based on this information, PJP developed a strategic plan to integrate literacy development into our journalism training through three main goals:

- Create core literacy competencies
- Create a literacy assessment suite
- Track impact

In 2024 and beyond, we are working to create a full scope and sequence for PJP Learning that adds 15 literacy competencies and workforce readiness skills to our existing 55 journalism learning standards.

PJP Inside

In February 2024, we revamped our award-winning quarterly print newspaper, PJP Inside, to better meet the training needs of incarcerated writers at varying literacy levels. This can be seen through new interactive content, news literacy columns, research and statistics tools, and themed issues that address editorial needs. We currently distribute 2,000 copies of each quarterly issue to active PJP writers.

Writer's Workshop

In May 2024, PJP launched the Writer's Workshop, a program driven by volunteer journalism coaches who work one-on-one with early writers.

PJP / Poetic Justice Summer Journalism Training

In the summer, 20 women writers participated in an introductory journalism workshop series at Eddie Warrior Correctional Center and Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in Oklahoma, led by local prison writing program Poetic Justice in partnership with PJP.



A Prison Writer's Guide to Media Writing

Two years in the making, the first-of-its-kind handbook, "A Prison Writer's Guide to Media Writing," was published in early 2024. The textbook is customized for incarcerated writers and includes 14 modules of instruction. It also includes several pages of blank paper at the end for writers with little access to writing materials.

A key feature of the handbook is a series of self-paced assignments that writers can submit for feedback in order to receive PJP J-School writing certificates. Two hundred writers were invited to participate in our first learning cohort, and 110 are currently enrolled. They include writers from 25 states; half the participants are people of color.

To kick off the program, we are partnering with education and media organizations, including Northwestern Prison Education Program, The Marshall Project, Open Campus, PEN America, Empowerment Avenue and Poetic Justice.

LOOKING AHEAD

SPREADING THE WORD

PJP Publishing houses our online publication and partnerships with other newsrooms. We aim to serve as moderators of a constructive public dialogue vital to a strong democratic society. Our stories bring more diverse and different perspectives, reflecting the world inside the criminal legal system in all its complexity, countering oversimplification and polarization.

Our editors think of themselves as coaches for our writers-in-training and every story is approached as a learning opportunity. The publication also serves as a sandbox, in which editors and writers work together to develop powerful reporting and narratives, so they can elevate the impact of prison journalism in public discourse.

after TANNENBAUM PASSED, INCLUDING A LETTER FROM A

TEACHER TO HER PAST SELF AFTER SHE WON THE 2020

JUDITH TANNENBAUM TEACHING ARTIST FELLOWSHIP.

EACH SECTION BEGINS WITH A BLACK-AND-WHITE

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM CARLSON, DRAWINGS DEPICTING TIGHT

Upcoming Projects

Building on the success of last year's Aging in Prison series, in 2024 PJP has been working on the following projects:



A story package tied to the upcoming U.S. presidential election that shares perspectives from incarcerated writers about the state of American democracy behind bars.



An on-the-ground reporting project about what it's like to live under extreme heat in prisons without air conditioning and sufficient cooling systems. July 2024 was the hottest month on record.



A project that explores the experience of living with cancer in prison and end-of-life care through a series of written and visual stories by incarcerated people with the disease and those who provide them with care and support.

Partnerships

PJP is deepening our publishing partnerships in 2024. In early 2024, PJP co-published [Richard Fox's](#) article "A Flawed Alabama Prison Medical Policy Leaves Families Fearing the Worst" (Jan. 3, 2024) with [Alabama Reflector](#). The same day, NPR's Morning Edition aired an audio story, "[People in prison explain what music means to them – and how they access it](#)" (Jan. 3, 2024), which features interviews with PJP alum [Joe Garcia](#) and PJP contributing writers [Jeffery Shockley](#) and [K.C. Johnson](#). PJP ran [a companion piece](#) that includes a Spotify playlist of Johnson's favorite music.

PJP joined Apple News in May 2024.

Journalistic Excellence

PJP and the Florida chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists created the [SPJ Florida-PJP Stillwater Prison Journalism Awards](#), which honors journalistic excellence in the incarcerated community for work published anywhere in the country. In May 2024, [12 PJP writers and artists were recognized](#) for their outstanding journalism in 2023.

FINANCIALS

INVESTING IN PRISON JOURNALISM

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash	\$194,307
Grants receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$0	\$635,543
Prepaid expenses	\$33,193
Total Assets	\$863,043

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$16,115
Accrued salaries	\$6,283
Total Liabilities	\$22,398
Net Assets, Without Donor Restrictions	\$840,645
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$863,043

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT + REVENUE

Donations and Grants	99.5%	\$1,913,623
Program	<1%	\$7,148
Interest Income	<1%	\$76
Total		\$1,920,847

EXPENSES

Programs	70%	\$827,864
Management and general	10%	\$114,420
Fundraising	20%	\$230,699
Total		\$1,172,983

OUR SUPPORTERS

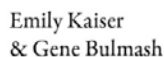
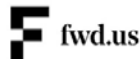
PJP IS GRATEFUL TO ALL OUR DONORS

Your contributions directly impact the lives of many people, facilitate our comprehensive training programs, expand our reach within prisons and enable our writers to tell their stories. We are grateful for your belief in the power of journalism as a force for change and your shared commitment to justice, understanding and humanity.

Our 2023 end-of-year campaign raised \$149,253 from 400 donors — individuals and organizations — and more than doubled last year's individual giving dollars.

Please know that your support does more than fund a project — it lights a path towards a more inclusive and empathetic society.

Our philanthropic partners include:



The following contributed \$5,000 or more in 2023:

Amanda Weitman
Cindy and Devin Wenig
Diana Kapp and David B. Singer
The Emerson Collective
Emily Kaiser and Gene Bulmash
The Eugene M. Lang Foundation
Fred Vogelstein and Evelyn Nussenbaum
FWD.US
Google News Initiative
The Hearthland Foundation
The Hennessy Foundation
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur
Foundation
The Just Trust
Keller Family NY Community Trust
Louise Story
The Miami Foundation
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