



# THE PRISON / MONASTERY

*From* PUNISHMENT *to* PENITENCE

UNCONDITIONAL FREEDOM IS A REGISTERED 501C3 ORGANIZATION. EIN: 91-2158747

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The Prison Monastery is a place where the incarcerated, removed from the pressures and demands of society, can contemplate their actions with dignity, and find their natural human capacity for contribution.



# THE PROBLEM

*Today's prison system is plagued by overcrowding, skyrocketing costs of housing and security along with high rates of recidivism. The Prison Monastery Project aims to change this dynamic from the inside out.*

Today,  
**2 MILLION  
PEOPLE**  
incarcerated in US prison

**500%**  
increase in US  
prison population  
since 1970

**1 IN 3**  
black boys are expected to  
go to prison in their  
lifetime & 1 in 6 hispanics

**95%**  
of prisoners  
will be  
released back  
into society

**\$100 BILLION**  
spent by American taxpayers  
on prisons annually

**INCALCUABLE**  
The cost of incarceration to  
offenders, their families, and society  
as a whole

**\$20,000  
TO \$60,000**  
Annual cost of  
one person in  
prison



## The Aim / Creating Better Neighbors

A population not merely *healed* from the pains and psychic maladies that contributed to their crime (trauma, depression, craving, anxiety), but has *flourished* into contributive individuals who are driven with purpose and bring benefit to one another, custody staff, the entire prison community, and the incarcerated population at large.



# Program Architects / Meet our Team



**Kate Feigin, MSW**  
*17-year criminal justice  
veteran  
Program Director, scientific  
observation*



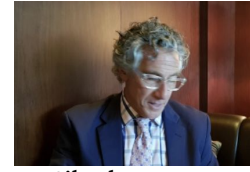
**Dr. Topeka Sam**  
*Founder  
The Ladies of Hope Ministry  
Advisor: The Prison  
Monastery*



**Jason Davis**  
*Gang Specialist  
Crisis Counselor*



**John D. Liu**  
*Ecologist, filmmaker, advisor  
to the UN Decade on  
Ecosystem Restoration*



**Ira Silverberg**  
*Founder of High Risk Books,  
former Literature Director  
of the National Endowment  
for the Arts*



**Nancy Coleman**  
*Physical Therapist  
Art of Soulmaking  
instructor*



**Marcus Ratnathicam**  
*Executive Director  
Unconditional Freedom*



**Dr Stefano M. Bertozzi**  
*Dean Emeritus, UC Berkeley  
Public School of Health*



**Marissa Ward**  
*Prison Monastery Program  
Manager*



**Bob Wilms**  
*Director, Programming/Development  
Prison Monastery Program*



**Gary York**  
*28-year correctional officer  
Tallahassee, Florida  
Guard to Guardian Mentor*



**Keith Hellwig**  
*39-year correctional officer  
Wisconsin  
Guard to Guardian Mentor*



## Program Growth / 2020 - 2022

14

Veteran mentors, correctional officers. We have distributed books and hosted workshops at Mendocino County Jail and the Central California Women's Facility.

306

certified volunteers nationwide who act as penpals on the correspondence course.

25%

of the 2500 person population of the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, the largest in the United States has enrolled in AOS.

140K

Prison tablets with the AOS book across the United States.. Coming soon to all 110K tablets in the California Department of Corrections system.

1300

incarcerated individuals have enrolled in the Art of Soulmaking program in a little over 100 facilities across the country in both red and blue states.

1st

Full Monastery Pilot Program launching in 175 person housing unit at The Central California Women's Facility in March 2023.

2500+

letters written by our volunteers to the incarcerated on the Art of Soulmaking.



# Funding: The Prison Monastery

*This funding round is to further the mission of The Prison Monastery Program in developing, measuring, and promoting a system of incarceration that is easily adoptable by governments. This model shows superior results in terms of fulfilling prisons social contract (human restoration, penance) and economics in terms of the financial impact on society.*

This funding round on three key areas of development:

1. **Sustain:** To sustain the existing success at the Central California Women's Facility, CCWF, and the 3,000 + digital participants in 144 facilities around the country
2. **Expand:** Launch a full Prison Monastery Program in a 175 bed housing unit at CCWF, that includes in-person courses for both incarcerated and officer populations, robust data collection, a farm and local, organic food offerings.
3. **Future Growth:** Develop the needed baseline infrastructure to expand to 10 more Prison Monastery sites, and expand to the next 100 prison and jails for The Art of Soulmaking and Guards to Guardians.





# Infrastructure

- + **Virtual Training:** Produce video training materials to support the existing 100+ requests from incarcerated individuals around the world for Art of Soulmaking groups.
- + **Data:** Developing innovative metrics and collecting data points from the Prison Monastery network to study its impact on the incarcerated mental health, CO mental health, and prison costs including security, CO sick-day related costs, and CO short-staff related costs to inform a long-term, multi-site impact study of the Prison Monastery.
- + **Program support for Art of Soulmaking,** the correspondence program which currently serves over 3,00 individuals and over 300 certified and trained volunteers.
- + **Pilot program** for incarcerated Art of Soulmaking graduates to guide enrolled, non-incarcerated volunteers suffering from depression in how to find fulfillment and happiness.
- + **Documentary:** We will produce a documentary film covering the multi-site implementation including direct interviews with participants in the Prison Monastery program, their families, and stakeholders in the criminal justice system and government systems.





# Impact

*Expansion of existing programs to directly benefit the following:*

- + 3,000 corrections officers
- + 20,000 inmate population
- + 100 certified graduates of a garden program
- + 100 certified graduates of an ecological restoration project
- + 5,000 incarcerated individuals getting better food



## Institutional Challenges @CCWF / Solution

- Well-being of Inmates
- Work environment and safety for Command Staff/CO's
- Effective rehabilitation
- Budget/Expenses

Spring 2023, Unconditional Freedom Project is implementing the The Prison Monastery system in a 175 person housing unit in the Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla, CA, the largest of its kind in the United States.

Our empirical and anecdotal findings are that this system promotes flourishing for inmate and custody staff, resulting in direct bottom-line savings in security and healthcare costs and increased overall health and harmony within the prison community.



From Prison / To Monastery



## Transformation in 4 stages:

1. **HEALING:** Soul-restoration through regenerating the earth & nutrition
2. **CONNECTION:** Re-building healthful, resilience building interpersonal relationships
3. **LIBERATION:** Reclaiming power based in responsibility
4. **SOCIAL JUSTICE:** Dignity through contribution

*Collectively, these form our human ecology.*



## The Methodology / Transforming Poison To Medicine

### **Healing** and the Earth:

- Regenerative Farm
- Ecology project
- Food

### **Connection** and Restoring:

- Arts
- Yoga
- Writing

### **Liberation** and Freedom:

- Art of Soulmaking
- Art of Addiction
- Meditation
- “Salon” rotation of authors/healers/thinkers

### **Contribution** and Purpose:

- Healthy food within the prison, local shelter
- Video broadcast on Re/human TV for prison-wide benefit
- Broadcast anonymous material on Edovo tablet
- Mentorship within the prison





## CCWF Pilot / Expanding Our Reach

### **Food —**

- Weekly rotation of farm-fresh meal to different housing unit
- Staff room treats

### **Curriculum —**

- Study period video recordings broadcast on CCWF TV for everyone to benefit
- Study period video recordings broadcast on “Prison Monastery” channel on the Edovo tablet nationwide

### **Culture Keepers —**

- Inmate leaders to facilitate classes and trainings in other units
- Develop a team of individuals employed in peacekeeping, coaching, mentoring the prison-wide community



## CCWF Pilot / Work Assignments

Work assignments for select group of participants which include both application and studying/educational period for certifications:

### **Regenerative Farming**

- Food cultivation using hyper water-efficient farming methods
- Water capture techniques
- Harvesting
- Horticulture/permaculture certification

### **Food & culinary skills —**

- Cooking skills
- Nutritional education
- Harvest processing/storage skills
- Culinary certification

### ***Culture Keepers (phase 2) —***

- Visitation to other housing units to facilitate classes and trainings
- Develop a team of individuals employed in peacekeeping, coaching, mentoring the prison-wide community



## CCWF Pilot / Sample Schedule

	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>AM</b>	1. Practice 2. Study	1. Practice 2. Community meeting 3. Farm	1. Practice 2. Farm 3. Study	1. Practice 2. Farm 3. Study	1. Practice 2. Farm 3. Study	1. Practice 2. Farm 3. Study	1. Practice 2. Study
<b>PM</b>	1. Kitchen 2. Practice 3. Study	1. Horticulture class 2. Kitchen 3. Culinary class 4. Study 5. Practice	1. Horticulture class 2. Kitchen 3. Culinary class 4. Study 5. Practice	1. Horticulture class 2. Kitchen 3. Culinary class 4. Study 5. Practice	1. Horticulture class 2. Kitchen 3. Culinary class 4. Study 5. Practice	1. Horticulture class 2. Kitchen 3. Culinary class 4. Study 5. Practice	1. Practice 2. Study
<b>Staff</b>		1. Physical therapy office hours 2. Community meeting 3. Food	1. Guard To Guardian office hours 2. Food	1. Physical therapy office hours 2. Food	1. Guard To Guardian office hours 2. Food	1. Physical therapy office hours 2. Food	



## CCWF Pilot / Science & Measurement

### **Quantitative: August, 2023**

*U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health*

Lead researcher: Dr. Stefano  
Bertozzi, Dean Emeritus



### **Qualitative: August 2025**

*Pacifica Graduate Institute*

Lead researcher: Kate Feigin, MSW PhD  
candidate Community Psychology







# The Prison Monastery

## *A Human & Economic Solution*

*The Prison Monastery model provides superior results in terms of fulfilling prisons social contract (human restoration, penance) and economics. We are collecting the following data from participating institutions.*

### ***Inmate population***

- + Stress*
- + Anger*
- + Depression*
- + Inclination toward drugs / alcohol*
- + Eudaimonia*
- + Healthcare costs*
- + Security costs*

### ***Officer population***

- + Stress*
- + Anger*
- + Depression*
- + Inclination toward drugs / alcohol*
- + Eudaimonia*
- + Retention*
- + Sick days*



## ***HEALING - THE EARTH PROGRAM***

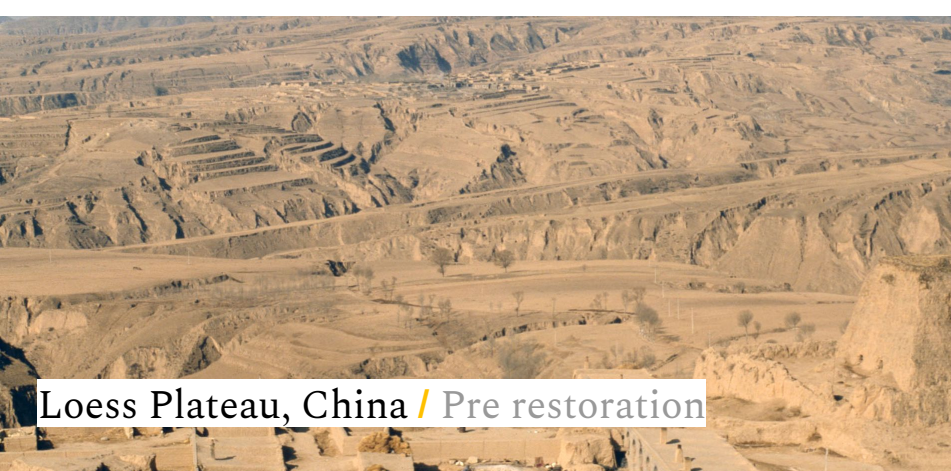
We believe that the rich connection to the soil and our earth will rehabilitate the human spirit. Starting with our regenerative farms inside the prison walls, we provide education, certification, and college credits to the incarcerated.

Under the guidance of Ecologist John D. Liu, part of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and large scale restoration of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, and permaculturist, and Co-Developer of the Resilience Design Framework for USAID, Warren Brush, we are creating a movement within the prison system that will lead to jobs and climate restoration.





# ✘/+ Ecosystem Restoration / A Vision



Loess Plateau, China / Pre restoration



Loess Plateau, China / Post restoration



California Prison / Vacaville, CA



Mendocino County Jail Farm / Mendocino, CA





“Inmates tell me they feel like they aren’t in prison anymore.”  
—Warden Michael Pallares, CCWF







## ***LIBERATION- THE ART OF SOULMAKING***

The Art of Soulmaking workbook is now used in 144 prisons across the country. This “monastery in a book” offers contemplative practices, along with meditation and yoga, to guide the learner to finding their unique genius by converting pain and darkness into creativity. Individuals in prison studying the book are paired with volunteer penpals all over the country to share in this journey.





***Jessalynn Graham***

*Incarcerated Resident*

*Central California Women's Facility*

*(:59)*

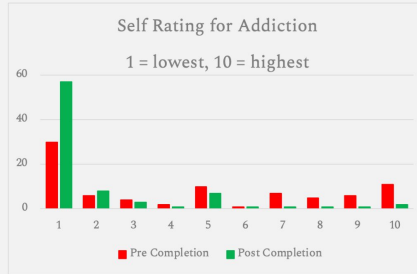




# Art of Soulmaking / Impact

Addiction decreased by

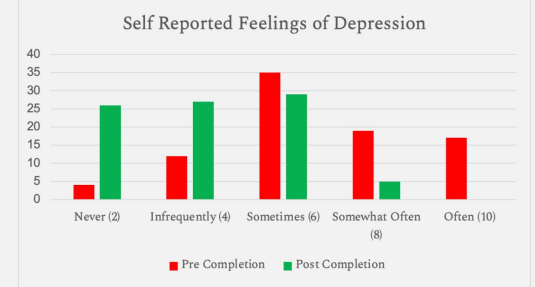
24%



\*Based on pre/post survey data from 82 participants

Depression decreased by

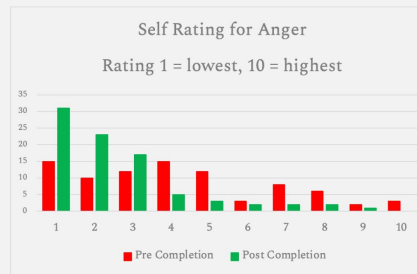
25%



\*Based on pre/post survey data from 87 participants

Anger decreased by

17%



\*Based on pre/post survey data from 86 participants

Stress decreased by

25%



\*Based on pre/post survey data from 86 participants



*“Corrections officers need help and support because they’re dying on the inside, but they won’t ask anybody for help.” — Greg, Correctional Officer*

## ***LIBERATION - FROM GUARDS TO GUARDIANS***

Guards to Guardians helps CO’s re-envision their lives and their work and connect more deeply with the nobility of their calling. They find recognition, insights, encouragement, community, and reflections to help embrace and embody the role of the guardian.

This program is sponsored by Gary York, a 30-year veteran corrections officer and columnist for *Corrections 1* magazine, and Keith Hellwig, a 39-year veteran corrections officer and author of several books.





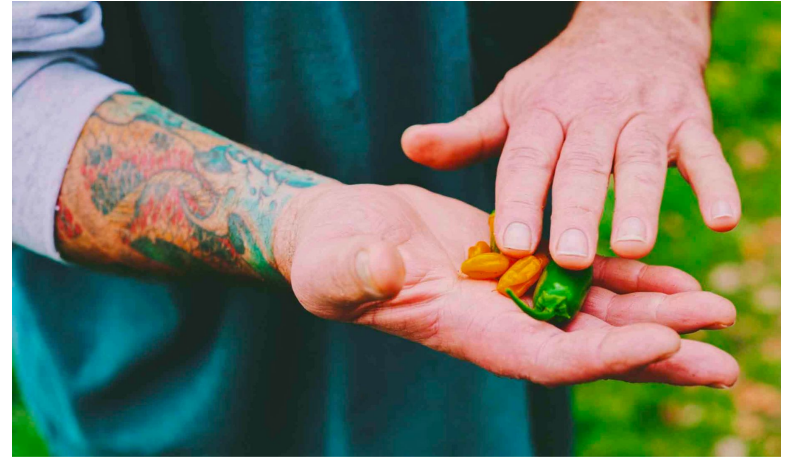


## ***CONTRIBUTION - FREE FOOD***

Our Prison Food Program is based on the premise that it is nearly impossible to have the kind of deep practice and insight needed for true, lasting change of the heart on a high-carb, high-sugar diet. Our bodies require real nutrition in order to heal our minds.

This program is about breaking the spell that quality food, prepared with care, cannot meet the “trifecta” of being nutritious, delicious, and inexpensive. Prison food can turn poison into medicine by orienting meals around organic, fresh produce grown in the garden,

With the guidance of Dr. Stephano Bertozzi, ***Professor Emeritus, U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health***, we are designing a food program that can be adopted at competitive costs.





# How you can Help

*Since 2020, we've made incredible strides towards rehumanizing the prison ecology, improving the lives of thousands of inmates, starting to address the well-being crisis of correctional officers and command staff, and building community each step of the way.*

*2023 is a bellwether year for Unconditional Freedom. The Prison Monastery Project is implementing the 175 bed pilot program and study at Central California Women's Facility, and we are continuing to expand the reach of the Art of Soulmaking, and Guards to Guardians programs every day.*

*Our friends, family, and volunteers have contributed over 1.5 million dollars to Unconditional Freedom between 2020 and 2022. We now need to expand this network of grantmakers, donors, supporters, and volunteers to meet the moment; to capitalize on the demand for services, program growth, and the social and economic needs of the marginalized communities inside and outside the walls of this country's prisons. Feel free to reach out anytime to discuss how you can contribute. I greatly look forward to connecting to you and your team.*

*Warmly,*

*Bob Wilms*

*Director of Development, Unconditional Freedom*

*415.830.1478, wilmshq@gmail.com*

A person wearing a white protective suit and a white mask with a clear visor is shown from the chest up. They are holding a wooden board with both hands, and a thin tool is visible in their right hand. The person is standing in front of a chain-link fence. The background shows green trees and a clear sky. The word "Contribution" is written in a large, white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

# Contribution

"MY GOAL IS TO GIVE BACK AND MAKE AMENDS. THAT'S WHAT MY LIFE IS ABOUT TODAY."

- JEN TRAYERS, UFP PARTICIPANT