

For Immediate Release
August 8th, 2013

Segregation story only a quarter of the story

“Given that about three quarters of the people we currently have incarcerated are in provincial jails and not federal institutions, the harm that is being done through the increased and extended use of segregation was only partially told in the recent CBC Power and Politics story” says Kate Kehler, Acting Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Manitoba.

Manitoba’s provincial jails are far more overcrowded than the federal prisons as they also hold those who have yet to even be convicted, from 65% to 70% of the incarcerated population at any given time, along with those who have been sentenced to anything less than two years. “Manitoba holds the dubious honour of being the leader in keeping people locked up the longest on remand status and this has led to a complicated system of transfers and segregation in an effort to control the ‘temperature’ inside the institutions,” says Kehler. “It is completely contradictory to public safety because, of course, it affects the staff’s ability to deliver programs or consistent treatment if it is even available at all” Kehler went on to observe.

The story is timely though given that August 10th is Prisoners Justice Day. This day was sparked by the death of Edward Nolan in a Millhaven Penitentiary segregation cell in 1974. He bled to death from a self-inflicted wound and it was discovered that the guards had disconnected the segregation cell call buttons. Inmates chose to fast and refuse to work in protest. “Prisoners then chose August 10th as the date to commemorate all needless deaths behind bars whether caused by murder, suicide or neglect” explains Catherine Latimer, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Canada.

“Given that the suicide and homicide rates, not to mention the deaths that are just left as ‘unknown’, within Canada’s jails and prisons are much higher, suicides are six times higher, than in the general population, it is important to gather and offer support and solidarity for the human beings on the other side of those doors and walls”, says Kehler.

As part of **Prisoners’ Justice Day** events held across Canada, a memorial is planned for Saturday, August 10th, beginning at 1:00 p.m., in front of the Winnipeg Remand Centre (141 Kennedy Street) to remember those who have died while incarcerated. There will be stories, songs and traditional drumming.

-30-

For More information Please Contact:
Kate Kehler, Acting Executive Director
204.775.1514 (Extension 315)