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UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

PRISON ARTS INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2019–2020



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES
Prison Arts Initiative



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We've held over **900** hours of workshops/course time.



We've served **1,768** people who are incarcerated and their family members.



We've facilitated **370** unique course and workshop sessions.

OVERVIEW

As a group, we at the University of Denver (DU PAI) are filled with pride and honor to share with you the outcomes of our first year of programming in partnership with the Colorado Department of Corrections. Through this partnership, we've been able to work with over 410 incarcerated participants across 10 state-run facilities.

During our first year of partnership, through the support of the CDOC, DU PAI has been able to start *The Inside Report* — a DOC-wide newspaper with contributions from across DOC facilities, expand from 3 facilities to 10 facilities, launch the *With(in)* podcast, produce historical productions of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* — which was covered by *The New York Times* — and *A Christmas Carol*, and begin rehearsals on three full-scale theatrical productions.

Additionally, with the support of the CDOC, DU PAI created innovative programming to continue engagement with DU PAI students during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Through quick thinking and collaboration, we were able to finish all of our winter 2020 arts-based and group leadership programming either virtually or through correspondence and launch an entirely new correspondence program, *Imagining Worlds*, in nine CDOC facilities while still maintaining the group leadership program.

We are humbled by the belief that the CDOC has in the arts and incredibly grateful for the trust in our programming.

THE DU PAI TEAM

Ashley Hamilton, co-founder and executive director
Apyrl Alexander, co-founder
Rachael Zafer, co-founder and consultant
Julie Rada, director of programming and lead affiliate faculty
Shannon Sliva, director of research
Dan Manzanares, development and communications manager
Tess Neel, operations and production manager
Joan Dieter, program coordinator
Jamiylah Nelson, administrative associate
Xavier Bird, administrative assistant
Ryan Conarro, creative producer and affiliate faculty
Danielle Littman, research assistant
Nicholle Harris, Graduate School of Social Work intern
Caroline Sheahan, *With(in)* podcast producer
Clare Hammor, performance and pedagogy consultant

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Libby Catchings
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Jessica Garrett
Karen Lausa
Jeffrey Lin
Jamiylah Nelson
Kristen Nelson



INITIATIVES



Group
Leadership
Program



Family
Reunification
Events



DU Inside/
Out Classes



With(in)
Podcast



"Reverberations
from With(in)"
Magazine



"Inside Report"
Newspaper



Inside Stories
Visual Art Show



Full Theatre
Productions

SEPTEMBER 2019

In the first month of partnership with the CDOC, DU PAI launched its **first large-scale production**, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, with an incarcerated cast and crew from Sterling Correctional Facility.

DU PAI's second **full-scale theatre production**, *A Christmas Carol*, began rehearsals, working with 36 incarcerated residents at Denver Women's Correctional Facility.

Arts-based workshops were launched in five facilities, serving 107 incarcerated individuals.

The **Group Leadership Program** continued in five facilities and was launched in five additional facilities, reaching 53 incarcerated individuals who worked on being leaders of DU PAI and role models in their facilities.

The Inside Report newspaper launched at Fremont Correctional Facility with 13 participants.

DU PAI hosted two **family reunification events**, reaching 217 guests and incarcerated individuals.

OCTOBER 2019

Arts-based workshops were launched at three facilities, bringing our monthly engagement with DU PAI participants up to 207.

DU PAI hosted two **family reunification events**, reaching 73 incarcerated residents and 157 family members.

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2019

DU PAI hosted two **family reunification events**, reaching 36 residents and 64 family members.

Thirty incarcerated members of the cast and crew of *A Christmas Carol* performed a **full-scale theater production** for the public both at Denver Women’s Correctional Facility and at The Newman Center for the Performing Arts on The University of Denver’s campus. The production also toured to Sterling Correctional Facility to perform for residents. Approximately 1,375 audience members viewed these performances.

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2020

DU PAI launched **arts-based workshops** in seven facilities, engaging with 174 incarcerated participants.

DU PAI launched rehearsals for three **full-scale theatre productions**: *Antigone* at Limon Correctional Facility, *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Fremont Correctional Facility, and an interview-based theatre project at Sterling Correctional Facility, engaging with 139 incarcerated participants.

DU PAI hosted three **family reunification events**, engaging with 330 participants and family members.

MARCH 2020

March saw the beginning of massive shifts in DU PAI’s programming due to the **COVID-19** pandemic. All productions, special projects, and family events were postponed indefinitely. Despite these massive changes, DU PAI still engaged with 189 DU PAI participants in arts-based programming and productions

APRIL–JUNE 2020

With unparalleled support from the CDOC, we pushed forward in exploring how DU PAI could provide meaningful programming during a terrifying time.

JULY–AUGUST 2020

DU PAI launched its first **correspondence course**, *Imagining Worlds*, at nine CDOC facilities, providing curriculum and lessons through printed materials and pre-recorded lectures. Around 180 participants enrolled.



FACILITIES

This year, DU PAI launched arts-based programming in an additional five facilities, bringing the total up to 10.



Buena Vista
Correctional
Complex



Colorado
Correctional
Center



Denver Reception
and Diagnostic
Center



Denver Women's
Correctional
Facility



Fremont
Correctional
Facility



Four Mile
Correctional
Center



La Vista
Correctional
Facility



Limon
Correctional
Facility



Sterling
Correctional
Facility



Territorial
Correctional
Facility

NUMBERS



PROGRAMMING

696

Total hours of
programming

410

Total unique
participants

135

Total individuals
impacted by
family events

AUDIENCES AT PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

233

One Flew Over
the Cuckoo's Nest

1,37

A Christmas
Carol



WITH(IN) PODCAST

27,990

First season
listens (SoundCloud
& iTunes)



THE INSIDE REPORT READERSHIP AND DISTRIBUTION

3,600

Total
Newspapers
printed

3,920

Website
page views



NON-CONTRACTED FACILITIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CONTACT

San Carlos (SCCF)
Arkansas Valley (AVCF)
Trinidad (TCF)

Delta/Rifle (DCF/RCF)
Youth Offender Services (YOS)
Camp George West (CCC)



EVALUATION

The largest group of fall 2019 DU PAI participants were serving life without parole (**16.81%**), with an additional **10.92%** of participants serving life and **10.92%** serving “virtual life.”

When DU PAI participants sign up, they report:

“ [I hope] to go beyond my limitations to push myself into places I’ve never been going, or doing things I never thought I’d try. To learn more about others as I learn more about myself.”

“ [I hope this workshop will] help me open up as a human and relate to others better.”

“ The only fear I have is more on my side ... truly opening myself up to other people, letting them see the true me and not the prison mask that I wear. I have been working on this for a while but it is a scary proposition.”

Post-workshop surveys indicate:

Their responses converged around several common content areas, including:

- ✓ Learning, Growth and Discovery
- ✓ Sharing and Expression
- ✓ Authentic Self-Expression
- ✓ Empathy and Perspective Taking
- ✓ Belonging and Connection
- ✓ Creative Collaboration
- ✓ Joy and Freedom

In addition, many participants mentioned course and facilitator qualities to which they attributed the program’s benefits. These include *safety, caring and respect, participation, and emotional involvement.*



“

“DU PAI is unique in that it is the only program that recommends participants to be who they want to be, and practice who they want to become.”

“My experience [in the creative movement workshop] was very uplifting in that it gave me confidence and belief that I can be creative in areas that weren’t known.”

“The walls came down, the smiles came out, and we came together — a rare and beautiful thing in prison.”



CONNECT

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FOLLOW

 @DUPrisonArtsInitiative
 @duprisonarts

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.



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