

Did you know?

In 2015-2016, the [Parole Board of Canada](#) granted record suspensions (pardons) to 94% of applicants. They have granted over 500,000 pardons and record suspensions since 1970.

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BREAKING NEWS

Reduced Pardon Wait Times for Some

Bill C-10, which came into force on March 13, 2012, extended wait periods through the *Criminal Records Act* for people who sought record suspensions (pardons). The wait periods changed from three to five years for summary (less serious) convictions, and from five to ten years for indictable (more serious) convictions. People who were convicted before March 13, 2012 were affected by the new longer wait periods.

This past summer, the courts found this retroactive criteria unconstitutional. The Parole Board of Canada now accepts applications under the old timelines from people who

were convicted before March 13, 2012 *and* who are [current residents of British Columbia and Ontario](#).

Further, applicants convicted before March 13, 2012 with four or more indictable charges for which they were sentenced to two years or more are eligible again. Those who were convicted of a Schedule 1 Offence before March 13, 2012 (sexual offence involving a minor) are also now eligible.

If you have a criminal record and wish to apply for a pardon, you must still have completed your sentence – any period of incarceration, fines, restitution or probation.

Teika Thompson, Adel Afzal

The \$631 application fee remains the same.

If you were convicted after the introduction of Bill C-10, you fall under the new legislation, and must fulfill current five and ten year wait periods.

This is a welcome change in the right direction. We remain optimistic that any further changes will allow applicants the opportunity to be rid of the negative impacts of having a criminal record.

We offer [application assistance](#) at our Eglinton office Monday to Friday, Danforth office on Thursdays and our Scarborough office on Tuesdays and Fridays.

A Hip New Program

Helping Individuals Plan Properly (HIPP) helps young people between the ages of 12-17 who may be impacted by the criminal justice system or involved in high-risk lifestyles such as street gangs. HIPP is a culturally specific program funded by Justice Canada and designed for youths of African and Caribbean backgrounds. The

program uses a person-centered, holistic approach based on effective communication.

The HIPP team can assist clients with resources that are available in the community.

Ken Williams and Moses Francis incorporate art and sports as part of the program. The HIPP

Ken Williams, Moses Francis

team caters their approach to individual participants. The team has so far connected youths to music recording, TV/Radio production, boxing, Muay Thai, football, and graphic design.

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HIPP is a new program for JHST. Although it is too soon to formally assess success, HIPP's Coordinator and Counsellors have seen prosecutors withdraw charges against youths who have completed the program. The preliminary results are in keeping with **JHST's support for second chances.**

HIPP was inspired by the Native Inmate Liaison Officer (NILO) Program (a First Nations cultural program) that runs in the East and South detention centres in Toronto. JHST identified a need for such a program among youth who are involved in gang culture and saw promise among the groups that HIPP now serves. Although based in JHST's head office on Eglinton Avenue West, the Program is mobile and operates from community hubs/centres and partner agencies.

HIPP sets out to help clients reintegrate into society as well as recognize and develop personal strengths.

Poetic Justice: Healing Through Art

Tanya Dimitrijevic, Adel Afzal

In 2014, Housing Caseworker Tanya Dimitrijevic was inspired by a client who called the JHST office while he was in segregation. The client, an artist, asked us to mail song lyrics to him. He felt that it might help with his struggle with trauma and mental health.

Tanya asked the client to write about his journey through poetry or song, explaining that it would be a positive and informal release. The client started to mail inspiring lyrics and creative writing pieces to her. And so began Poetic Justice.

Poetic Justice provides informal support through an arts-based approach. We aim to facilitate a positive and creative way for men to express emotions and personal narratives around incarceration and their subsequent journey toward reintegration.

As an undergrad at Trent University, Tanya was a columnist for Active Minds, a student mental health advocacy group affiliated with the Psychology department. She contributed poetry to the Arthur (Peterborough & Trent University's Independent Press). Tanya applied this experience in her endeavour to help JHST clients who are currently incarcerated and struggling with mental health and trauma.

To date, Tanya has received about 50 submissions. Some of these are on display on the [Reintegration Centre's](#) main floor wall. Tanya is working on new ways to present these pieces — including a collage and an album.

Tanya believes strongly that art is a natural, positive, and productive form of expression for underlying emotions. Art-based practices allow men a safe space and non-judgmental environment to **share personal journeys. It's a creative outlet.**

To submit artwork and poetry to the program, email Tanya Dimitrijevic, tdimitrijevic@jhst.ca.

Select Poetic Justice Submissions



Created by a current inmate in the South Detention Centre, in support of October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month





Know someone who needs a second chance?

They may qualify for a pardon.

- Improved employment prospects
- Meet educational requirements
- Increased likelihood to attain Citizenship
- Less hassle travelling and more benefits.

416-925-4386 ext. 271

The power of partnerships

Adel Afzal

John Howard Society of Toronto is fortunate to have wonderful partner organizations in the community. These partnerships allow non-profits, together, to provide more holistic services to clients. We all make a bigger difference this way.

For example, Second Harvest provides food to JHST. They delivered 15,025 pounds of food to us between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017. This donation was valued at \$37,562.50, but the donation is invaluable to our clients.

The donation fulfilled JHST's clients' access to food and Second Harvest's interest in diverting good food from landfills.

JHST has similarly partnered with homeless shelters/hostels, detox and rehabilitation centres, employment services, counselling services, and more.

These partnerships help us reach clients **who we couldn't reach on our own.** Together, we make communities stronger.



Congratulations, Lois!

After a combined 30 years with us, John Howard Society of Toronto is sad but proud to see Lois Powers, our valued Assistant Executive Director, leave JHST for a much-deserved opportunity as Executive Director of John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton.

Lois started as a volunteer in 1987 and worked in various full- and part-time capacities with us since 1989, including as a Program Manager in 2003. In 2011, she became our Assistant Executive Director and helped shape JHST into the compassionate and client-centered organization it is today.

Our managers, staff, clients and partners miss her greatly.

Hello to all of my JHS Toronto colleagues, partners and clients! Writing about my experiences with JHS Toronto has been a challenge as I could write a book (and one day, I may do just that!). I cannot think of a better match for my

values and beliefs. Most importantly, to work everyday with people who thought the same way was beyond rewarding. I have seen the agency through many changes and challenges, but I was proud to be part of those transitions.

The most rewarding experience I had was working as a Counsellor supporting clients to achieve their goals and creating a safe place for them to do so. It was beyond humbling.

I enjoyed my experience as a Director with the agency and being able to support staff in this important work. You inspired me to keep writing proposals to support you in your endeavours. I was so pleased to be able to create programs from an idea to full implementation - the HIPP Program being the most recent.

In turn, I always felt supported by staff and the management team with any workplace challenges I experienced. I am most thankful for the personal friendships that I developed throughout my years at JHST.



Lois Powers

For community partners reading this, thank you for your support and expertise!

I continue to enjoy the JHS experience here in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton! I could not be in a better place.

Thanks to all.

Lois Powers, Executive Director
John Howard Society of
Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton



Making our community safer by supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of those who have been in conflict with the law.

www.johnhoward.on.ca/toronto



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