



## **BECOME A HUMAN RIGHTS PEN PAL!**

### **Who is a Human Rights Pen Pal?**

A Human Rights Pen Pal is someone who believes that solitary confinement is torture, who supports the California hunger strikers and their demands to be treated as human beings, and who would like to develop a respectful and mutually educational letter-writing relationship with an imprisoned human rights pen pal.

### **What is the Human Rights Pen Pal program?**

The Human Rights Pen Pal program is an anti-racist, grassroots organizer training program in solidarity with the human rights of prisoners in California's solitary confinement cells. The program promotes principled relationships between prisoners in solitary confinement and supporters outside the walls. It will combine practice, political education, beginning community organizing skills, and evaluation.

### **How can you become a Human Rights Pen Pal?**

To learn more about the Human Rights Pen Pal program, or to find out how to become more involved, please email [humanrightspenpals@gmail.com](mailto:humanrightspenpals@gmail.com)

## HUMAN RIGHTS PEN PALS

Human Rights Pen Pals is a grassroots, racial justice community organization, in solidarity with people in California's solitary confinement cells. Through letter writing and community organizing, we promote principled, mutually educational relationships between people in solitary confinement and human rights supporters outside the prison walls. *We believe that the power of pen and paper can transcend prison walls.*

We take our inspiration from the poetic words of Assata Shakur, "A wall is just a wall; it can be broken down." The pen pal program is centered around the relationships between people who believe that all human beings have human rights, whether they are inside or outside the prison walls. We assume that the developing relationships will lead to a growing commitment of those 'outside the walls' to work in solidarity with imprisoned people working for their human rights 'inside the walls.'

*Our History:* Human Rights Pen Pals began in the spring of 2013 as a project of the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity coalition (PHSS). PHSS is a Bay Area-based coalition, whose overall goals are to amplify the voices of California people imprisoned in solitary confinement; and to win the Five Core demands of the hunger strikers, who have initiated three major hunger strikes in 2011 and 2013, the most recent one involving 30,000 people incarcerated in California prisons. (Please see the website [www.prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com](http://www.prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com)).

The Pen Pal program started with two workshops of community-based pen pals in the Bay Area, with a total of about 25 community pen pals, each 'matched' with one or more imprisoned pen pals, all of whom were hunger strikers. After the 2013 hunger strike, we received numerous requests from community supporters throughout the country to be 'matched' with an imprisoned pen pal. As of December 2015, we now have over 200 community pen pals; but we also have a large waiting list of imprisoned pen pals seeking a community pen pal with whom to correspond.

So, please check our website for an application to become a pen pal, or if you're already writing to an imprisoned hunger striker, share your experience and this flyer with a friend who believes in human rights, and invite her/him/them to become a pen pal, too.

### ***Contact the pen pal program by:***

*email*            [humanrightspenpals@gmail.com](mailto:humanrightspenpals@gmail.com)  
*website*        [www.humanrightspenpals.org](http://www.humanrightspenpals.org)  
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                      P.O. Box 71373  
                      Oakland, CA 94612  
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*Thank you for your commitment to justice.*