

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2018/12/14/help-us-extend-a-lifeline-to-people-in-solitary-confinement/>

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All Donations Will Be Doubled for Twice the Impact

by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | December 14, 2018

Dear Readers, Supporters, Colleagues, and Friends:

In recent weeks, we've written to you about the [work we are doing at Solitary Watch](#) to bring an end to the use of long-term solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails—a goal that, for the first time, actually seems possible, despite the distance we still have to go.

Today, we want to tell you what we are doing to try to give back just a fraction of what we've received from the brave souls who found the strength to reach out and bring us [news from inside a secret world](#) of loneliness and abuse. **Through our [Lifelines to Solitary](#) project, Solitary Watch supplies life-affirming and sometimes, life-sustaining human contact and validation to individuals living in extreme isolation.**

With personalized letters, newsletters, and holiday cards, we keep in touch with more than 5,000 people in solitary across the country. (This year, our mailings included the [first-ever guide to yoga and meditation](#) written *by* and *for* people in solitary confinement.) Sometimes, we provide people only connection with the outside and their only proof that they are not forgotten by the world beyond their cells.

Upon receiving our holiday card, one man in solitary in Texas wrote:

I can't tell you how touched I am for you giving me any attention. I am so grateful to you and cried tears reading your card because the torture, abuse and neglect I'm facing makes this cell and my world a lonely place, and many days I think of how to take my own life and end the misery and pain but you inspire me and I continue to fight on.

[su_button url=https://www.newsmatch.org/organizations/solitary-watch target=blank style=flat background=#2ed992 color=#000000 size=10 center=yes radius=5 icon_color=#000000 class=font-family: Arial !important; font-size: 16px !important; font-weight: bold !important;]Please Support Lifelines to Solitary[/su_button]

Four years ago, we also launched a powerful new component of Lifelines to Solitary: **the first ever prison correspondence program especially for people in solitary confinement.** We have matched up faith communities, student groups, and hundreds of dedicated individuals with pen pals in solitary and learned from people on both sides how profoundly two lives can be changed with a single stamp.

Unlike some other components of our work, **the Lifelines to Solitary project receives no grant funding, and is completely supported by individual donations.** Only with your help can we continue to carry out our and expand our work: responding to the hundreds of letters we receive every year at Solitary Watch, printing and sending more than 20,000 newsletters each year, recruiting and educating correspondents on the outside and matching them up with people in solitary, providing our mail-forwarding service and ongoing support to correspondents, and bringing messages of hope and healing to thousands of men and women living in isolation.

This year, you have the unique opportunity to see your donation doubled, thanks to the News Match program. All donations up to \$1,000 will be matched in full if received by December 31. At present, **we are behind schedule for meeting our year-end goal of \$25,000,** which has the potential to be matched with another \$25,000 providing all the funding we need to maintain and grow our Lifelines to Solitary program. Please click on the link below to make your donation online, or learn where to send your check.

This holiday season, **please remember those who live in a world so dark that a single card or letter may be their only connection to humanity.** Please support Lifelines to Solitary. Thank you.

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"Out my window I see into a concrete yard surrounded by red brick walls. There is a drain in the middle of it and out of it weeds are growing. I thought they were weeds until a few blossomed into these beautiful yellow and brown flowers. Every now and then a pair of owls roosts on the security lights. This spring they had two babies. We watched them grow up and fly away.

"On any given day the sky here is breathtaking. The beauty out my window stays in my mind. I look around this cage at plain concrete walls and steel bars and a steel door, a steel toilet, and I endure its harshness because I am able to keep beauty in my mind."

Words and art by Jesse Wilson, created in solitary confinement at ADX federal supermax

Solitary Watch
wishes you peace,
strength, and hope,
in this holiday
season and throughout
the new year.

*Jean Jim
Kate Rose Kate
Valerie Marlies*

2018 Solitary Watch Holiday Card

James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, *Blood in the Face*. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Jean Casella](#)

December 29, 2021

by [Jean Casella](#)

December 23, 2021

by [Events and Announcements](#)

December 3, 2021

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

I just sent you an email with some information about my son and would love to get him on mailing list. Please let me know. Thank you and God Bless!

Im happy to donate to this worthwhile endeavor. How can I add the name of a political prisoner in long-term solitary confinement to your mailing list? He may be already on it, but if not, he should be. ~ Rebecca Hensley

Thank you, Rebecca. We would be happy to add his name to our list. Please send his complete mailing address to info@solitarywatch.org.

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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Solitary Watch News