



# LIFELINE

annual report 2016

Hope • Reintegration • Success

Lifeline  
Transition  
Services





## Annual Report 2016-2017

This past year has presented opportunities for our In Reach workers to promote the peer mentoring concept. Rick Sauve delivered the Break Away program in three institutions and has received very positive feedback from inmates who are looking to disaffiliate from gang culture. The first year of the program was funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and we hope to be successful with another grant this summer. I would like to thank CSC's Regional Ethno-Cultural Advisory Committee (REAC) for their financial contribution to the Break Away Program so that it could be delivered in a fourth institution in the Spring/Summer of 2017.

Rick and John were also invited to facilitate peer mentoring training sessions for a project funded through CSC and the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse in consultation with St. Leonard's Society of Canada. This project is an adaptation of the peer mentoring model with lifers to offenders who struggle with substance misuse.

On a more somber note, this may be the final year for LifeLine (previously known as PeerLife Transition Services). Since 2012, LifeLine has been privately funded by a collaborative of five agencies who one day hoped that CSC would refund the program. Five years later and the agencies that once funded this vital program are struggling to find the resources to continue.

I would like to sincerely thank our funding partners, St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton, St. Leonard's Society of Peterborough, the House of Hope, Maison Decision House, and the St. Leonard's House Windsor's Board of Directors for their belief in the concept of peer mentorship and their commitment to fund the program for one last fiscal year. While there have been discussions with CSC regarding the programs return, lifers and long-term offenders do not appear to be a priority for this administration. The collaborative partners are doing what they can to preserve the program and ensure that life sentenced offenders continue to have support inside and within the community. We encourage readers to write the Minister of Public Safety and your local MP in support of funding for LifeLine.

Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to thank our In Reach workers, John Rives and Rick Sauve. John and Rick are a true life line for the men inside, and for many, their only source of hope. The loss of LifeLine, in particular, John and Rick, will be far reaching and felt by many in the institutions and in the communities they serve.

Catherine Brooke  
Executive Director,  
St. Leonard's House, Windsor

## LifeLine Inreach Yearly Report 2016-17

**John Rives**

Throughout the six years since the federal funding for LifeLine was cut, we have kept the time-proven concept of Lifers helping Lifers alive under the aegis of PeerLife Transition Services. Now once again as LifeLine Inreach we continue to struggle to maintain level of Inreach service at Ontario's three minimum security institutions while developing new programming to meet the diverse needs of life-sentenced and long-term prisoners.

As Rick Sauve writes in his report the Breaking Away program for gang affiliated clients has now been piloted across the province to much acclaim. Recently, in conjunction with the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse (CCSA) and St. Leonard's Society of Canada, Rick and I assisted in the development of a Peer Mentoring Workshop for People with Problematic Substance Use (PSU) which will be piloted early in the summer of 2017. We believe these projects will help us accomplish a core objective of the LifeLine Concept, that is, that Lifers (and other prisoners) can be the greatest resource for each other by sharing knowledge, encouragement and engaged mentorship founded on years of successful living behind bars. This shared experience can be a key element in a successful parole application and groundwork for a positive lasting return to the community.

As a LifeLine Inreach worker for approaching 20 years, I remain convinced of the value we bring to the correctional environment as a whole in addition to individualized service for our clients. I would argue that motivated Lifers, fully engaged in their correctional plans make for safer, more rehabilitative insitutions. Ultimately, it is at the parole hearing where the success of the entire process comes to light. LifeLine Inreach continues to provide assistance free-of-charge at an average of 4 hearings per month. Personally, over the course of my tenure, I have represented Lifers and other clients at well over 400 panel hearings. And yet, my work with Lifers in the institutions is heavily focused on the realities of parole over the long, long haul. Simply to earn a transfer to minimum security, Lifers must prove themselves in so many ways including safety of the public, engagement in their correctional plan and accountability. They have completed a host of correctional and other programming and have diligently worked on personal and skills development. They have had little exposure to parole success. I believe the Inreach program has, since its inception, proven to be without peer when it comes to promoting successful, well-grounded, realistically planned transitions back to society.

Although, the Inreach Workers receive kudos on a daily basis from correctional staff, clients and managment - not to mention high levels of cooperation and facilitation for our regular work - renewed federal funding has not been forthcoming. It cannot be overstated that LifeLine *is* the Inreach Worker. Without experienced professional staff, the Concept might linger on as the shadow of a once promising ideal but LifeLine will have no real substance for the men and women who have come to value our Service.

We are truly at a crossroads. Unless solid funding can be established, our work will come to an end.

The past year LifeLine Inreach once again has shown that the need for our services has not diminished. We have strived to remain the beacon of hope for our clients while filling the vacuum that was left when sustainable funding was cancelled. We receive regular requests from institutional staff asking for our assistance as they value our work. We have continued to develop and provide unique services that has stretched our capabilities but only heightened our commitment. Echoing John the assistance and direction that we have provided in preparing our clients for a successful life on parole is our measuring stick.

There have been many successes. The Break Away program has continued to flourish. It is now being delivered in Collins Bay and I have been asked if I would consider doing a follow up group. Warkworth, and BCI institutions have also asked if I would deliver additional groups. Most importantly the populations that fall into the category are asking for the program as they know its benefits and there is no other program of this nature available to them. I have had the opportunity to meet with MP's and other government officials to share the vision, the program and express not only the value but the need. All have provided encouragement to continue, and we will, however it has stretched our capabilities and stunted our growth without sustainable funding. We still have the vision to fulfill.

Another highlight was appearing before the Senate hearings with Anita Desai in the spring. We were very well received and were asked if we would return at a later date. It was rewarding to be heard and to be recognized for the commitment and work that St. Leonard's continues to provide. After 39 years of involvement with both being a prisoner and providing services I try and remain optimistic. I have witnessed the range fear, hopelessness, hope, sadness, happiness but most of all dedication and commitment of those I have served and who have mentored me. There is something about this work that infects your soul and I would be remised if I didn't thank the St. Leonard's family for allowing me to be a part of it.

Rick Sauve'  
2016-2017



**Activity Report**  
SLS PeerLife Transition Services

Apr2016-Mar2017

	Case Confs.	NPB Panels	Judicial Reviews	Inst. Groups	PubEduc & Media	Comm. Relations	Family Assist	Meetings	Client Contacts	Misc. including travel*
Rick Sauve (BCImin/med:groups)	23	21	4	25	6	7	3	51	926	11
John Rives (CBImin/JImin)	0	25	1	4	4	24	0	44	657	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1583</b>	<b>16</b>

NB: brackets indicate the four primary minimum institutions served, periodic visits include Warkworth and Millhaven Reg. Hosp. \* includes 11 client UTA transports

**Individual Clients (not including group contacts):**

Bath	27
BeaverCreekMin	124
CollinsBayMin(FI)	82
JoycevilleMin(PI)	80
Inst. Total	<u>313</u>
Community	19
Grand Total	<u>332</u>



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May 2017

In 2012, after more than 20 years of brilliant, researched based, award winning service, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) decided to end LifeLine funding. At its peak, twenty-six LifeLine In-Reach Workers provided service to more than 2,200 life sentenced people per year.

Faced with the loss of a vital and important program, each CSC region put together different initiatives. In Ontario, a small group of Friends of LifeLine pooled resources and self-funded a program called PeerLife.

There were two primary reasons for continuing this program without funding. First, the service is vital to humane incarceration and the safe release of long term offenders. Second, the two InReach Workers, John Rives and Rick Sauve represented the highest quality of InReach work and their experience could never be recovered. Rick and John are two people serving Life sentences with recognized credibility and acceptance from Lifers, CSC and the Parole Board of Canada.

The initial members of the Friends of LifeLine group were: St. Leonard's Windsor, St. Leonard's Hamilton and St. Leonard's Peterborough. This group was subsequently joined by House of Hope and Maison Decision House in Ottawa offering both moral and financial support. Together, this group retained the services of Rick Sauve and John Rives as In-Reach Workers and continued to provide InReach services. The LifeLine program reduces violence, self-injury and suicide, making for a safer environment inside the institutions and safer releases to the community.

This year (fiscal 2018) is looking to be the last year for PeerLife/LifeLine without financial assistance. The quality of work has not decreased. The need has not diminished – there are more than 5,300 people serving a life and/or indeterminate sentences in Canada. The funding partners are, however, at the end of their financial resources and cannot continue without financial help. In order to make our case as clearly as possible we are producing a program evaluation to support the value of continuing the LifeLine program.

What you can do to help: Please consider writing to Minister Goodale ([goodale@parl.gc.ca](mailto:goodale@parl.gc.ca)) and your MP in support of funding for LifeLine. Finally, please share this letter.

**Links to Related News Stories:**

[Prison Rehab Program Axed Due to Budget Cuts](#) CBC April 16, 2012

[Ottawa axes rehabilitation program for prison 'lifers'](#) Globe & Mail April 16, 2012

[St. Leonard's Society of Canada Press Release](#) April 16, 2012

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