

ARTS IN CORRECTIONS

A partnership of the California Arts Council and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Arts in Corrections programs currently offer an array of performing, literary and visual arts disciplines, such as theater, music, creative writing, poetry, painting, drawing and sculpture for eligible CDCR inmates. Arts in Corrections programming is provided by professional artists – individuals who have actively participated in their particular arts discipline and who are trained to work in correctional settings.

Since launching as a pilot program in 2014, California's Arts in Corrections program has reached more than 2,000 inmates at 19 CDCR facilities. In 2017, the program expanded to all 35 CDCR adult institutions.



“ I care about everyone now. That's what it's done for me. I don't need this program to get out of prison – I need this program to stay out of prison. ”



“ The Arts in Corrections class helps us experience the emotions of anger, fear and sadness. I used to bottle everything up. I was a walking time bomb. Now we are training our emotions. ”

BENEFITS OF ARTS IN CORRECTIONS

Studies and evaluation indicate that Arts-in-Corrections programs have a wide range of positive impacts on inmate behavior and prison environments, including the following:

- ▶ building positive relationships
- ▶ encouraging healthy behaviors
- ▶ bridging cultural differences
- ▶ improving inmate relations
- ▶ reducing inmate-staff conflict
- ▶ improving family relationships
- ▶ increasing critical thinking
- ▶ building real-world job skills

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMMING

Through the Arts in Corrections programs, local nonprofit arts organizations coordinate a wide array of arts programming led by professional artists. The following is a sample of current programming:

Theater

The Actors' Gang, under the leadership of Artistic Director Tim Robbins, provides theater arts programming with an emphasis on Commedia dell'arte techniques.

Traditional Arts

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts promotes and supports ways for cultural traditions to thrive now and into the future through the arts. Master teaching artists of traditional expressions provide residencies Arts-in-Corrections programming in Mexican jarocho music and verse composition, Native American beadwork, African American storytelling, songwriting, and African drumming, Chicano poetry, and/or other traditional arts disciplines.

Shakespeare

Marin Shakespeare Company's successful classes focus on the creation of original autobiographical theater pieces written and performed by inmates, inspired by themes chosen from Shakespeare.

Creative Writing

InsideOUT writers uses creative writing as a catalyst for personal transformation and has worked in numerous correctional institutions in southern California. Professional creative writing experts provide creative writing and literary arts programming.

Music

Dance Kaiso provides residencies in Afro-Caribbean dance. Teaching artists conduct Caribbean drum/percussion and dance classes taught in a geographical, historical, and cultural context, culminating in a final presentation.

Visual Art

Along with other art disciplines, the William James Association provides an opportunity for inmates to create collaborative projects through visual arts and fine crafts workshops led by professional artists.



“ This class has brought down barriers that I have had with these men I have been thrown in with. I look at all of them differently now. Friendships have arisen in places I would never before have attempted. ”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the California Arts Council, a state agency dedicated to advancing California through the arts and creativity.

Stephanie Anderson
Arts in Corrections Program Manager
stephanie.anderson@arts.ca.gov
(916) 322-6344

Photos by Peter Merts

