

Issue #14

THE ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF PETERBOROUGH

NEWSLETTER

May 2020



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COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the increased concerns around the spread of COVID-19, E FRY office is closed until further notice. We are available remotely to offer phone support services. We can be reached remotely at the following numbers:

E Fry office: **705-749-6809** Toll Free: **800-820-7384**

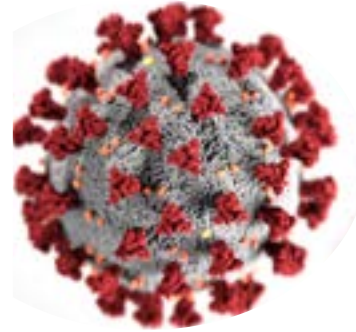
Text: **705-559-0763**

Peterborough Bail Verification and Supervision Program:

705-808-5680

Lindsay Bail Verification and Supervision Program:

705-559-1225



CAEFS calls for the Release of Prisoners due to COVID-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020- COVID-19 & Incarcerated Peoples.

We are currently in the midst of a global outbreak of COVID-19.

As an organization dedicated to advocating for federally incarcerated women, CAEFS is concerned about the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) preparedness to manage this outbreak and reduce the harm to people inside.

While Public Health has indicated that risk is low for the general public, they have identified several groups who are at increased risk of more severe outcomes; these include those who:

- Are aged 65 and over
- Have compromised immune systems
- Have underlying medical conditions

These same groups are also prevalent within our federal prisons. In their most recent report, the Office of the Federal Investigator (OFI) noted that on 2017-18, 25.2% of the federally incarcerated population was 50 years of age and over. Previous OFI reports also remind us that it is "universally established that correctional facilities house a number of health-compromised and vulnerable individuals". The report also addresses the rapid aging of prisoners, making the link between prisoners aged 50-55+ having comparative health risks and those who are 65+ living outside of prisons, due to the over-representation of chronic health issues and lack of access to adequate health care.

Furthermore, Public Health has identified the risk of COVID-19 may be increased for certain settings including, "large gatherings in enclosed spaces". Canadian provincial prisons are chronically overcrowded and both federal and provincial prisons are places where people cannot practice social isolation in the same ways that people outside of prisons can, it is nearly impossible. That all incarcerated people are at increased risk for infection is especially concerning given the past reports we have received from women inside indicating ongoing challenges with accessing adequate health care and preventative health measures inside, including even the most basic of necessities such as soap.



CAEFS advocates that:

- Any person with complex or chronic medical conditions be immediately released to community for treatment;
- People aged 50+ who are at the highest risk of serious illness and death should be released into the community on conditional release;
- Section 81 and 84 should be utilized to transfer Indigenous women into community, and that ample supports be provided to these communities to respond;
- The use of Community Residential Facilities, Community Based Residential Facilities, Transitional Housing, and 'Parole to Other' should be utilized to release incarcerated people as quickly as possible.
- The immediate release of incarcerated mothers and their children in the mother-child program to their homes or Conditional Residential Facilities;
- The immediate release of any incarcerated person who is currently at their parole eligibility day, who have completed their correctional programming, OR who could access programming to meet their correctional plan in community and resources should be provided in community.
- Section 121(1.b) of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act states that "parole may be granted at any time to an offender [...] whose physical or mental health is likely to suffer serious damage if the offender continues to be held in confinement". We urge correctional authorities to release as many prisoners as they can using the tools that are at their disposal in order to alleviate the potentially severe negative mental and physical health impacts that come from being incarcerated at a time of national and global health emergency.

It is the responsibility of the government of Canada to protect the people for whom incarceration heightens the urgency of the danger that they face from a global pandemic.

Annual Rebel with a Cause Event



Photos BY CLIFFORD SKARSTEDT, [EXAMINER](#)



This year's Rebel with a Cause event was a huge success! Thank you to all of our sponsors and all those who attended to celebrate our three Rebels.

Rebel with a Cause is our annual fundraiser where we honour three local women who have demonstrated advocacy and action to address issues of criminalization, challenged practices in the criminal justice system to make them more equitable, and/or worked towards making changes toward gender equality.

This year, we honoured three outstanding women in our community:

Lynn Zimmer– former Executive Director of YWCA

Deb Gillis– former Police Sergeant Court Services

Ximena Murchadh– Local advocate and peer leader

Trent Education Event

Shifting Power: Changing our Conversation about Women in the Criminal Justice System

Our education event on February 25, 2020 was well attended. It featured 4 speakers who discussed the over-representation of women in the criminal justice system, feminist views of punishment, and prison abolition. Thank you to everyone who attended and all those who helped make this event a success!

E FRY Week 2020

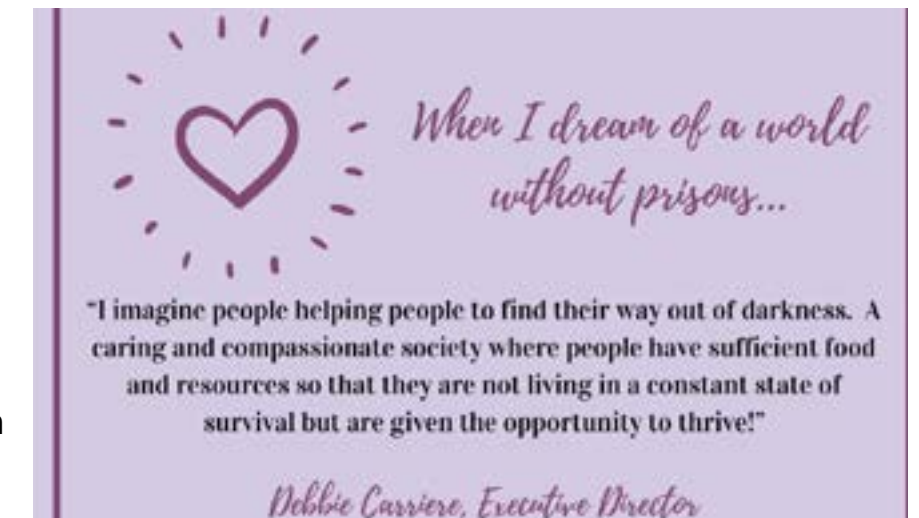
May 4-May 10, 2020

Each year, the The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) celebrates National Elizabeth Fry Week during the week leading up Mother's Day. The goal is to enhance public awareness and education around criminalized and vulnerable women in Canada.

E Fry Week as a time to imagine what thriving community may look like when we emerge from the current pandemic. This crisis has exposed serious flaws and gaps in our existing systems. It has become glaringly obvious that we need to create a new way of operating - one that reflects the vital lessons we have been learning about how we are all able to contribute to collective safety and care.

We continue to mark this week as Elizabeth Fry Week because the majority of women in prison are mothers. For most of these women, they were the sole supporters of their families at the time they were incarcerated. When mothers are sentenced to prison, their children are sentenced to separation. We draw attention to this reality by ending Elizabeth Fry Week on Mother's Day each year. On Mother's Day, we honour all mothers. We do this by continuing to imagine and work towards a world without prisons by building thriving communities.

#EFRYWEEK2020 had us share even while we are apart using the hashtags [#ImagineAWorldWithoutPrisons](#) and [#BuildCommunitiesNotPrisons](#) to discuss what our world would look like without prisons and what a thriving community needs.



Volunteers are a driving force of our agency, we are so appreciative of everything our volunteers do for us at E Fry and we are always looking for more volunteers to assist with Bingo.



Thank You to the **United Way of Peterborough** for donating laptops to our agency!



We also want to thank **Delta Bingo** for their continued support of local charities and our ongoing partnership.

If you're interested in getting involved, please contact the office at **705-749-6809** or email us at: info@efryptbo.org.



Donations to the Elizabeth Fry Society are so important and they help our team to continue doing the work we do.

*There are several ways to donate. You can donate using the the [Canada Helps link](#), complete the Form below and send us an e-transfer, or you can go old school and send us a cheque. All donations are greatly appreciated! E-Transfer details are: info@efryptbo.org. Please set the password to **efry150**.*

Donor Name	Phone
Address	City
Postal Code	E-mail address

Please make cheques payable to Elizabeth Fry Society
150 King St. 4th Floor K9J 2R9 Peterborough, ON

Charity Number: 129863379 RR0001

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