WORLD AMERICA REFRAMED

The CORRIDOR
a documentary film

BY ANNELISE WUNDERLICH & RICHARD O'CONNELL

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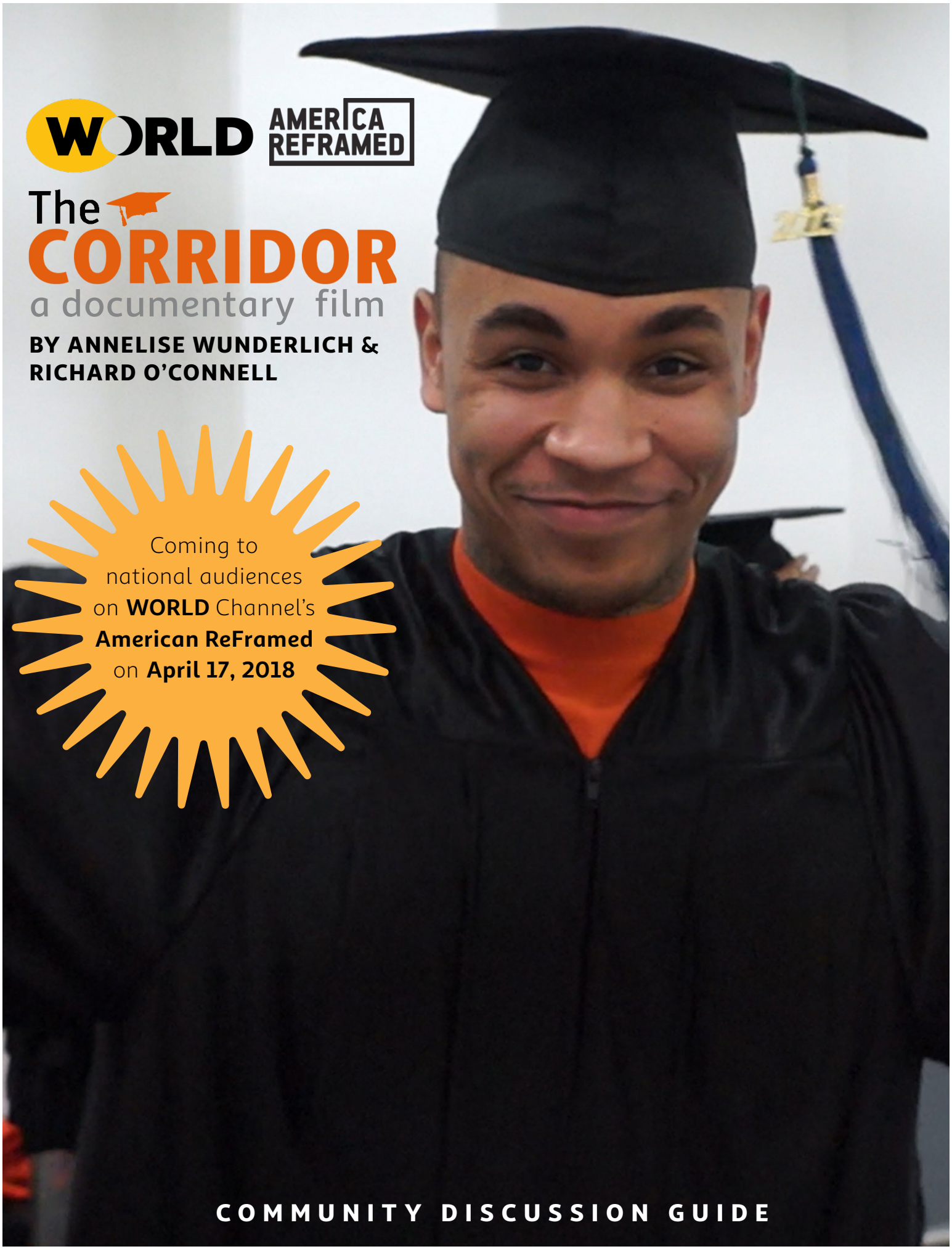

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Film Overview

The Corridor

The Corridor is a feature length documentary portrait of the first high school in the United States providing education to adults serving time in jail.

The San Francisco Sheriff's Department considers the school to be the "crown jewel" of their restorative justice based re-entry program, and it has inspired similar programs in California and across the country. The film captures a semester inside the school as inmates, teachers, and the deputies prepare for graduation day. ***The Corridor*** explores the shifting boundaries between punishment and rehabilitation at a time when California—and the nation—is questioning what justice really means.

The school has at its heart a core belief that most people who end up in jail have the capacity to change, if they are given some kind of real opportunity to do so.

The Corridor centers around the tension between two central questions that societies have been grappling with for thousands of years, and which continue to be debated into the twenty first century. The first: how should society achieve justice? The other: what is our capacity to change our course in life?

Over 10 years ago, former Sheriff of San Francisco Michael Hennessy decided to stop just 'warehousing' inmates and to begin to provide a series of programs, including the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, that prepared inmates and their communities for their release. Research shows that people who have received inadequate education or who exhibit poor literacy skills are disproportionately found in prisons and jails–the higher the educational level, the less likely people are to be rearrested. Five Keys Charter school was designed to open up opportunities for ex-convicts to create alternatives to the revolving door of incarceration.

Once arrested and processed in San Francisco, enrollment in the school or other programs is mandatory for all inmates who never received a high school diploma. The school has at it's heart a core belief that most people who end up in jail have the capacity to change, if they are given some kind of real opportunity to do so.

The Corridor provides a 360 view, and doesn't cast judgement on the effectiveness of the school or programs. Rather, it is an immersive portrait of the inner workings of the school, capturing along the way conflicts, dilemmas and breakthroughs that arise. The film portrays an ensemble of characters: the men and women behind bars, to the teachers, administrators and deputized staff. ***The Corridor*** implicitly poses questions for the audience about crime and punishment, and whether or not real change is possible.

In this section, participants will examine themes, key issues and perspectives presented in ***The Corridor*** to help build a thoughtful conversation or other exchange of views.

FRAMING FIVE KEYS' RESTORATIVE APPROACH

The United States criminal justice system, with over two million people currently under correctional supervision, is a world leader in incarceration. Though the United States only makes up about 5% of the world's population, it holds 21% of the world's prisoners. The system's largely punitive model has tremendous negative impact on both individuals and society, particularly on communities of color, who are disproportionately affected. According to the NAACP, African Americans are five times more likely to be imprisoned as whites, and if African Americans and Hispanics were incarcerated at the same rates as whites, prison and jail populations would decline by almost 40%. Additionally, the lack of structured supports and resources for people coming out of prison creates barriers to successful reentry into society, contributing to a high rate of recidivism, and a cyclical experience of crime and incarceration.

With increasing public and political outcry about the problem of our criminal justice system, advocates and administrators are seeking various approaches to shift the United States' response to crime. Today many countries differ from the United States in their approach, often focusing on methods of rehabilitation and reconciliation. What sets Five Keys Charter apart from other educational and rehabilitative programs behind bars— especially in the United States— is their use of a holistic restorative justice framework, and a commitment to educating and addressing the full spectrum of an individual's needs. The Five Keys curriculum, focused on "five keys" — Employment, Recovery, Family, Community and Education — seeks to restore the individual who has been pushed out of the educational system, along with other traumas they may have experienced, such as childhood trauma, abuse, drug addiction, racial injustice, sexism. While taking a reparative approach, restorative justice also requires individuals to be held accountable for their own participation in inflicting damage to others and their community.

Five Keys defines their restorative approach as:

Restorative Justice recognizes that crime hurts everyone; victim, offenders, community, and creates an obligation to make things right. Five Keys' programs have joined a growing movement based on these principles. We believe that all people have worth. Our programs help all our students who are impacted by crime by fostering an understanding and the skills to heal and thrive. Offender accountability and the voice of survivors are paramount to restoration. Restorative Justice underlies all of our educational, employment and therapeutic programs and is taught through our customized curriculum during a required, semester-length course. Results are measured by how much repair and learning is accomplished rather than by how much punishment was inflicted.

INSTIGATING FACTORS: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CAUSES CRIME?

In The Corridor, incarcerated student at Five Keys Charter, William says, "Everyone has choices, but when you're born into bad choices, when your great grandfather didn't have so many choices, where the bad choices were sometimes the best options, it becomes tradition."

- What are the choices that William is referring to?
- What are some of the sociological and societal instigators of crime that we see illustrated in ***The Corridor***? (Structural racism, broken windows policing, drug use/self medicating, gang activity, generational trauma, childhood abuse, poverty, lack of guidance, lack of education, survival.)
- What role does choice play in crime that stems from these instigating factors?
- How could understanding these sociological and societal factors help develop systems and supports to intervene before the turn towards crime?
- How does Five Keys Charter School attempt to address these factors as a restorative intervention post-arrest?
- In what ways do you think Five Keys Charter School does not— or cannot— address social and societal instigators of crime?

ADDRESSING THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

> ***The school-to-prison pipeline starts (or is best avoided) in the classroom. When combined with zero-tolerance policies, a teacher's decision to refer students for punishment can mean they are pushed out of the classroom—and much more likely to be introduced into the criminal justice system.***
>
> — tolerance.org

We learn in ***The Corridor*** that nearly 70% of people behind bars dropped out of high school. A teacher in ***The Corridor*** shares that black and latino people are disproportionately incarcerated, many of whom had negative experiences in schools that were inadequate.

- What inequalities exist between low-income community schools versus well-funded schools — both in access to resources, and methods of discipline?
- In what ways do punitive zero tolerance policies in contributing to a society of over-incarceration? What are some reasons a young person might decide to dropout of school?
- When participating in Five Keys became mandatory at the jail for people without a high school diploma, recidivism rates dropped from 70% to 26%. Why do you think this is? What actions and perceptual shifts would it take to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline?
- Five Keys introduces education back into the lives of incarcerated adults. What are the challenges in introducing education later in life?
- Consider the ethical and moral issues of building a school into a jail. What are some reasons people disagree with this approach? What other part of the school-to-prison pipeline is left unresolved?

INHERENT WORTH AND DIGNITY

> ***We're still human. We still have something inside us that is good.***
>
> — Five Keys student

Punitive approaches to crime often deepen an offender's identification with the negative aspects of themselves, robbing the person of their full humanity and capacity for change. A teacher in ***The Corridor*** says, "inmates are people, and people are assets to be developed, not failures that need to be controlled."

- Identify methods and moments in ***The Corridor*** where Five Keys Charter School uplifts their students as a person with inherent worth and dignity.
- What do you think inspired Five Keys to take this approach?
- What do you think motivates people to want to change their mentality and behavior?
- Could a focus on rebuilding self esteem and self image help a person to take responsibility for their actions, and contribute positively to society? How does acknowledging the duality of being a victim, as well as a perpetrator, help in this process?

CRIMINAL JUSTICE VS. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In ***The Corridor***, students are supported in a restorative, holistic experience of education, employment, recovery, family and community — the "five keys." Explore this metaphor...

- What do you think the keys "unlock" in students?
- Why are all five keys necessary? What would happen if you took one away?
- How effective do you think the Five Keys model would be without any one of the elements?
- Keeping the previous discussion questions in mind, how does the Five Keys approach address both society and the individual?
- What does the restorative model offer that punishment and isolation cannot? How does it go beyond even other educational and rehabilitation models?
- Do you think people who have committed crimes should be given access to free programs?
- Why do you think participation is mandatory in Five Keys? What aspects of their work do you find most powerful?
- What are the challenges and limitations of restorative and educational programming in the jail setting?

THE POSSIBILITY FOR TRANSFORMATION: CHARACTERS IN FOCUS

William shares that it takes a strong mind and will to successfully engage school while incarcerated...

- What challenges and barriers play out in the film for various characters?
- What helps William motivate through those challenges (to be with his children, the possibility of release and parole, wanting to gain skills he lacked, opening up to emotions, "facing demons," exploring his personal history, and the cycles that landed him in jail)?
- When William delivers his graduation speech on stage, he is off jail grounds, standing before a crowd alive with cameras and the smiling family and friends. He is wearing a cap and gown that covers his orange state-issued clothing. Why do you think Five Keys believes it is important to celebrate the student's accomplishments — and why do these details of location and clothing matter?

Bethany expresses shame, guilt and regret that her 20 year drug addiction interrupted her ability to parent six children...

- In what ways do you think Bethany's childhood experiences — being born to heroin addict, entering the foster care system, dropping out of school in the ninth grade — contribute to a broken self image, and a repeated cycle of parent-child trauma?
- In class Bethany shares that her form of self sabotage includes bad mouthing loved ones, but inside her head, the self talk is far more abusive and negative. She cites her experience in jail as a necessary intervention in her life, and shares that through her studies, she is even beginning to like herself. After a positive experience with Five Keys, why do you think Bethany relapsed when she was released, and returned to the jail?
- What continued supports were needed to help Bethany to transition back to life on the outside?

WHAT I WAS TAUGHT #SCHOOLSNOTJAILS

After engaging a discussion about the impact of education in The Corridor, explain to participants that they will be revisiting moments of learning in their life, big or small, that have made positive, and potentially life-altering impact. Take a moment to expand the container of education to encompass The Five Keys areas of focus. Under this umbrella, education not only happens schools, but in community centers and religious spaces, through the mentorship of family members, through mental health support systems, through internships and jobs.

Hang chart paper around the room, giving enough space for participants to wander between, each headed with one of The Five

KEYS AREA OF FOCUS:

- Education
- Employment
- Recovery
- Family
- Community

Invite participants to silently mill the room, approaching each chart paper when an idea strikes to write a strength or skill they gained in a learning experience connected to each heading. After 10 minutes, gather back as a group, and bring the chart paper to reflect. Notice the bevy of strengths and skills in the room. Invite participants to share brief stories connected to what they wrote.

Use these experiences to underscore the power of education and knowledge in efforts of rehabilitation. Ask participants to write a statement related to one of their experiences that could fit in the space of Twitter's 240 characters, on Facebook, or be posted on an Instagram meme. Have fun with the statements, and post to social media, tagging ***#schoolsnotjails #thecorridordoc #WORLDxReEntry.***

EXAMPLE STATEMENTS:

- *My nephews KNOW I'll be there for them when times get rough. My Grandmother taught me that family comes first, and to always honor that sacred bond. We're on it, Gram.* ***#schoolsnotjails #thecorridordoc***
- *Ms. Smith taught me in 3rd grade how to hold my breath and count to ten whenever I got upset. Many, many people should be thanking Ms. Smith right now.* ***#schoolsnotjails #thecorridordoc***
- *I learned how to master geometry in 9th grade… now *humble brag* you're looking at a master architect. Thanks Mr. Harvey.* ***#schoolsnotjails #thecorridordoc***

This activity can be modified for an individual to engage through journaling, and can also be used to cultivate an online discussion by publicly inviting others to join in posting.

Standards-Aligned Lesson Plan

Overview: In this one-off lesson, students grapple with the benefits, complications and failures of three approaches to crime: punitive, rehabilitative and a future vision of a "prison without walls." The lesson offers ideas for taking the conversation further through extended activities.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, print-outs of articles

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY:

The Human Barometer, Crime & Punishment

STEP ONE: Ask students to stand in the center of the room, with space cleared for movement. Assign one side of the room as I agree, and the other as disagree. The center represents a space of indecision. Read the following statements, and ask students to silently move towards agree or disagree in relationship to the idea presented.

- The cause of the crime lies primarily in the individual offender and their bad choices.
- Society should help people through social programs so they are less likely to commit crimes.
- A person who commits a crime should be punished for their criminal acts.
- Behavior can be modified, and a person who has committed a crime can change.
- Isolating people who commit crimes is necessary to change their behavior and mind.
- The fear of going to prison helps prevent people from committing crimes.
- The removal of criminals from society helps to protect society.
- It is possible for a formerly incarcerated person to live a productive life in society after going to prison.
- Educational programs help people who commit crimes to not reoffend.

STEP TWO: After the barometer exercise, engage a brief discussion:

- What is the prevailing social attitude about crime? Do you think these views are changing?
- Does a person's circumstances contribute to their choices that lead to crime? Does it matter?
- How does fear and punishment work on the human psyche? Is it effective? In what ways?
- Why might it be hard for someone to re-enter society after going to jail or prison?
- What do you think the role of education is in curbing crime rates?

POST-SCREENING ENGAGEMENT:

Examining Methods of Rehabilitation vs. Punishment

STEP ONE: After watching the film, engage the discussion questions presented in the first section of this toolkit to process the viewing. Explain to students that they'll be examining different approaches to crime through the next exercise.

STEP TWO: Divide into groups and hand out the approximately 750 word articles listed below, each representing a different approach to dealing with crime: punishment, education as rehabilitation, restorative justice, and — largely a future concept — prisons without walls. For a large class, you might assign two groups the same reading material.

ARTICLE ONE FOCUS: Punishment
Print and distribute the *Los Angeles Times* Op-Ed: **Cruel and Unusual Punishment in Jails and Prisons** by Martin Garbus

Also share the following examples of disciplinary punishment from the ACLU's Know Your Rights In Prison: *physical punishment, punitive segregation, losing visitation privileges, restricting visitation privileges, monetary restitution, water deprivation, reducing shower privileges and extending sentences.*

ARTICLE TWO FOCUS: Rehabilitation Through Education
Print and distribute the New York Times Op-Ed: **Turn Prisons into Colleges** by Elizabeth Hinton

TEXT THREE FOCUS: Restorative Justice
Print and distribute excerpts located in the index from Greater Good Magazine article, **Can Restorative Justice Help Prisoners Heal?** by Jill Suttie

ARTICLE FOUR FOCUS: Prison Without Walls: The Future?

Print and distribute excerpts located in the index from The Atlantic, **Prison Without Walls** by Graeme Wood

STEP THREE: Ask students to read their assigned article silently, underlining important information and facts.

STEP FOUR: Assemble the student groups, and offer each two pieces of chart paper. Each chart paper should have a pre-written header, as illustrated in the sample charts below. Based on the article, and their notations, the group should pull out the methods used in the article to address crime— some may have many, some may have only a few — and to determine what they think the purpose of this method is by the people who employ it. Be clear with students that this is not time for opinions, or whether or not they agree with the method, but to understand why the method is used.

SAMPLE CHART

METHOD USED	***PURPOSE***
Punishment: humiliation	To keep people in line, and cause them from not acting out again
Rehabilitation Through Education: college degrees offered	To offer expanded opportunities for jobs upon release.
Prison Without Walls: Electronic monitoring	To monitor people while also keeping them close to family

STEP FOUR (continued): On a second piece of chart paper, invite students to consider how the methods described in their article might benefit society, the individual, and where the methods might cause concern, fall short or fail.

SAMPLE CHART

BENEFIT TO SOCIETY	***BENEFIT TO INDIVIDUAL***	***CONCERNS/ FAILURES***
Punishment: humiliation: potentially keep someone from offending again through fear of being shamed.		Shame and humiliation damages self esteem and self image, further hardens the person, and might push them more deeply into crime.
Rehabilitation Through Education: college degrees offered: reshapes minds, offers tools and skills, better chance of the person contributing to society in positive ways upon release.	A chance to start over, to move life forward, to increase knowledge and have greater access to a purposeful life.	If someone has a felony on their record, it still makes them an unattractive candidate in the eyes of many employers. If reentering community with a degree but no other supports, how does a degree help with housing and basic needs?
Restorative Justice Model: reduces recidivism, focus on the crime's effect on the victim as motivation for change vs. punishment by the state, can support survivor healing,.	Purposeful reflection on what causes violence in oneself, ability confront roles as both victim and perpetrator, process of reconciliation can be growthful and healing.	Victims may not want to be in a healing process with their perpetrators, and wounds may be reopened without being healed. See above concerns stated in rehabilitation through education.
Prison Without Walls: Electronic monitoring: tracks people so if they cross certain boundaries related to their crime, their action can be interrupted.	The ability to be in society, to be near support systems and family, to have poor self control monitored and interrupted so they do not offend or violate.	Constantly being monitored for years on this level feels like a possibly dangerous direction for society, and could cause more problems if it becomes an overzealous system.

STEP FIVE: Invite each group to present out their findings. Ask the full class after each presentation closes if there is anything that could be added to their peers' charts.

As a large group, discuss the following:

- Which methods of responding to crime seem to benefit society the most?
- Why do you think Five Keys charter had success in lowering its recidivism rate?
- How did we see the methods work for William? Why didn't they stick with Bethany?
- What are the limitations and complexities of a school in a jail?
- What do you think the future of jails and prisons should be?
- What needs to happen outside of jail to allow the Five Keys' method, and other restorative and rehabilitative practices, to have deep and lasting impact?
- Has anyone's mind changed through watching the film/research? (if there is time, you might consider re engaging the human barometer activity.)

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION:

- **Free Journaling:** Invite students to journal about the ways in which The Corridor, and the follow up lesson, challenged their ideas who goes to jail, and what should happen in jail. What was surprising? What made them think more deeply about the United States' system of incarceration? Did they change their minds about a belief, gain new insight?
- **Re-design Jail:** Invite students, based on what they learned in the film and lesson plan, to design their idea of what a humane jail or prison looks like (if it is a jail or prison at all!)

  What else, and who else, is imagining the future of justice design? **Designing Justice + Designing Spaces** created a mobile classroom for Five Keys, among many other community-generated projects. Their organization engages communities in the design and development of new buildings, spaces, and tools to attack the root causes of mass incarceration.

  Engage students in researching DJ + DS' projects pre or post-writing exercise, and/or invite student groups to use the work of DJ + DS to refine their own vision, then draw physical plans to bring their ideas to life.
- **Listen to oral histories** at **StoryCorps' Justice Project website.** Respond via writing, conversation or art projects that visualize connected themes and words that arise in the recordings.

FIVE WAYS YOU CAN TAKE LEARN MORE AND TAKE ACTION:

1. Support the formerly incarcerated transition to life back in their communities:
   - » Fortune Society https://fortunesociety.org
   - » JustLeadership USA https://www.justleadershipusa.org
2. Support families and children of the incarcerated:
   - » The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/
   - » Project What http://communityworkswest.org/program/project-what/_Support educational programs in your communities' correctional facilities:
   - » The Prison Education Project (http://www.prisoneducationproject.org/)
   - » Prison Education.com (https://prisoneducation.com/)
3. Learn more about the movement to reform the criminal justice system:
   - » Cut50 (https://www.cut50.org/)
   - » The Sentencing Project (https://www.sentencingproject.org/)
4. Learn more about the school-to-prison pipeline. (https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2013/the-schooltoprison-pipeline)

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Excerpts from The Atlantic, Prison Without Walls

by Graeme Wood

Incarceration in America is a failure by almost any measure. But what if the prisons could be turned inside out, with convicts released into society under constant electronic surveillance? Radical though it may seem, early experiments suggest that such a science-fiction scenario might cut crime, reduce costs, and even prove more just.

Increasingly, GPS devices... are looking like an appealing alternative to conventional incarceration, as it becomes ever clearer that, in the United States at least, traditional prison has become more or less synonymous with failed prison. By almost any metric, our practice of locking large numbers of people behind bars has proved at best ineffective and at worst a national disgrace. According to a recent Pew report, 2.3 million Americans are currently incarcerated—enough people to fill the city of Houston. Since 1983, the number of inmates has more than tripled and the total cost of corrections has jumped sixfold, from $10.4 billion to $68.7 billion. In California, the cost per inmate has kept pace with the cost of an Ivy League education, at just shy of $50,000 a year.

[The devices] ... allow tens of thousands of convicts to walk the streets relatively freely, impeded only by the knowledge that if they loiter by a schoolyard, say, or near the house of the ex-girlfriend they threatened, or on a street corner known for its crack trade, the law will come to find them. Compared with incarceration, the cost of such surveillance is minuscule—mere dollars per day—and monitoring has few of the hardening effects of time behind bars. Nor do all the innovations being developed depend on technology. Similar efforts to control criminals in the wild are under way in pilot programs that demand adherence to onerous parole guidelines, such as frequent, random drug testing, and that provide for immediate punishment if the parolees fail.

...I asked law-enforcement officers and BI personnel [who makes the tracking devices], who have installed hundreds of monitoring anklets, how their clients first reacted when they felt the cinch of the band around their ankle

and knew that, from that moment, they would be under constant surveillance. In most cases, Jennifer White told me, "they are just relieved to be at home and with their families and working." Some were even grateful, because the device gave them an excuse to avoid criminal friends: after all, no one wants to commit a crime with an accomplice who's being monitored. But not all were so upbeat. Some cursed. Others wept.

There are also, of course, worries about the creeping power of government, and the routinization of surveillance. Right now, BI monitors mostly offenders who have done something seriously wrong, and although its anklets enable parole and probation officers to lay down very specific location itineraries, in practice most just mark off home and work spaces. But there is no reason, as the technology gets cheaper and the monitoring ever more fine-grained, why electronic monitoring could not be used to impose an ever wider range of requirements on an ever wider range of "criminals." A serious felon might have every second of his day tracked, whereas a lighter offender like myself—recently caught lead-footed by a traffic camera—might be required to carry a tracker that issues an alert any time I move faster than 65 miles per hour. (If such an intervention sounds far-fetched, recall that many jurisdictions in the United States already require convicted drunk drivers to pass an ignition-mounted Breathalyzer test before they can start their cars.)

These are the kinds of possibilities that give privacy advocates nightmares. Erik Luna, a law professor at Washington and Lee University, is a critic of mandatory sentencing and other measures that have packed U.S. jails, but he urges caution when viewing electronic monitoring as an alternative. "There should be a general concern about the extent of the power of the state to follow and track individuals and gather information about their lives," Luna says. "What is the minimum ambit of privacy, to maintain the level of human dignity that a liberal form of government should provide?"

At the same time, if the people being monitored are those who would otherwise be in prison, then the infringement on their privacy is substantially less intrusive than that entailed in being required to sit in a cell all day. BI's White made exactly this point when I raised the question with her. "They are doing their time in lieu of incarceration," she said, with some exasperation. When I asked whether the privacy concerns of inmates should be considered at all, her answer, in essence, was no: "A person's rights, when they are incarcerated, or a ward of the state, are different from yours and mine."

Excerpts from Greater Good Magazine article, Can Restorative Justice Help Prisoners Heal?

by Jill Suttle

[The] Victim Offender Education Group (or VOEG) [at San Quentin Prison is] an outgrowth of a movement that aims to help people who've committed crimes take responsibility for the harm they've caused others and to make amends to the victims of crime and their community. Operating within the criminal justice system as an alternative to punishment alone, these "restorative justice" programs help prove that personal transformation is possible, even for people who've committed the most serious crimes.

Restorative justice models have come about because of a growing recognition that the criminal justice system is warehousing large numbers of people—disproportionately, African Americans, Hispanics, and the poor—and tearing apart communities while failing to make them safer. Not only does restorative justice offer deeper levels of engagement and rehabilitation, many argue it's more cost effective, produces less recidivism, and is more satisfying to victims of crime than the current model. The VOEG is a project of the Insight Prison Project (or IPP), which began in 1997.

CONFRONTING YOURSELF

Robert Frye is a graduate of IPP who was recently released from San Quentin after serving 26 years of a 25 years-to-life sentence for an armed robbery that resulted in a homicide by his codefendant. He first heard about VOEG after taking a meditation course offered at San Quentin prison and felt attracted to the introspective, "self-confrontative" aspects of the program. "For many years during my incarceration, I had a lot stuff I wasn't dealing with," says Frye. "So, when I saw what they were doing, I said this is something I need to do for myself."

He and the other prisoners went through an intensive, yearlong program designed to help them open up, learn to trust each other, and take greater responsibility for the harm they've caused. They explored how crime impacts everyone—not just the direct victims, but the victims' spouses, children, parents, and communities—while developing

empathy for victims through directed exercises. They also learned about the effects of childhood trauma and abuse and how these experiences may have impacted their personal psychology, all the while developing skills like emotional regulation and anger/stress management.

HEALING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

For Sonya Shah, director of curriculum for VOEG, the program's effectiveness is tied to the connections the prisoners make between the harm they've caused and the harm done to them as children. "A child has few resources to cope with trauma," say Shah. "Without a strong attachment to a caregiver, unprocessed trauma will likely lead toward either turning on oneself, through substance abuse or cutting, or turning on others, through violence and abuse."

Neuroscience research supports her contention. In one recent study that used MRI technology to look at the brains of traumatized adolescents, researchers found that these adolescents had a "heightened sensitivity to conflicting emotional information and a lack of regulatory control over emotion processing" than adolescents without a history of trauma, which put them at greater risk for later adult pathology.

IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FAIR TO VICTIMS?

After her husband was murdered in 2005, Dionne Wilson became very angry, and "hated everything and everybody." ... The promise of closure and relief that she'd been promised never materialized. That's when she began to explore other options, like Buddhism and forgiveness practices, which culminated in her writing a letter of forgiveness to her husband's killer.

She soon found herself involved with VOEG, volunteering to talk with inmates who'd committed murder or other violent crimes. Her first visit to a women's prison in Chowchilla convinced her that she had a lot to learn... she saw how the prisoners were victims, too, and that many felt remorse for their crimes... she has been able to tell her story of loss to other prisoners, and she feels that participating in VOEG is helping to end the cycle of violence by preparing prisoners to be better citizens—either within prison or out in the world when they are eventually released.

While not all victims may find healing through dialoguing with offenders, and the goal is not necessarily forgiveness, many victims find it more satisfying than traditional forms of justice. Yet, some critics argue that the focus on transforming offenders and rebuilding relationships, rather than directly helping victims of crime, is problematic. According to Susan Herman, Executive Director, National Center for Victims of Crime, restorative justice programs fall short when they don't consider the ongoing needs of victims—for example, financial help, counseling, escort services to help them feel safe in their communities, or other types of assistance needed to recover from the trauma of their losses. In remarks made at the International Symposium on Victimology, she says:

My hope would be that someday, when a crime occurs, in addition to holding offenders accountable, we would also ask, "What do victims need?" and "How can offenders, communities and society at large help victims rebuild their lives?" From a victim's point of view, that would be justice.

Resources

NONFICTION

- *All Day: A Year of Love and Survival Teaching Incarcerated Kids at Rikers Island by* Liza Jessie Peterson
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Fist Stick Knife Gun: A Personal History of Violence* by Geoffrey Canada
- *Incarceration Nations: A Journey to Prisons Around the World* by Baz Dreisinger
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson
- *Justice That Restores* by Charles Colson
- *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* by James Forman Jr.
- *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* by Howard Zehr
- *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
- *Zek: An American Prison Story* by Arthur Longwood

FICTION

- *All American Boys* by Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds
- *Daughter* by Asha Bandele
- *Monster* by Walter Dean Meyers
- *Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward
- *Rikers High* by Paul Volponi
- *Ruby On the Outside* by Nora Raleigh Baskin

DOCUMENTARY FILM

- 13th
- The Central Park Five
- Herman's House
- The Farm: Angola, USA
- The House I Live In
- The Released
- Rikers
- What I Want My Words To Do To You

WEBSITES