

Health inside & out



IN THE SUMMER OF 2019, NEW YORK CITY'S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE WARNED NEW YORKERS THAT CONTACT WITH THE LEGAL SYSTEM HAS A LASTING IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. FROM POLICE STOPS AND SEARCHES, TO HAVING A RELATIVE OR COMMUNITY MEMBER INCARCERATED, INTERACTIONS WITH THE SYSTEM CAUSE LASTING HARM.



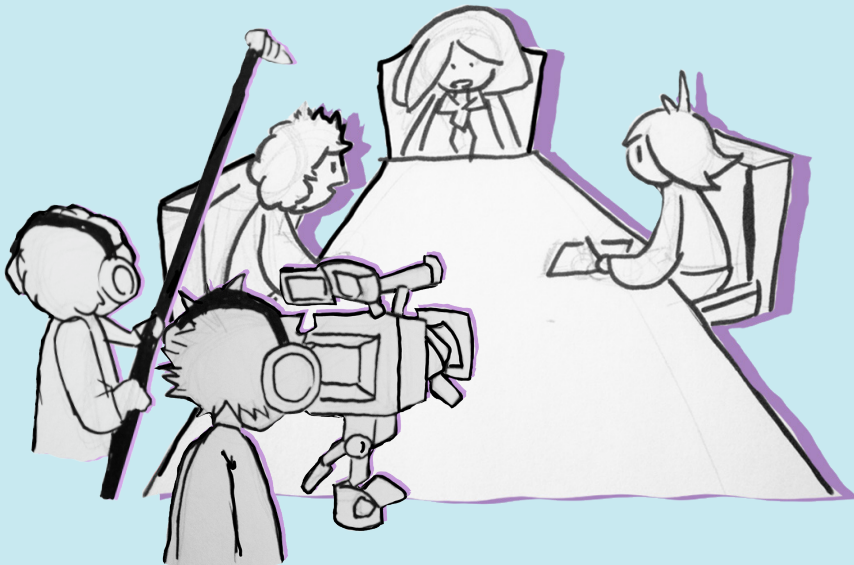
HOW DOES INCARCERATION IMPACT THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES?

HOW IS INCARCERATION A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

During the winter of 2019, CUP collaborated with Teaching Artist Farideh Sakhaeifar and public high school students from Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy International High School to unpack the public health impacts of prisons and jails on New Yorkers and their communities.

To investigate, students surveyed members of their community, interviewed stakeholders working on the issue, and created art work that explored ideas of incarceration and liberation.

Students created this booklet to teach others what they learned about incarceration and mental and physical health.



WHAT MEDICAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE IN PRISONS AND JAILS?

NEW YORK CITY



"In New York City we have a health provider in our city jails that's independent from the correctional agency. It's run by our public hospital system. We do have a high level of quality and access to good health care in jails but that's usually not the case around the country."

- **CHELSEA DAVIS**
Director at the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

NEW YORK STATE

"They have prison hospitals, but most of them are not capable of handling really serious illnesses... If you're in a private prison, [the prison] supplies insurance and can refuse you based on [pre-existing] conditions. So you might not get the care you need."

- **DAVID NORMAN**
Committee Advisor at the Incarceration Public Health and Action Network



JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS

"[Youth are] getting mental health care while they're with us. They'll get dental care. So they're getting a lot of these concrete [health] services that they might not always have access to in their communities."

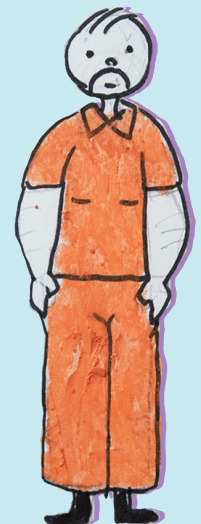
- **VICTORIA PHILLIPS**
Psychologist at the Horizon Juvenile Detention Center



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JAILS AND PRISONS?

"**Jail** is for individuals who have yet to be sentenced or who are charged with a misdemeanor and found guilty of a misdemeanor so they are incarcerated for one year or less. **Prison** is for felonies which by definition have a sentence that carries more than a year so once you've been sentenced for a felony, you go to prison."

- **VICTORIA PHILLIPS**
Psychologist at the Horizon Juvenile Detention Center



HOW DOES INCARCERATION

IMPACT INDIVIDUALS' HEALTH?

PHYSICAL HEALTH

POOR CONDITIONS

"It can be a big tax on your physical system because... you are in the same building all day, everyday. The air is not always the best quality air. We have a lot of issues with these buildings. They're older buildings... We've had rodent problems. All of those things are not good for you physically."

- VICTORIA PHILLIPS

MAKING EXISTING HEALTH ISSUES WORSE

"Many of the people who are incarcerated come from lower income communities, and that being the case, they come with pre-existing conditions. There are statistics that show that, when released from jail, individuals face increased health risks [for example], relapse to drug use, and problems getting health care."

- DAVID NORMAN



LONG TERM HEALTH IMPACTS

"[Incarceration] can hurt your future prospects for employment and housing and can lead to other forms of discrimination that are ultimately harmful to economic development and your family, community, and thus your health."

- CHELSEA DAVIS



MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTING THE PHYSICAL HEALTH

"The science has developed now that we know that [for] people experiencing emotional trauma, it manifests itself in physical ways. And so people who are in prison age faster than people on the outside...they age by about ten to fifteen years faster than their peers on the outside."

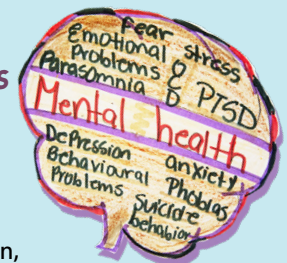
— SOFFIYAH ELIJAH
Executive Director at Alliance of Families for Justice

MENTAL HEALTH

INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

"The act of incarceration is dehumanizing. People are made to feel less than human and that can really affect you psychologically. We see a lot of people coming out of incarceration with increased post-traumatic stress, increased depression, and anxiety. That is a huge public health problem that we are not addressing."

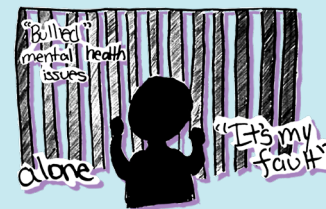
- VICTORIA PHILLIPS



CREATION OF TRAUMA

"Because it's a restrictive setting and it's not always the healthiest setting [incarceration] exacerbates already existing problems. Dehumanizing aspects really can create new problems, new traumas. Being locked up is a trauma in itself."

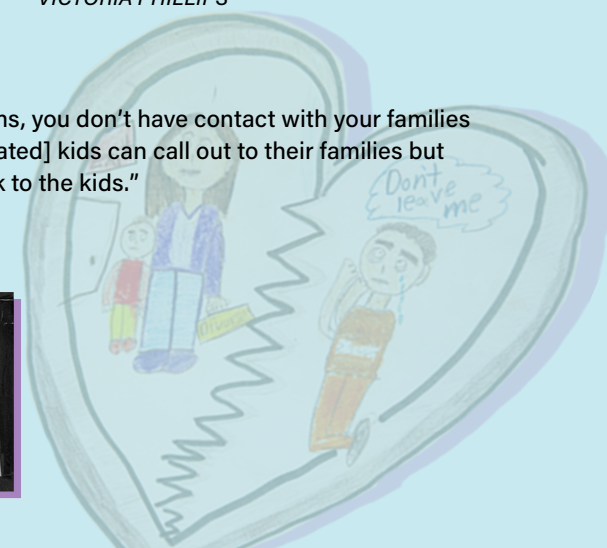
- VICTORIA PHILLIPS



LOSS OF SUPPORT

"You are losing support systems, you don't have contact with your families as often as you like. [Incarcerated] kids can call out to their families but the parents can't call in to talk to the kids."

- VICTORIA PHILLIPS



CORRECTIONS OFFICERS EXPERIENCE TRAUMA AS WELL

"Research has shown not just that [incarcerated] kids themselves are experiencing trauma, but by virtue of working in a detention center, staff themselves are exposed to trauma on a daily basis. And it affects them."

- VICTORIA PHILLIPS

HOW ARE FAMILY MEMBERS IMPACTED BY INCARCERATION?

RISKS FOR CHILDREN

"For children, having an incarcerated parent may result in negative health and social consequences. Parental incarceration has been associated with increased drug usage during late adolescence in the United States. If you have a parent that's been incarcerated, your chances of being incarcerated later, the probability of that happening is much higher than in the average population."

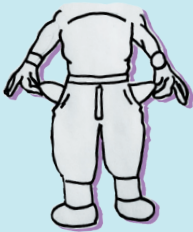
- DAVID NORMAN



CHANGE IN FAMILY FINANCES

"The family health is affected because many times the major breadwinner is taken away from the family, so that changes how people can live and how people can eat."

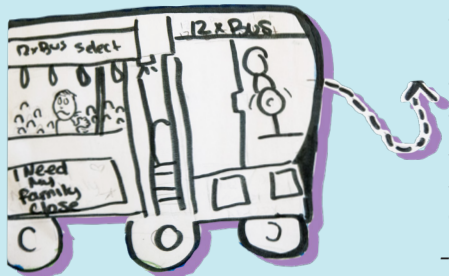
- DAVID NORMAN



LONG JOURNEYS

"There's a lot of physical strain on the families... let's say you're from Staten Island and you get locked up, your family has to travel a long distance from Staten Island to the Bronx or Staten Island to Brooklyn to see you... So it's a big toll on resources which a lot of our families don't have to begin with."

- VICTORIA PHILLIPS



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

"I lived this experience of having incarcerated loved ones and not telling anybody about it. I lived in silence... There's countless peers of mine that went to prison... I have people who I'm very close to who died in prison because of medical neglect or being denied release on parole."

- SOFFIYAH ELIJAH



HOW ARE PEOPLE IMPACTED ONCE THEY ARE RELEASED FROM PRISON?

INCREASED RISK FOR HARM

"Formerly incarcerated individuals face a dramatically increased risk of death two to four weeks after being released. [There is an] 10-12 fold increase in mortality rates from heart disease, drug overdoses, suicide, and homicide."

- DAVID NORMAN



INCREASED RISK FOR DRUG OVERDOSE

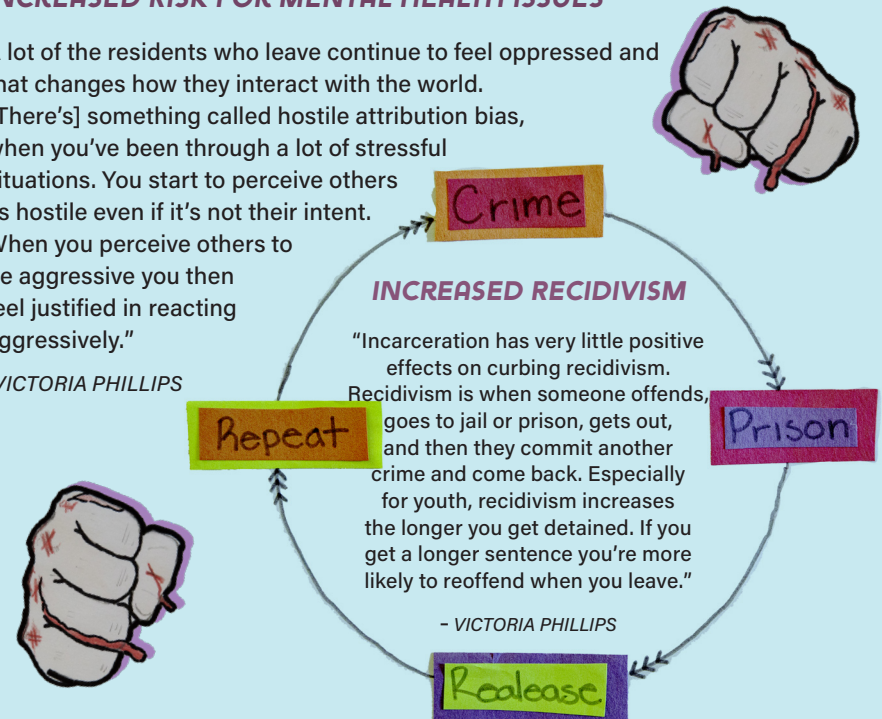
"There was a study that showed that people leaving jail, were over 12 times more likely to die of a fatal overdose than people who hadn't been in jail. So [the Mayor's Office] does a lot of work to make sure that people have drug treatment, medication, naloxone, and people who can administer medication if there's an overdose, when they are leaving."

- CHELSEA DAVIS

INCREASED RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

"A lot of the residents who leave continue to feel oppressed and that changes how they interact with the world. [There's] something called hostile attribution bias, when you've been through a lot of stressful situations. You start to perceive others as hostile even if it's not their intent. When you perceive others to be aggressive you then feel justified in reacting aggressively."

- VICTORIA PHILLIPS



- VICTORIA PHILLIPS

WHO DECIDES WHAT HEALTH PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE TO INCARCERATED PEOPLE IN NYC?

"The Department of Corrections and the Bureau of Prisons decides [what's available]."

- DAVID NORMAN



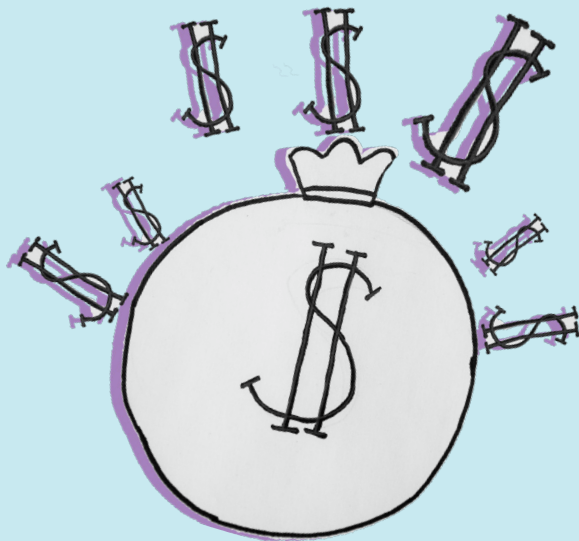
"The Medicaid Imprisonment Exclusion Act means that any health services provided to people who are incarcerated or imprisoned in a jail, are not billable to Medicaid. Which means our public health safety net won't cover costs for anyone who's incarcerated. At the same time, people who are incarcerated are actually the only people in the United States who have a legal right to health care. So it means that there are a lot of health services that are needed in jails and we as a local government, have to pay directly for those services."

- CHELSEA DAVIS

HOW MUCH DO THESE REENTRY SERVICES COST?

"Our re-entry programs in total, cost the city about \$35 million dollars per year. These are all funded through the city budget. It's all of our taxes that are paying for these programs, so everything costs a different amount."

- CHELSEA DAVIS



WHAT MEDICAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE FORMERLY INCARCERATED?

FOR ADULTS

"We have a very large public hospital system. In jails, the division of Health+Hospitals can make connections between the services people were getting in jail and the ones people can get in the community. They can make sure that they get connected to a clinic, or a public hospital that can help them. We also have specific programs, targeting different kinds of needs. If you have a serious mental illness in jail, through correctional health services, you can actually get six months of case management and help if you need to get set up with more time or connections to longer term care."

- CHELSEA DAVIS



"Medicaid [is] the major source of providing care to people who are formerly incarcerated, but many people are reluctant to go through the social service system because it's a system that drags out, and many people just feel like [they] don't want to wait and they want to just go and start making money."

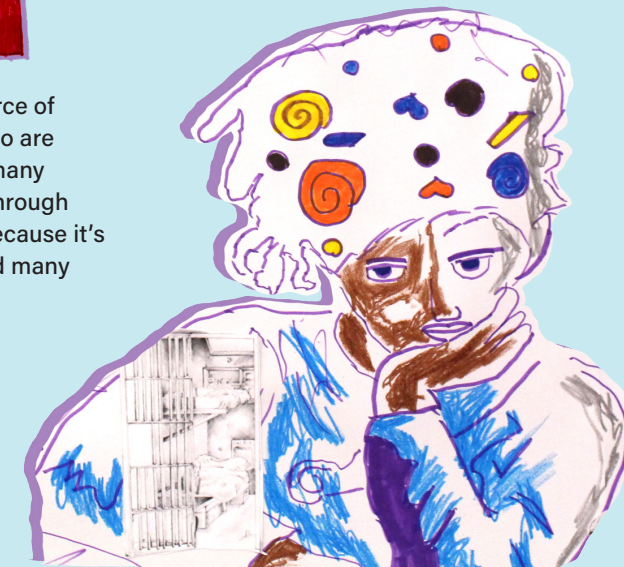
- DAVID NORMAN



FOR YOUTH

"Unfortunately, there's not a lot of long term services for youth leaving our facilities... There are providers out there who can do outpatient therapy or who can do drug treatment or who can do programs, like inpatient programs, but there are not enough. So there's waitlists and it's tough... It can be anywhere from two to eight weeks."

- VICTORIA PHILLIPS



HOW CAN THINGS BE DIFFERENT?

SHIFT FROM PUNISHMENT TO REHABILITATION

"We have to humanize jails and get away from a punishment paradigm: instead of punishing people, rehabilitate people. Most people who go to jail or prison are coming back home. That's your community, wouldn't you like them to come home better than worse?"

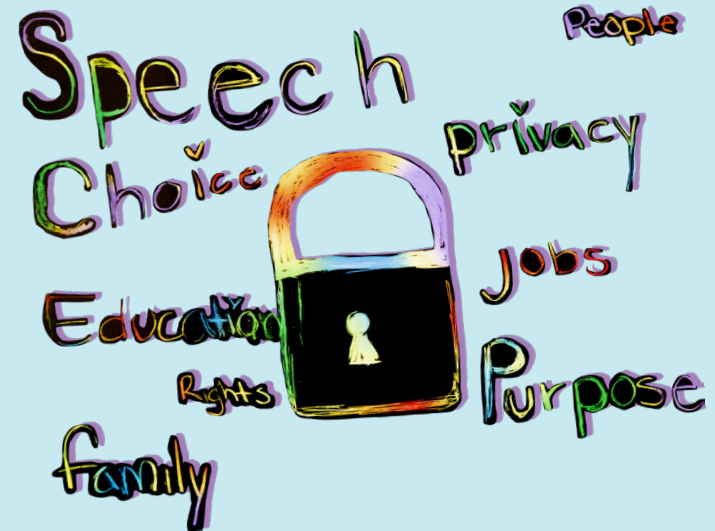
- DAVID NORMAN



REINVEST IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

"A disinvestment in public health systems, especially the public mental health system, the historic war on drugs, and drug treatment systems, has led to a lack of a safety net for a lot of people with health disorders. That means they're more likely to be in the criminal justice system."

- CHELSEA DAVIS



BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER

"It's extremely important for people who are incarcerated to be close to their communities, and visit with people who they love. [That way] they can have better re-entry services, community organizations, and other kinds of service providers."

- CHELSEA DAVIS

REDESIGN EXISTING FACILITIES

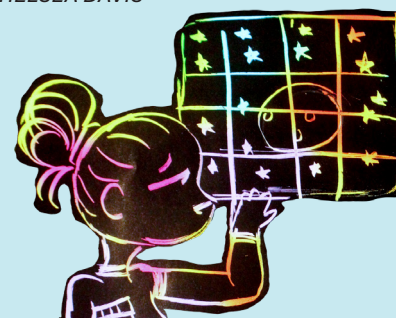
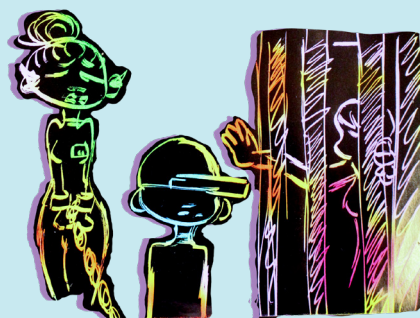
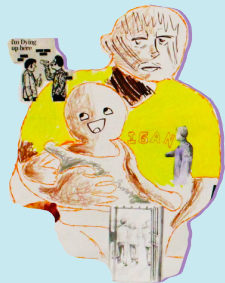
"It's actually a lot about design. It's a much better environment to have free movement and go outside, whenever you want to go outside. To have a lot of natural light, to have really good food, all of those things can ultimately be really important for your health."

- CHELSEA DAVIS

LISTEN TO FAMILIES OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE

"Not only should [family members] have a voice but the fact that they're not incarcerated gives them more access to elected officials and access to the ballot box to bring about change and make their voices heard."

- SOFFIYAH ELIJAH



How can you get involved?

ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

"Once people feel empowered and once people feel supported, then they're able to tap into the power that they have. And we provide them with training, communication skills, and advocacy skills, and then we provide them with the opportunities to be organizers and mobilizers. And then they have an opportunity to see victory at the end of their efforts."

- SOFFIYAH ELIJAH

EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

"Pay attention to the issues. Study history. Study what movements were successful in the past to bring about change. So you don't have to remake the wheel or make the mistakes that the people who went before you made, but you can learn from their successes and build on that."

- SOFFIYAH ELIJAH

VOTE

"As soon as you can register to vote, register to vote. If you can't register to vote, if you're too young to vote, encourage everybody that you know who can vote, to vote."

- SOFFIYAH ELIJAH

SHARE STORIES

"If you heard a story you feel passionately about, tell that story, spread the word... We share our information, we take [people's] stories and incorporate it in our work. That's kind of how we work together to get all this done."

- DAVID NORMAN



What does the community say?

Do you think incarceration impacts the MENTAL HEALTH OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD???



IN THE WINTER OF 2019, KAPPA STUDENTS SURVEYED THEIR COMMUNITY ABOUT THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH.

FOR MANY FORMER PRISONERS GETTING OUT OF JAIL IS THE FIRST STEP IN A LONG AND DIFFICULT JOURNEY OF "STARTING FRESH" WHY IS THAT?

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What do Students say

"I learned about how incarceration impacts people's mental and physical health and causes a lot of trauma in people who get out of prison. It is very hard for people to get help when they get out of prison, and apply for a job. This hurts a lot of people because without a job people can not support themselves."

- KURDIAN EDWARDS, KAPPA STUDENT



"Many people incarcerated suffer from physical and mental health such as depression and PTSD as well as are not being provided with the proper resources to deal with their struggles with physical and mental health."

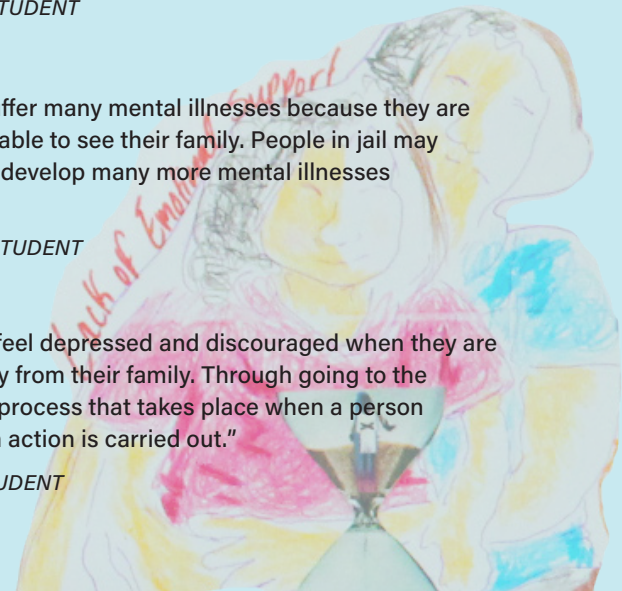
- CELIANY MARTINEZ, KAPPA STUDENT

"I learned that people can suffer many mental illnesses because they are incarcerated without being able to see their family. People in jail may get depressed but they can develop many more mental illnesses because they are isolated."

- REYNA ALMARANTE, KAPPA STUDENT

"I learned that many people feel depressed and discouraged when they are being locked in jail and away from their family. Through going to the interviews I could learn the process that takes place when a person is imprisoned and how each action is carried out."

- MARIANNY BEATO, KAPPA STUDENT



THE CENTER FOR URBAN PEDAGOGY (CUP) IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT USES THE POWER OF DESIGN AND ART TO INCREASE MEANINGFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICULARLY AMONG HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES.

THIS PROJECT IS ONE OF CUP'S URBAN INVESTIGATIONS PROJECT BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN WHICH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPLORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW THE CITY WORKS. STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH CUP AND TEACHING ARTISTS TO CREATE MULTIMEDIA TEACHING TOOLS THAT REACH AUDIENCES IN THE FIELDS OF ARTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

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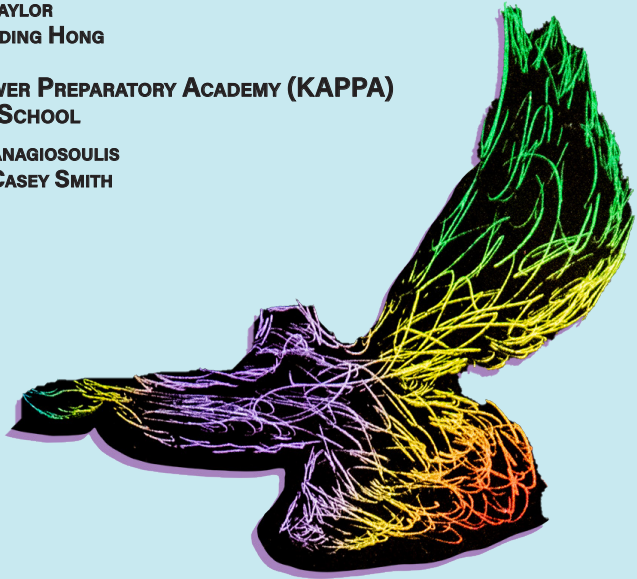
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