

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

PRISON ARTS INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022



Our Town Staged Reading at the University of Denver



Prison Arts Initiative
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Table of Contents

Overview.....	1
Our Team.....	2
Facilities.....	2
Initiatives.....	3
Numbers.....	7
Evaluations.....	8
Artistic Justice: A Praxis.....	9
Inside Wire Impact Report	11
Quotes from Participants.....	14
Media Coverage.....	15
Connect with DU PAI.....	17



With(In) Team at Sterling & Denver Women's Correctional Facilities

Overview

The staff, advisory board, affiliate faculty and volunteers at the University of Denver Prison Arts Initiative (DU PAI) are excited to share with you the outcomes of our third year of programming in partnership with the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC). Through this deepening relationship, we continue to offer high-quality programming to hundreds of incarcerated learners and collaborators across Colorado.

In July 2021, DU PAI was able to start facilitating in-person programming again after the prolonged pandemic through our art-based courses, *With(in)* podcast, *The Inside Report* newspaper, *Reverberations Art Magazine*, theatre productions, and films. Whether we were in a pandemic holding programming in-person or through correspondence, our students never failed to show their resilience through their desire to learn and create community inside the walls using the arts.

DU PAI also launched *Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio*, the first and only statewide prison radio station in the U.S., and the first ever radio station in the world to reach listeners in the public 24/7 from inside prisons. At launch, Inside Wire began broadcasting from Limon, Sterling, and Denver Women's Correctional Facilities. (As of fall 2022, the station also broadcasts from Buena Vista Correctional Facility.) Through the hard work of our audio producers at these three facilities, we are proud to offer music, stories, news, entertainment, and companionship to listeners inside and outside prison.

We remain humbled by our supporters—the staff and leadership of the CDOC; DU's College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences; community partners; interns; and, most of all, by our incarcerated students and collaborators.

Thank you,
The DU PAI Team

The DU PAI Team 2021-2022

Ashley Hamilton, *Executive Director*

Lilly Stannard, *Assistant Director of Programming*

Tess Neel, *Program Coordinator and Production Manager*

Dan Manzanares, *Development and Communications Manager*

Ryan Conarro, *Director of Creative Media and General Manager of Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio*

JoyBelle Phelan, *Program Assistant*

Seth Ready, *Communications Associate, Hotlines and Music Manager of Inside Wire*

Eric Davis, *Communications Associate*

Shannon Sliva, *Director of Research*

Danielle Littman, *Research Assistant*

Caitlin Konya, *Graduate School of Social Work Intern*

Clare Hammor, *Performance and Pedagogy Consultant*

Advisory Board

Members

2021 -2022

Libby Catchings

Eric Davis

Jessica Garrett

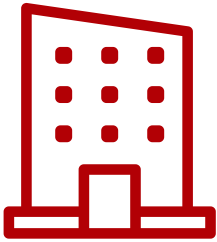
Jeffrey Lin

Jamiylah Nelson

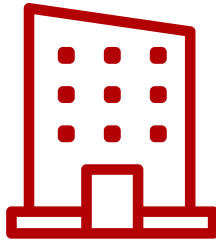
Kristen Nelson

Shannon Sliva

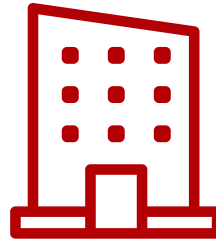
Facilities



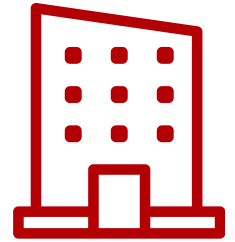
Arkansas Valley
Correctional Facility



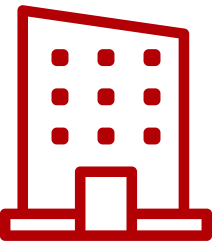
Buena Vista
Correctional Facility



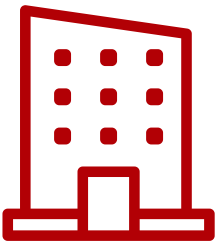
Colorado State
Penitentiary



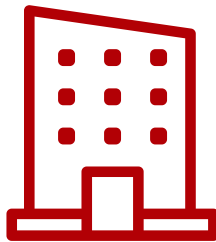
Colorado Territorial
Correctional Facility



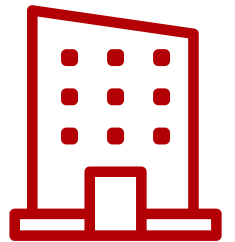
Denver Reception &
Diagnostic Center



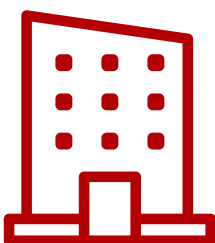
Denver Women's
Correctional Facility



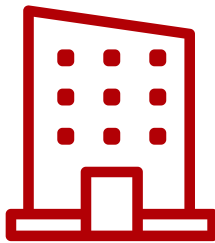
Four Mile
Correctional Facility



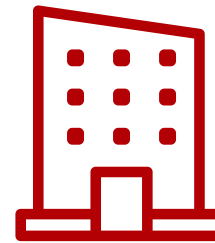
Fremont
Correctional Facility



La Vista
Correctional Facility



Limon
Correctional Facility



Sterling
Correctional Facility

Initiatives

July - August 2021

DU PAI started implementing in-person programming in facilities across the state after a year of correspondence classes due to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.

We launched our arts-based courses in ten facilities across the state. **164 students** participated in these arts-based courses, engaging with class materials ranging from poetry, to theatre improvisation, to dance.



Growing Up In My Cell, Hector Castillo

DU PAI Artistic Development Team (ADT: George Chavez, Andrew Draper, Dr. Ashley Hamilton, Matthew LaBonte, Angel Lopez, Terry W. Mosley Jr. and Brett Phillips) created and hosted the very first Artistic Justice Workshop. The two-day arts-based, experiential workshop explored the shared humanity which exists between incarcerated residents and CDOC staff.

September 2021

DU PAI opened its **second annual Chained Voices Art Show** featuring **137 unique artists and 330 pieces of art**. The art show took place in three different locations throughout September: the Community Commons Gallery at the University of Denver, Cottonwood Center for the Arts in Colorado Springs, and an online gallery showcasing every piece of art at www.chainedvoices.org.

Chained Voices sold ninety five pieces of artwork and helped raise pieces of artwork and helped raise **\$13,588 in proceeds for incarcerated artists** across the state by the end of the month.

October 2021

The Inside Report, our statewide newspaper produced in collaboration with CDOC, **published Volume 2, Issue 1**. 2,000 copies were circulated to all twenty one CDOC facilities.

DU PAI also published the fall issue of *Reverberations Art Magazine: "Liminal."* 2,000 copies were circulated to all twenty-one CDOC facilities.

November 2021

After a year and a half in the making, DU PAI finally performed and filmed our adaptation of *Antigone at Limon Correctional Facility*. This project was directed and adapted by Julie Rada, who was serving as DU PAI's Director of Programming at the time. DU PAI originally started to produce this production back in early 2020, however, it was postponed until fall of 2021 due to the limitations of the pandemic.

DU PAI also partnered with the University of Denver's Theatre Department in producing a staged reading of *Our Town*. This collaboration included five DU theatre students, three previously incarcerated actors, and eight incarcerated actors and artists at Sterling Correctional Facility who zoomed in for the production. DU PAI is deeply honored to have received a [Denver Post True West Award](#) for this production.

December 2021

Fall courses were concluded with several culminating events, including final sharings and performances witnessed by resident and staff communities alike at each facility across the CDOC.

January 2022

Solutions Journalism Network selected DU Prison Arts Initiative staffers Ryan Conarro, JoyBelle Phelan, and Seth Ready as 2022 LEDE Fellows. They're one of sixteen international cohorts selected from a pool of over 250 applicants, charged with creating new works of journalism that "LEDE": *Leverage* the network of journalists and community members; *Engage* the community; *Disseminate* knowledge about the medium of solutions journalism; and *Elevate* stories that are missing from dominant narratives. In addition, our DU PAI team articulated and began planning an audio series called "WORTHY: Colorado Reentry Stories" for production and air at the end of 2022.

In recognition of the 150th anniversary of Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility, DU PAI devised and filmed *These Walls*. Our hope for this project was to better understand the humanity of people hidden behind the walls of Territorial. The Creative Team inside Territorial used music, movement, visual art, and performance to share *These Walls*, a historical and contemporary story of the facility.

March 2022

In response to the shutdown caused by the Omicron variant in the COVID-19 pandemic, “Art & Resilience” was launched as a [correspondence class](#). The course aimed to support folks inside by equipping them with various therapeutic arts tools to continue to take care of themselves and one another through yet another programming shutdown. [277 students from ten facilities](#) across the state listened in to podcast-style lectures and completed corresponding assignments responded to by DU faculty.

[Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio launched](#). Inside Wire is the first and only statewide prison radio station in the United States, and the first in the world to reach the public 24/7 from inside prisons. DU PAI and CDOC hosted a launch party with over fifty guests at Limon Correctional Facility, the hub of Inside Wire operations. Within the first hour of its broadcast, voices and audio works were heard on Inside Wire from audio production studios across the state, including from Limon, Sterling, and Denver Women's Correctional Facilities. As many as [14,000 incarcerated listeners](#) tuned in on their televisions via the CDOC's closed-circuit TV network. Listeners in the public joined via the Inside Wire app, the streaming signal at [coloradoprisonradio.com](#), or via Alexa. In its first month of broadcast, Inside Wire reached over [10,500 unique public listeners in more than five countries](#).

April 2022

[In-person arts-based courses launched at nine facilities](#) with the exciting new addition of courses such as “Moving Meditations: Intro to Dance & Choreography” and “Creating (In)Place: An investigation of prison architecture through visual and literary arts.”

May 2022

DU PAI premiered *These Walls* at the SIE Film Center in Denver, CO, with [167 people from the public in attendance](#). Dean Williams, who was the Executive Director of the CDOC and the Colorado Territorial Management Team at the time, attended in-person alongside the Creative Team from the facility, who attended the event virtually. We ended the night with an incredible talkback during which the public was invited to ask the Creative Team questions about the process of creating *These Walls*.

June 2022

Spring courses were concluded with culminating events including: Voice & Speech showcases, monologue series, and visual art in-class exhibitions. Residents, CDOC staff, and DU PAI staff had the pleasure of attending many of these events to witness what had been learned and crafted by these 156 students.

The Inside Report, our statewide newspaper produced in collaboration with the CDOC, published Volume 3, Issue 1. 2,000 copies were circulated to all twenty-one CDOC facilities.

DU PAI also published the spring issue of *Reverberations Art Magazine*, circulating 2,000 copies to all twenty-one CDOC facilities.

DU PAI's *Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio* staff attended the first ever International Prison Radio Conference in Oslo, Norway. Ryan Conarro, Seth Ready, and Brent Nicholas visited several of Norway's prisons. While there, they met and collaborated with leaders in global prison radio, including: Norway's Rover Radio, the UK's National Prison Radio, India's Tinka Tinka Radio, Israel's Radio Focus, Argentina's La Tribu FM, Australia's Jail Break, and from California: Uncuffed, Humans of San Quentin, and EarHustle.

By the end of its first four months of 24/7 broadcasting, *Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio* was led by fourteen full-time audio producers at three facilities. It engaged numerous guests and contributors, including over 115 additional incarcerated residents, more than eighteen CDOC staff, and over fifteen community leaders and members of the public.

DU PAI also opened its third annual Chained Voices Art Show at the McNichols Building in collaboration with Denver Arts & Venues. This partnership and gallery extended through August of 2022, which is the longest-running Chained Voices Art Show we have produced to this date.

Numbers

Art-Based Courses

19 In-person courses across the state
10 Cell-Side courses across the state

984

Total Hours
Of Programming

597

Total Unique
Participants

With(in) Podcast

11

Team
Members

11

Episodes

96

Total Work
Hours Inside

Inside Report Newspaper

12 Core Team Members

12 Bureau Chiefs

92

Total Work
Hours Inside

4,000

Total Papers
Printed

Inside Wire

14 Full-Time Audio Producers

115 Additional Incarcerated Collaborators

160

Total Work
Hours Inside

3

Radio Production
Studios

Film & Productions

80

Cast & Crew Members

108

Total Work
Hours Inside

2,700+

Total
Views

Chained Voices Art Show

137

Unique Artists

330

Total Art
Submissions

\$13,588

Total
Proceeds

Group Leadership

55

Group
Leaders

384

Total Work
Hours Inside

Artistic Justice

300

Participants

11

Facilities

176

Total
Workshop Hours

A Year in Review

2021-2022 DU PAI Arts-Based Courses Evaluation Summary

Evaluation conducted by Danielle Littman & Shannon Sliva

Over the 2021-2022 program year, ten different arts-based courses were facilitated at eleven different facilities throughout the Colorado Department of Corrections across two program periods (Fall, Winter/Spring). Some of these courses were offered more than once, totaling nineteen courses. These courses ranged across artistic disciplines of theatre, visual art, journalism, movement/dance, creative writing, improvisation, and more.

Students from various artistic and educational backgrounds applied to take part in the arts-based courses and, once accepted, began attending classes once a week for twelve to fourteen weeks. Each class was comprised of anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five students and facilitated by a member of DU PAI's affiliate faculty—all of whom are prominent artists and educators in the Colorado community. Students experienced rigorous academic dialogue and text, engaged in arts-based projects and activities, and supported one another through the development of final projects and performances.

Quantitative Findings: A Graphic Representation



*indicates statistically significant change between pretest to posttest

To read the full evaluation report, [click here](#)

Artistic Justice Workshops Taken on Tour

In the Summer of 2021 the DU PAI Artistic Development Team (ADT: George Chavez, Andrew Draper, Dr. Ashley Hamilton, Matthew LaBonte, Angel Lopez, Terry W. Mosley Jr., and Brett Phillips) created the very first Artistic Justice Workshop. The two-day arts-based, experiential workshop explored the shared humanity between incarcerated residents and CDOC staff. This workshop was inspired by the profound experience this specific group experienced throughout their process of collecting interviews for *IF LIGHT CLOSED ITS EYES* (a play created from one hundred interviews across the system), after which they felt called to share their learnings with their larger community. From June 2021 through September 2021, the ADT traveled to the following eleven facilities and led the Artistic Justice workshop for 300 incarcerated residents and CDOC staff, leading to profoundly meaningful results.

- Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility
- Buena Vista Correctional Facility
- Centennial Correctional Facility
- Colorado State Penitentiary
- Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility
- Denver Reception & Diagnostic Center
- Denver Women's Correctional Facility
- Fremont Correctional Facility
- Four Mile Correctional Facility
- Limon Correctional Facility
- Sterling Correctional Facility



Dr. Ashley Hamilton and the Artistic Development Team at Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility



Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio Impact Report

Evaluation conducted by Ryan Conarro

THE LAUNCH OF INSIDE WIRE: COLORADO PRISON RADIO

Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio launched on March 1, 2022, with a special broadcast from Limon Correctional Facility. **Over 50 guests** gathered in the facility's program wing as the broadcast audio floated through the hallways and prison library. Those in attendance notably included executive leadership from across the Department of Corrections, as well as local, state, and national press. Within its first hour on the air, and every day since, **Inside Wire's 24/7 broadcast has exemplified its first-of-its-kind geographical scope:** audio produced from numerous regions of the state weaves seamlessly on-air, from Limon, Sterling, and Denver Women's Correctional Facilities. *To listen to the Inside Wire broadcast launch event, [click here](#) to find it in our Inside Wire Audio Archive on Soundcloud.*

REACHING LISTENERS INSIDE & OUTSIDE PRISON

On March 1, 2022—Inside Wire's launch day—we reached **over 4,000 unique listeners in the public** via the Inside Wire app, our internet streaming signal, and the Alexa tool.

By March 22, 2022, Inside Wire had reached **10,000 unique listeners** in the public.

By June 30, 2022 Inside Wire had reached **over 15,300 unique listeners** in the public.

Inside Wire reaches **over 15,000 potential listeners in Colorado prisons**. In our Summer 2022 Listener Engagement Survey, **90.5% of respondents said they listen to Inside Wire at least every week. 55.5% said they listen every day.**

To check out our full Inside Wire Impact Report from our 2022 Listener Survey, please [click here](#).

REACHING LISTENERS INSIDE & OUTSIDE PRISON

As of June 2022, Inside Wire's team included fourteen producers across three Colorado prisons. The DU PAI team installed state-of-the-art audio production studios and sound booths at these facilities in collaboration with staff from the Colorado Department of Corrections and with our Denver-based consulting engineer, Jonathan Howard. *Radio World* magazine highlighted Inside Wire's industry-standard equipment in a November 2022 feature article. *To check out the Radio World feature, [click here.](#)*

The training journey for each Inside Wire incarcerated producer includes technical audio production skills; broadcast writing; interview strategies; and ethics and considerations of representing and editing stories on the air. When a producer completes their training, they earn a certificate in Fundamentals of Sound Production and Audio Storytelling, granted by University of Denver's University College.

A RADIO STATION FOR ALL: INVITING OTHERS INTO THE STUDIO

As of June 2022, in addition to our fourteen full-time radio producers, numerous others have spent time in our studios as contributors, guest hosts, or subjects of our feature productions, including...

- **Over 115 incarcerated residents**
- **More than eighteen staff members from Colorado Department of Corrections**
- **Over fifteen visitors from the public, including community leaders and staffers from reentry support organizations**

To check out our Program Schedule, including when you can hear our flagship morning music show and our range of feature and talk shows, [click here.](#)

2022 LISTENER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY: “IT LETS ME KNOW I’M NOT ALONE”

In Summer 2022, with support and guidance from DU PAI advisory board members Shannon Sliva, Jeffrey Lin, and Danielle Littman, we offered our first Inside Wire Listener Engagement Survey. The survey was delivered as an insert in the *Inside Report* newspaper, announced on facility fliers and TV announcements, and was amplified by DU PAI Group Leaders within each facility. We relied on the collaboration of CDOC staff to gather and return completed surveys. **178 residents** responded from sixteen **CDOC facilities**; the demographics of this sample of the community closely match those of the larger CDOC population in terms of age, race/ethnicity, and gender.

“I DANCE IN MY ROOM”: LISTENER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

How has listening to Inside Wire impacted you?

- "Inside Wire’s music uplifts me and motivates me to not give up."
- "[I remember hearing] the Inside Wire team’s interview with The Marshall Project reporters [about voting rights for Coloradans on parole], because I thought I had lost that right forever!"
- "It was the Wednesday morning DJ. He played nothing but slow jams, and that helped me cheer up and inspired me to write letters."
- "I heard someone on “Behind the Mic” who I didn’t like very well. It helped me realize you never know what someone goes through."
- "I enjoy hearing about women's and men's successes in CDOC."
- "I dance in the cell to Inside Wire."

Respondents say...

- **46.9%** say that they “have taken action after hearing something on Inside Wire.”
- **65.8%** agree that “Inside Wire has made me more aware of services available during and after prison.”
- **63.5%** agree that “listening to Inside Wire has made me feel more positive about life.”
- **60.6%** say that they “would like to listen to Inside Wire on the streets after release.”
- **73.2%** agree that “Inside Wire fills an important need by providing relevant information about reentry.”

Quotes from our Participants

“

"I feel as if I have a renewed sense of purpose when it comes to my personal and professional interactions with other human beings."

"It was in these [workshop] moments [that] I didn't feel like I was in prison and more somewhere I belong."

"This play helped breathe life into me."

"People in this workshop worked together despite race, group, or gender. It was quite spectacular."

”

These Walls Film at CTCF



Antigone at Limon Correctional Facility

Media Coverage

General DU PAI Coverage

DU Clarion: [DU Prison Arts Initiative: Shifting the Conversation for People, Spaces and Systems](#)

Reddit: [The DU Prison Arts Initiative \(PAI\) is a program that teams up with correctional facilities across the state to use art as a means for incarcerated people to express themselves.](#)

DU Newsroom: [CAHSS Raises Over \\$250,000 to Support Social Justice](#)

West Word: [Words Beyond Bars Brought Books and Hope Into Colorado Prisons](#)

Denverite: [Claud Kasiah started writing Playground Ensemble's latest concert while he was in prison](#)

Production & Film Coverage

The Denver Gazette: [Turns out, 'These Walls' CAN talk](#)

CBS4 Denver: [Film Created At Cañon City Prison Humanizes Life Inside](#)

AllEvents.in Denver: [DU PAI Presents "These Walls" at the Sie Film Center](#)

Westword: [Our Town: University of Denver Prison Arts Initiative](#)

Chained Voices Coverage

Denver Arts & Venues: [McNichols Civic Center Building Presents Exhibitions, Events and Exhibits Celebrate Pride](#)

DO303: [Chained Voices: DU Prison Arts Initiative](#)

Channel 7 Denver: [Art for Redemption Mural](#)

Colorado Newsline: [A push to change Colorado's prison culture and perceptions — one art piece at a time](#)

Colorado Independent: [Art from the incarcerated rehabilitates, connects population with outside world](#)

Southeast Express: [Creating art provides connections for Colorado's incarcerated population](#)

Colorado Independent: [Opinion: Hearing inside voices](#)

Denver7 News: [New DU art show displays pieces by incarcerated artists](#)

With(in) Podcast Coverage

303 Magazine: [11 Colorado Podcasts to Add to Your Listening Queue](#)

Player FM: [Season 2, 13: The Way Back](#)

The Denver Post: [Denver's best podcasts for 2022 include alien conspiracies, stoner culture, police reform and more](#)

Inside Wire Coverage

National Public Radio: [Incarcerated producer finds purpose in running a radio station from prison](#)

NBC News: [Inmate-produced radio station streams beyond prison walls](#)

US News & World Report: [Colorado Prison Radio Begins Airing From Behind Bars](#)

AP Network News: [Colorado prison radio begins airing from behind bars](#)

CGTN America Television: [Prison radio station debuts in Colorado](#)

Colorado Public Radio: [At this prison radio station, inmates tell their stories in their own voices](#)

To check out other press coverage of Inside Wire, [click here](#).

Additionally, DU PAI's press release for Inside Wire: Colorado Prison Radio was shared on 330 different sites and reached a potential audience of 222 million people — it currently stands as the most shared press release in the history of the University of Denver.

Other Programming Coverage

The Whole Story: [Introducing the Solutions Journalism Network's 2022 LEDE Fellows](#)

Pen America 100: [The Sentences That Create Us](#)



Sarah Berry and Cynthia Gonzalez in DU PAI's Inside Wire studio at Denver Womens Correctional Facility.

CONNECT

DU Prison Arts Initiative
prisonarts@du.edu
2135 East Wesley Avenue,
Office 304
Denver, CO 80210
303-871-5241
liberalarts.du.edu/prison-arts

FOLLOW

 [@DUPrisonArtsInitiative](https://www.facebook.com/DUPrisonArtsInitiative)

 [@duprisonarts](https://www.instagram.com/duprisonarts)

 [linkedin.com/company/
du-prison-arts-initiative](https://www.linkedin.com/company/du-prison-arts-initiative)

GIVE

To learn more and give to DU PAI, visit
bit.ly/GIVE2PAI

DU PAI is supported by the Colorado Department of
Corrections, Arts Affinity Group, Arts in Society,
and the Madden Center.



Prison Arts Initiative
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



COLORADO
Department of Corrections