



# NEWSLETTER

Welcome to another issue of Second Chance Quest's newsletter. SCQ was founded by several prisoners in Virginia, who were strongly supported by their family members in Virginia and New Jersey. Second Chance Quest is a nonprofit organization geared to righting the ills of our penal system. Our vision is to tackle this problem on two fronts: Firstly, by mentoring prisoners on the inside in preparing them to live crime free lives upon release. We will equip these men and women with the necessary information on the availability of resources that they are qualified for. For the past three years we have been doing just that in Virginia. Secondly, to mentor at-risk children, primarily those who have an incarcerated parent. We are earnestly in the process of reaching this goal within the upcoming year.

Second Chance Quest strongly believe that to achieve any lasting impact in the reduction of crime, society has to include prisoners in that conversation, and that they be afforded a proactive role in that endeavor. Who best knows the causes and effects better than those who have experienced it first hand? I assure you, an at-risk youth will readily listen to what a prisoner has to say about the pitfalls of the streets rather than get it from their parents or law enforcement. Our society has tried time-and-time again to stamp out crime, or at the best, reduce it. We are yet

to see any lasting effect in that regard. It is time to take a different approach! One approach which SCQ advocates is "Alternative Sanctions" for nonviolent offenders. Far too many young promising souls are imprisoned in the prime of their lives for years-on-out for victimless crimes. A just alternative sanction would be to have those individuals enlist in the military, or assigned to an adult boot camp program as opposed to a wasted life behind bars, which in turn, heighten the odds of the children being caught up in the penal system. Furthermore, we advocate the restoration of a person's full rights after they've completed that sanction as their debt to society, we propose their criminal records be expunged. In that, those men and women will be afforded a true second chance in society.

I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you to become a member/volunteer of Second Chance Quest. Together people of goodwill can and will make a difference, do stand with us as we work tirelessly in making our communities and nation a better place for our children.

I'll leave you with our motto: "The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no farther than yourself, but the ends you serve that are for all in common, will take you into eternity." (Marcus Garvey).

Mr. T. Bravo  
President SCQ



## Inside this issue:

Message from the President of SCQ	1
Second Chance Month Change	2
Voices From Behind The Wall	3
SCQ Support Group Student's Perspective	4
Social Media Takeover	6
SCQ Workshop	6
Dear Members and Volunteers	7



## Second Chance Month



### May has been declared Second Chance Month in the Commonwealth

Second Chance Month: Justice for all Virginians (Richmond Times)

"It is vitally important that we ensure the fair and even application of justice for all people in the commonwealth, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, class and race. That is why Gov. Ralph Northam has declared May as Second Chance Month in the Commonwealth. From our sentencing guidelines to our public defender offices, educational programs in jails and prisons to the re-entry process, we understand the significant impact that our policies have on people in the criminal justice system and on our communities. In recognition of Second Chance Month, it is timely to reflect on our past work and to commit to future criminal justice reform initiatives as we work toward a safer and more equitable Virginia. We are proud that Virginia's state-run prisons have maintained the lowest recidivism rate in the country for the third year in a row. This is largely due to the dedication of our correctional officers



and our continued commitment to innovative programs and re-entry efforts that focus on factors such as mental health and substance use disorders. This year, Gov. Northam funded an expansion of Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) Community Corrections Alternative Program. This program allows judges in criminal cases to choose an alternative sentencing option, which includes cognitive behavioral treatment, workforce development and life skills training, and intensive substance abuse treatment.

Gov. Northam administration continues to work to restore the rights of individuals who have paid their debts to society. Nearly 14,000 people so far have had their rights restored under the Northam administration. When we help formerly incarcerated people seek housing, employment and health care upon release, we increase their chances of successfully participating in society. This helps to prevent future crime and keep communities safer..."

"As we recognize Second Chance Month, I feel confident that Virginia is moving toward a more equitable

criminal justice system. We successfully raised the felony larceny threshold to \$500 after decades of advocacy, and have ended the policy of suspending driving privileges for individuals who have unpaid fines and fees unrelated to driving, which will benefit hundreds of thousands of Virginians. In addition, Gov. Northam have announced that he will not sign another mandatory minimum sentence bill during his term as governor..."



**Gov. Northam**

## Change



In life we must sometimes "Do" the things that we may not want to do in order to get ourselves to where we want to be. The commitment that's needed, we often fail to let it evolve into a certain discipline that would propel us into "Rooms" just like this one (SCQ Support Group class); full of potential. Second Chance Quest has opened my eyes and has enabled me

to peep into the shallow streams of humanity. In this Support Group I can see MAN and ME, a plan for destiny. There's change in a constant and ever evolving atmosphere, but the best part is that patience allows others to grow here. The sorrows and pains can be stored here because when we exit each week, we leave it as the doors clears.

Second Chance Quest gives men the opportunity to seek out the superfluous in matters and discern whether the way they're living is right and exact according to what's been said as to how a man suppose to conduct himself. The stability that the SCQ Support Group provides is unmistakably cohesive.

**By: Grant-EI**

## Voices From Behind The Wall

### Safe Keepings!

"At night when I'm lonely and I lay in this cell, I think of only you to escape this hell. When my chest starts to hurt and I think of death, I think of you and soon I catch my breath.

When nights are cold while I lay on these sheets, I think of your warmth and it puts me to sleep. When I awake and open my eyes, I know it was you that kept me alive!"

"If I keep doing what I've been doing, I will keep on getting what I've been getting. If I want to change what I've been getting, I will have to change what I've been doing.

Be careful of your thoughts, for your thoughts become your words. Be careful of your words, for your words becomes your actions.

Be careful of your actions, for your actions become your habits. Be careful of your habits, for your habits become your character. Be careful of your character, for your character becomes your destiny."

**By: Tim Wright (A.K.A. Humble Hillbilly)**

### Purpose

Every day I take time to survey my surroundings in here. There are people of various ages, sizes, hues, cultures, upbringings, beliefs and a myriad of other things that make everyone uniquely individual. Our obvious commonality is our incarceration. For whatever the reason, we've all ended up here for whatever amount of time we were given. We could look at the purpose(s) of the incarceration. In other words, the charge(s). We could also look at the underlying purpose(s) that caused the person to catch the charge(s). However, instead of looking at the appar-

ent purpose, I want to look at the absent purpose. The purpose that wasn't there, but should've been. What I mean is that the vast majority of incarcerated people (men and women alike) were not encouraged to find their purpose before they ran into the situation that led them to prison.

Find the thing in life you're most passionate about; the thing that once you start doing it, you'll feel like you were born to do it. If you ask a person who is just entering the system what's their purpose/passion, a very high percentage of them wouldn't be able to tell you or even care. I used a person just entering as an example because some people find their purpose/passion while incarcerated. Who knows how different these same people's lives would have been if they'd found their purpose while they were free.

That's not to say that circumstances of life and the decisions they made because of them wouldn't have still led them to prison or to an undesirable life, however, I do believe that the number of people who still ended up here would be significantly lower. Take me for instance. Typical "hood" upbringing. No biological father or father figure.

Raised by numerous women in my family. Short stay in a foster home. Didn't finish school. Ran the streets and chased girls. Sold and smoked weed. Most of the stereotypical things can be applied to me. The point is that I had nobody to support and encourage me to find my passion, which turned out to be football and writing. I love to write. I write books, poetry, song lyrics, screenplays, legal and personal letters for others and anything else. I like to think I do it well too, but my point is that if I'd been encour-

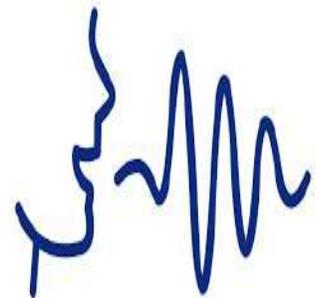
aged to find and pursue these passions of mine, I know that I wouldn't have ended up here. That's just me personally.

Instead, the streets got to me. Enveloped me. Lulled me into a false sense of purpose and belonging. Sadly, I had to discover my purpose while incarcerated. Even as I sit here writing this, I look around and see people whose lives have no purpose. I see people who don't care and are only interested in hedonistic pursuits.

When you look at successful people who come from similar backgrounds as I do, how many of them at some time or another say that whatever it is they're doing saved their life? They say that because they know that their life could have very easily be the one I live every day. Their life could've easily been over already. Their life could've easily been perpetual turmoil and catastrophe.

Purpose is important in our lives. I don't mean the purpose your parents or friends or anyone else has assigned to you. A purpose void of passion is merely a task. I'm talking about a purpose you are naturally passionate about. A purpose that you're self-motivated for. A purpose that you'd strive to complete even if nobody paid you to do it. A purpose that feels more like a burning, insatiable desire and gives you the deepest sense of happiness and satisfaction when you're in the midst of it. THAT is purpose. THAT is the conduit through which truly feeling alive is transferred.

Whether you're on the street or in prison, I encourage you to explore life enough to find your purpose. You'll see life through a different lens and the way you



## Voices From Behind The Wall (Cont.)



move through days will be different. When you find the purpose you're passionate about, your life will be passionately purposeful and that's a beautiful thing. Peace.

**By: Rodney Fenner**

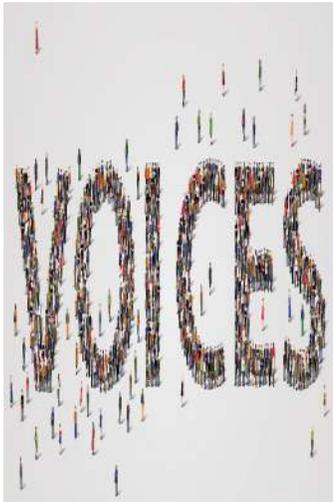
### Forgiveness

Allow me to share what forgiveness means to me. Forgiveness and Family Cohesion...One must forgive one's self first for his own wrong ways, before he may ask others for their forgiveness!!!

So forgiveness is a two way street. When one thinks of forgiveness, true forgiveness: the willingness to absolve, acquit, or remit and cease all resentment and ill will begin... in the heart and mind. Forgiveness follows (3) three stages:  
 Stage #1--the offender and/or victim must forgive themselves.  
 Stage #2--the offender and/or victim must ask God for forgiveness.  
 Stage #3--the offender must ask the victim for forgiveness and the victim (hopefully) acquiesce and is willing to accept forgiveness.

And each person has to work towards learning how to find their forgiveness.

**By: Unknown author**



### Good Dudes

"Good Dudes" - let's be honest, this phrase or label is often used without full understanding of the person and / or the meaning. Do's and don'ts for just consideration to be a "good dude"( my views) there's more don'ts cause us ("good dudes") already know what to do. first, you can't have none of them crazy charges (we know what they are). Back biting, stealing, gunning , disrespecting any and everyone, hating the next man, etc. are just some of the don'ts. There's much more of course but, the do's are much more simple.

Do be a man of integrity, honesty, favorable character, moral fortitude, and principal assertions are first on my list to be labeled a "good dude", there's much more of these also. 12:30, and 6:00, ( standing straight up and down), is required as a " good dude".

A lot of us judge a person first before knowing there whole story. I try to "see" a "good dudes" ways and actions for myself before I "say" he is a "good dude". I would love to hear some different opinions on this subject in the future. Peace!

**By: Wop**

### Food For Thought: "DOC"

Doc does not stand for Doctor, however; like a doctor, Doc cuts through many fabrics

of lives like a surgical knife. Doc is a creature of two types. It holds in its belly those that have offended society by committing a crime, thus serving the public to protect.

Doc also destroys and eats the lives of those in its belly and their families. Doc turns its offenders into a true beast by nature both to the offender and society. Doc is a protector and a destroyer, safety for some misery for others.

**By: Unknown author**

### Men Cry Too

If you don't think men cry too, ask the one I see in the mirror, he will tell you they do.

Crying is for women and children! You may boldly say. It's not for men; they don't break down that way. I'm a man and I've been one for many years, if the walls of my cell could speak, they would say that, I sit down at night and wipe away the tears. I've watched my youthful looks turn to old. I've helplessly watched my woman walk away; saying one side of her is getting cold.

So, if you don't think men cry too, ask the one I see in the mirror, he will tell you they do.

**By: Mr. C. Matta**

## Second Chance Quest Support Group Student's Perspective

"Since my enrollment in Second Chance Quest Support Group, it has given me the opportunity to gain a different outlook on life, and a better understanding of my

surroundings thanks to the discussions we share with each other from week-to-week. In my humble opinion, Second Chance Quest Support Group is a mind healing

support group that's dedicated to bring about "change" in everyone that is willing to give it a chance..." **A. Benjamin (Spyros)**

## Second Chance Quest Support Group Student's Perspective (Cont.)

"Right from the beginning I had mixed reviews as to what I really thought about this class... Just another group of dusty xxx prison prophets (a twisted product or my arrested development). But then, I get the opportunity to hear men speak... (on their respective days). Such as Tom, (Whom I've known for decades), Ish, and Ray-Ray, just to name a few.

It was like that scene in the movie "The Five Heartbeats", where Eddie Kane took over the stage and launched their career. What I'm saying is, I made a 'Commitment' to myself from that day forward, to strive to acquire the necessary 'Discipline' so as to make the 'Change'..."

**By: Mr. S. Brice**

"I think Second Chance Quest is based off of people wanting a second chance. In order to even think about a second chance we have to be willing to take the proper steps towards that goal to show that we are worthy of a second chance. I think that Commitment, Change, Discipline, Patience, Stability, and Tolerance (principles taught by SCQ Support Group) are all great words to think of and use as a stepping stone in the direction of a second chance..." **By: Mr. Cooper**

"Wow to Second Chance Quest! This course is helpful for individuals that are incarcerated. I recommend everyone that's housed at Buckingham Correctional Center to take this course. I am very grateful for the commitment of the founders and mentors. You guys have

been a real good support group..." **By: Reginald**

"Since I've been attending Second Chance Quest, the experience has been great! I learned that this program has the knowledge, wisdom and understanding of changing boys to men. Commitment, Change, Discipline, Patience, Stability and Tolerance. These six principles (as taught) are the key elements in the transformation of someone's ways, thoughts and actions in becoming a better person..."

**By: Mr. Talley (aka Flav)**

"While attending Second Chance Quest, I've learned a lot and I have changed many of my negative ways. I look at things differently now. I learn how to respect and place value on everyone and everything. Thanks to the support group I now have an understanding of the Prison Industrial Complex, and how best to manage my money..."

**By: Mr. Turner**

"What Second Chance Quest program gave me was a second chance to see more in myself, about myself and changing within. Being in this class and learning about change. Changing a model of reality is a form of growth that often comes from epiphany or insight. It's a sudden awakening or revelation that shifts a belief. Second Chance Quest taught me, changing a system for living, on the other hand, is a progressive change..."

**By: Evans (aka Prince)**

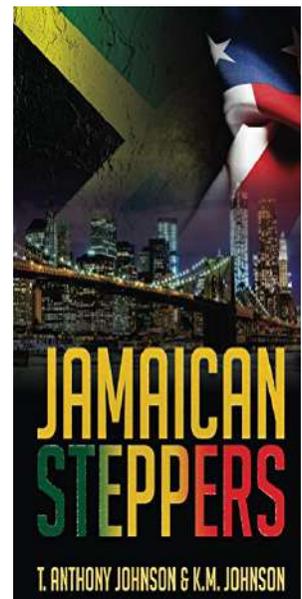
"When I've made a com-

mitment to complete any goals, small or large, I have to change within. So I learn to discipline myself to be patient. The Second Chance Quest Support Group has helped me to learn to slow down, think, and digest each issue instead of reacting first. I have learn by making these changes will help me when I commit myself to becoming a better person..."

**By: Mr. Munford**

"The act of changing your life sounds easy, but the actual application of the methods you'll need in order to change can be a long process. If you have the patience of an iceberg you can bring about positive change I'm your life and acquire the discipline you need to bring it about..."

**By: Bryan**



To Order send Cash/Check/Money Order for **\$12.00 (discounted price)** to:

**East Road Publishing**  
15912-B Crain Hwy, Suite 200  
Brandywine, MD 20613

Also available online at:  
**Amazon.com**

## Social Media Takeover



We would like to thank everyone that participated in our annual Social Media Takeover, which focused on the importance of a second chance after incarceration.

We started off the five-day takeover with an internet radio appearance on 8 Squad Rebel Radio w/ four influential, formerly incarcerated men who discussed some of the roadblocks many people face after incarceration. These men are working in their communities to help level the playing field. The station's co-founder Dre hosted the event along with Justice Figeroa. We were also joined by Shawn Hartwell, Shanduke McPhatter and Chi Ali.

Justice works with incarcerated men in a New Jersey assessment center. Shawn Hartwell runs a popular #fckprison campaign that encourages people to think about the consequences of going to prison before reacting. Shanduke McPhatter runs Gangsters Making Astronomical Community Changes Inc or G-M.A.C.C. a Brooklyn nonprofit credited for a 30% drop in shooting incidents from 2012 to 2017 in the precinct where it operates, and a 65% decrease from 2017 to 2018. We also had a brief call from hip hop artist and author Chi Ali who is currently on tour for his newly released book "Another Kind of Freedom". He is also releasing a highly anticipated documentary titled, "The Fabulous Chi Ali". These gentlemen shared their personal experi-

ences after incarceration and their obligations to the communities they serve.

The second day we had a table talk with four formerly incarcerated women about the struggles they faced upon release, the impact of quality reentry programs in and out of facilities, and parenting after prison. We also spoke with Sandrine Cooper, a psychologist who has spent many years working with incarcerated and newly released men. Vanee Sykes, Co-Founder of Hope House, shared her story of being incarcerated and the work Hope House does to provide a safe housing space for formerly incarcerated women and girls. She came with Chasity, who also works at Hope House and talked about going through life with an incarcerated father. Aisha Hall shared her views on the disproportionate rate at which African Americans are incarcerated compared to whites. Aisha is newly released from federal prison, has published several books, and spends a lot of time advocating for prison reform. Tamara Henry has been home about four years and talked about the fear she felt after joining the carpenter's union, wondering if she would soon be let go because of her record. This scared her because the work — which she enjoyed and was good at doing — is also the reason she can take care of her daughter. While Tamara was incarcerated she became good friends

with Candace. We all spoke with Candace when she called in from Fluvanna Correctional Facility.

On day three we were honored to have a discussion on policies and community involvement with Helena Muhammad and Dupre Kelly. Ms. Muhammad worked with former NJ Governor Jim McGreevy and New Jersey Reentry Corporation, whose mission is "to remove all barriers to employment for citizens returning from incarceration." Mr. Dupre Kelly is a member of the hip-hop group Lords of the Underground. He also ran for city councilman in Newark and continues to be a voice for the community.

During the last three days, we took calls from men and women who are currently incarcerated. We were also live on Facebook and Instagram with men and women who have been impacted by incarceration. All participants weighed in on the importance of a second chance after incarceration.

Overall, the Social Media Takeover was a success. We look forward to doing it again in April 2020.



For all your Graphic Design Needs!  
<https://www.cjproper.net>

## Second Chance Quest Workshop at Buckingham

Correctional Center has again found a way to embark into a new frontier that

will amaze you. For the first time we will conduct a workshop for our Latino brothers.

There are no other programs or workshops offered for Spanish speaking offenders.

## Second Chance Quest Workshop at Buckingham (Cont.)

The workshop will be lead by our English speaking mentors and translated by several post graduate Spanish speaking brothers. The hope is to extend the principles and ideology of Second Chance Quest to a disenfranchised group that are hurting in a prison system that at times leaves them isolated from general population due to a language barrier.

Could you imagine being in a foreign land, not speaking the language, not having knowledge of the culture? Who do you trust? Sometimes even your own people can not help you because they are struggling themselves to survive. It is bad enough that the prison system may keep us divided in our housing arrangements so that we may not be able to reach out to one another. What's worse is that we cause division between our-

selves because of our petty differences.

Second Chance Quest members want to embrace our Latino brothers and let them know they are not alone in the struggle to find a moment of peace in this environment.

Bridging the language barrier is made with an extended hand of friendship. That hand of friendship can be best reached by athletic competition. Beginning on June 1, 2019, Second Chance Quest members launched Invitational Soccer Tournament. Three young members of our population that are in good conduct were chosen as team captains and paired with some of the best senior players as team advisors. These team advisors will teach their young captains not only in soccer strategy but leadership and sportsmanship.

The Founding Second Chance Quest Members of this tournament are: T. Bravo, W. Anderson, C. Matta, E. Hill, N.

Colossi, D. Bonilla, E. Johnson, G. Hatchett, W. Barrett, R. Saunders, D. Aranda, L.Cherry

Team Jersey Graphic Designer A. Zuri

League Commissioner - L. Aviles-Rios

Team Chivos is lead by: Captain F. Gracia, Team Advisor L. Cahvas

Team Los Rapidos is lead by: Captain O. Alfaro, Team Advisor D. Bonilla.

Team Los Aguilas F.C. is lead by: Captain J. Guevara Team Advisor N. Landero.

Gentleman, good luck and play well.



## Members and Volunteers

### Dear Members/Volunteers,

Thank you for your unwavering support and contribution to Second Chance Quest. We have some good news for you; SCQ has partnered up with Prison Fellowship and over 200 other nonprofit organizations in recognition of April as "Second Chance Month".

The President and the U.S. Senate have signed into law a resolution designating April as Second Chance Month, in the spirit of bringing attention to the prison justice system and the struggles ex-offenders face upon transitioning back into society.

Second Chance Quest

will be hosting a number of events during the last week of April 2019. We will be hosting an on-line shout-out live from all the major prisons in Virginia. This live feed will be heard across the entire nation and the world. Contact us immediately (via, email) to sign up and be given a time slot.

**Note:** You'll be required to add Second Chance Quest's phone number to your approved call list. No collect calls will be accepted.

Also, Second Chance Quest will be holding a raffle to generate the much needed

funds to keep our doors open. Do encourage your family and love ones to purchase our raffle tickets, which can be purchased on-line. First prize will be a "Laptop Computer", Second prize winner will be "Dinner for Two", at a respectable restaurant.

Thank you, we are looking forward to hearing from you!

**Second Chance Quest  
PO Box 855  
Maplewood, N.J. 07040**

**Phone: (304) 878 - 3727, or  
(304) TRUE - SCQ**

Get involved.



**It's Never Too Late To Make A Difference!**



PO Box 855  
Maplewood, NJ 07040

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

## SPONSORS

Good news! You now have the opportunity to become an official member of Second Chance Quest. This April is our First Annual Membership Drive.

### SCQ'S - "PRISON" MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

For an annual fee of \$10.00, you can become a member. Here are some of the benefits of becoming a member of SCQ:

- Four (4) issues of Second Chance Quest Newsletters per year
- Email Access to Second Chance Quest Head Office
- Receive Periodic Updates to all Second Chance Quest Activities and Annual Facebook Take-Over
- Afforded access in having your short stories and/or articles published in SCQ's Newsletter - deemed appropriate

Members will be afforded Second Chance Quest's organizational support on valid grievances - if deemed members' grievance warrants SCQ's backing.

You, as a member, have the full weight of this not-for-profit organization on your side and in your corner - for life!

### SECOND CHANCE QUEST - "REGULAR" MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

For an annual fee of \$50.00. As a new member, you will receive the following:

- A complimentary SCQ T-Shirt
- Official member-only access via our website
- Four (4) issues of SCQ's Newsletters per year
- Priority and Discount rates to all SCQ Events/Functions

We encourage you to join us as we work diligently to bring about positive changes to our criminal justice system through the mentoring of both those who are incarcerated and the children of the incarcerated. Join us by becoming a life-long member as we rise to the challenges of reducing mass incarceration. We are tackling this challenge on both fronts, (at home and in the prisons).

