“On the Edge of Possibility”
Life on Parole and the Justice System in CT and Beyond:
A Resource Guide for Public Screenings

This purpose of this document is to give individuals, organizations, and communities a deeper understanding of incarceration, parole, and reentry in Connecticut and beyond. This document is freely available to the public, but was developed for the purpose of preparing individuals to hold a screening of the Frontline and The NY Times documentary Life on Parole.

Pre-Screening Resources
The following resources are recommended prior to hosting a screening of Life on Parole.

TIMES VIDEO
What Happens After Prison

The Times, in collaboration with the PBS series “Frontline,” followed 10 recently released inmates struggling to succeed on the outside.
By KASSIE BRACKEN
July 16, 2017

Parole in CT
CT Legislative Library brief historical synopsis of Parole
CT Judicial Branch - CT Law about Pardons and Parole
CT Board of Pardons & Paroles (decision making body)
CT Parole and Community Services Division (DOC - supervision)

CT Toughens Law Against Home Invasions. CT’s policy changes to parole six months after a deadly home invasion in the town of Cheshire.
By Alison Leigh Cohen
Jan. 24, 2008

How did Connecticut’s Department of Corrections change after the Cheshire home invasion? This article provides some explanation.
Prison Life ‘After Cheshire’ Suspensions Increase, Parole Opportunities, Decrease and Understanding is Stalled.
An inmate’s perspective on how the Cheshire home invasion has changed parole in CT and beyond.
By Chandra A. Bozelko

The Rules that Parolees Must Follow.
States set their own rules for parole; here are Connecticut’s.

A short article covering a Life on Parole screening and community conversation at the New Haven Public Library, CT.
By Marisha Hicks
Dec. 20, 2017

Parole Holds Key to Reentry Puzzle.
A brief background on how the film Life on Parole was produced. Also includes an interview with producer Cynthia Farrar by the “Criminal Justice Insider”
By Thomas Breen
April 10, 2018

Life on Parole Discussed.
A short article covering a Life on Parole screening and community conversation at the Manchester Public Library, CT.
By Annie Gentile
April 10, 2018

The “Insane” Ways Our Prisons Handle the Mentally Ill. A review of Alisa Roth’s work that explores the way the criminal justice system makes the sick even sicker.
By Sam Dolnick
May 22, 2018
Screening & Community Dialogue Resources
Below are resources to assist you in hosting a screening and facilitating a community conversation.

Life on Parole. (55-min. documentary).
FRONTLINE and The New York Times go inside an effort to change the way parole works in Connecticut and reduce the number of people returning to prison. The film follows four former inmates as they try to find work, stay sober and keep out of trouble while navigating their first year on parole. View the video transcript.

Screening and Community Conversation Guide.
IMRP has developed an outline to assist individuals and organizations Interested in hosting a screening of Life on Parole.
By Richard Frieder
Summer 2018

Post-Screening Resources: The Path Forward
Below are a selection of alternatives and possibilities to help explore what CT and the nation could be doing differently?

What Statistics Can’t Explain About Life on Parole
While covering inmates re-entering society, Shaila Dewan saw how people can be locked into the complex justice system, no matter how enlightened that system tries to be.
By SHAILA DEWAN
July 17, 2017

Despite recent changes, Connecticut’s parole system continues to fail most individuals during reentry. Why?
60 Minutes Presents: Behind Bars.
The prison system that emphasizes rehabilitation over punishment, a bank robber who became a law professor; and beautiful music inside the “waiting room of hell.”

*You must create an account to view the video.
By CBS News
March 2018

What can the United States learn from one of the world’s best prison systems? CT’s Governor and the Department of Corrections administration goes to Germany to find out.

Opioid Users Are Filling Jails. Why Don’t Jails Treat Them?
Getting methadone in jail gave a Connecticut heroin user a firmer foothold in recovery. But fewer than 1 percent of jails and prisons allow it.
By TIMOTHY WILLIAMS
Aug. 4, 2017

Connecticut has a methadone prison program that works, but most prisoners and parolees do not have access. Why?

A Gun to His Head as a Child. In Prison as an Adult.
Taking childhood trauma into account means asking inmates “What happened to you?” instead of “What is wrong with you?”
By AUDRA D.S. BURCH
Oct. 15, 2017

How does childhood trauma followed by years of being in and out of Connecticut prisons as an adult affect a father’s relationship with his daughter and her relationship with him?

Parole Revocation in Connecticut: Opportunities to Reduce Incarceration
In 2015, the CT Board of Pardons and Parole asked Yale University’s Criminal Justice Clinic to present recommendations to improve the parole revocation process.
By Asli Bashir, Rachel Shur, Theodore Torres, & Fiona Doherty
Sept. 2017

Connecticut law provides parolee’s the opportunity to appeal when they are removed from parole and sent back to prison. How affective is the process? How can it be improved? The report attempts to answer these questions.
Michael Moore Visits Norway’s Prisons. A short clip of Norway’s prison system provides a shocking alternative to America’s system of “corrections.” Taken from the full-length documentary Where to Invade Next. By Michael Moore 2015

What makes Norway’s prisons one of the best in the world? Michael Moore attempts to find out.

IMRP’s Case Study of Life on Parole. After holding three focus groups with stakeholders, and over 15 public screenings followed with community conversations, find out what IMRP learned about Life on Parole in CT. By Jacob Werblow & Andrew Clark

We welcome your feedback.

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