

Diploma thesis or school project about the death penalty

This project will provide the opportunity to get in a short-time contact with a death row prisoner or with another person concerned with the death penalty.

What inmate can I write?

You can either choose an inmate on the homepage or ask me. I will then allocate a name to you. Please get in contact with me before you write the inmate you chose. He might not be available for a while.

Don't forget that you can also write to the people in the "Other people speak" section. They all have a connection to the death penalty and are willing to share their experiences.

How do I write the letter?

You can write the letter by hand or on the computer. Either way, I will need the letter as a pdf document.

What shall I write about?

I suggest you first introduce yourself: age, profession, interests, how you learned about connectdeathrow and your motivation to write the letter. The first message should contain the actual questions. If you want, you can refer to the text(s) of the inmate or person in "Other people speak" on the homepage.

Please don't ask about the case of the inmate.

You might include a photo of your house, animal or anything else that has meaning in your life. Because it's a short-term contact you might not want to share too much of your private life though.



After receiving the answer a second and third letter could be sent to clarify the information the inmate provided or to pose follow up questions.

The last message should consist of a thank you note and a brief explanation about what happened with the information the inmate supplied. If it's an article, a copy can be enclosed along with the last message.

Where do I send the letters?

Please send the letter in electronical format as a pdf document.

When and how do I receive the inmate's answer?

It can take up to 3-4 weeks until you receive an answer. You will receive the answer through me, also electronically. I process all the answers immediately, so you don't have to ask whether there is an answer waiting for you.

Please note: The inmates don't have access to internet. They receive and write letters on paper. An inmate service in the USA helps to forward letters to and from inmates which shortens the time mail needs to reach its destination.

Why are the full names and addresses of both sides not revealed?

Connectdeathrow does not provide direct contact details. As the letters go through me, both the inmate and the free person are "safe".

I wouldn't support connecting juveniles with death row inmates for a long-term pen pal-ship because they don't have the life experience for such a demanding task. Also, in order to start a long-term pen pal-ship people would have to be prepared first. See next question.

Why can't I go on writing after the 2-3 letters?

This project is not set up to arrange long-term pen pal-ships. For such, a longer preparation period would be required.

I can provide you with information about long-term pen pal-ships that are arranged through www.lifespark.org of which I am a member.

The participating inmates in the connect project have all agreed to become part of these short-time contacts because they love the idea of giving something back to society. Most of them have at least one stable pen pal-ship.

What does it cost?

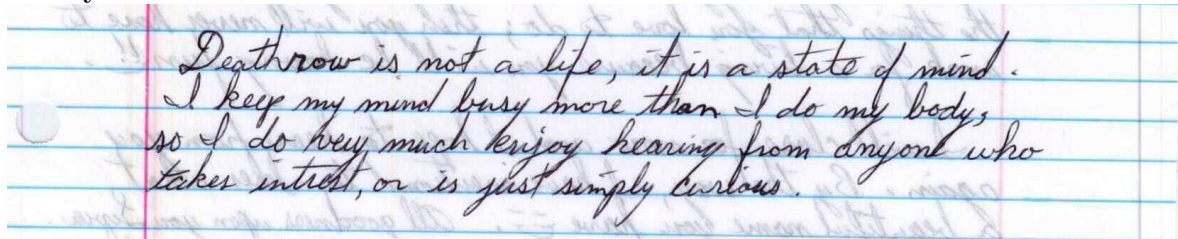
Because of the expenses for the interactions with the participating inmates, the maintenance of the homepage etc., I ask you to make a contribution of 15-20 Euro or CHF.

If you have any more questions, don't hesitate to contact me at contact@connectdeathrow.org

Ines Aubert, August 2017

Excerpts of and feedback about a letter exchange through the project connectdeathrow

Will, 16 years on death row in Florida:



Deathrow is not a life, it is a state of mind.
I keep my mind busy more than I do my body,
so I do very much enjoy hearing from anyone who
takes interest, or is just simply curious.

A, 15 years old:

Dear W.

I am A. and I live in Switzerland. My family and I live in a house. My brother is 14 years old, my sister nine years and I am 15 years old. At our garden we have many flowers and much space to play. At the garden we are not alone, because our rabbits live there in a big cage. This year we plant many flowers and many berries. I hope they grow good.

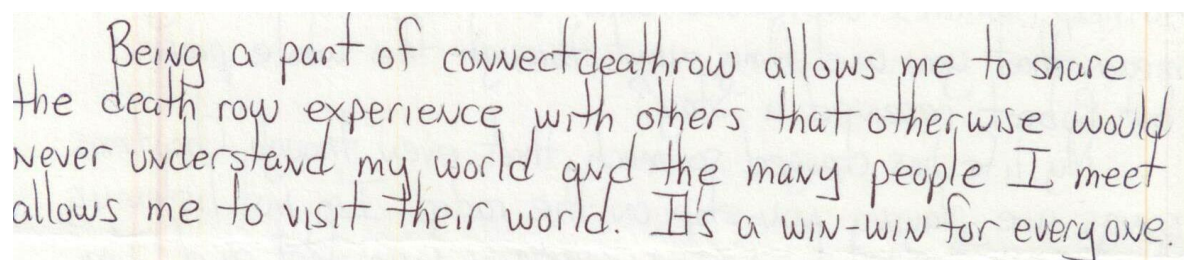
At the end of the Middle school we must do a project. I heard that Ines write you letters and I was very interested in that, so I decided to do the same.

What are you doing all day? What are your dreams?

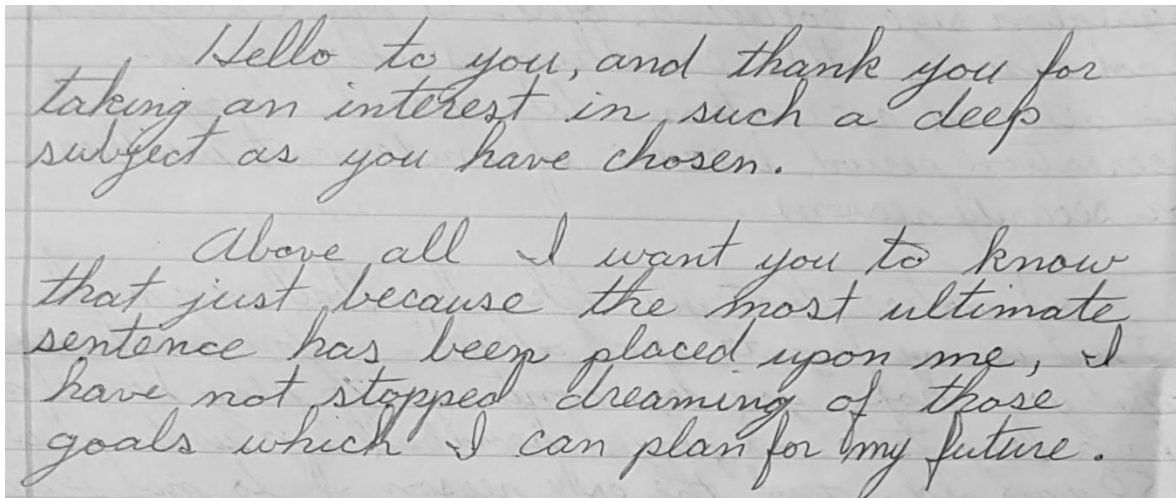
Kind regards

A.

Feedback of an inmate on the project connectdeathrow:



Being a part of connectdeathrow allows me to share the death row experience with others that otherwise would never understand my world and the many people I meet allows me to visit their world. It's a win-win for everyone.



Answer of a death row inmate to a juvenile's questions:

Answer of an inmate:

To answer your question of "what do I do with my day" is this... I like to read books of many different genres, and if I am not reading, I like to solve a variety of puzzles such as Crosswords, Logic Problems, Sudoku, Anagrams, Cryptograms, Kakuro and any kind of puzzle that challenges my mind. I am very limited as to what I am "allowed" to do in my cell, but that is only in a physical sense. Even though I am locked into a limited physical environment, my mind is still free to do as I wish. ☺ I do get a recreation period twice a week, but for only three hours each period. There are only a few activities that are afforded us during outdoor recreation...

Feedback on the project by N., 15 years old, 2017:

I am 15 years old and I have exchanged 3 letters with the inmate. It was a great experience and I'm very glad that I was able to make this experience. I can definitely say that I was very impressed and happy about how kind the inmate was. At the end of a letter he always wrote "Take care of yourself"

and this little sentence meant so much to me because it isn't just a polite ending.

We were talking about many topics, mainly his childhood, his family relations and life in prison (dealing with other inmates, etc.). Anyway, I'm pretty sure that this experience will influence my life in many ways. First of all, before taking part in this project I wasn't sure whether I'm against death row or not. Now I'm 100% sure that death row shouldn't be practiced anymore and that it'll never be the right way to handle any situation.

Furthermore I've thought much about the inmate's letters and I won't quit doing this for a long time. I'm also convinced that I'll never forget him and the letters he wrote. My mother thought it was a good idea to take part in this project, she was happy about me thinking about that serious issues from many views and not only seeing them in black or white. My father was a little bit more skeptical. If my mother hadn't allowed it, he wouldn't have allowed it too. But he wasn't here for it because he thought that the inmate would receive my/our address. While writing and receiving the letters and seeing me being curious and thoughtful about it, he started being interested in it and now he doesn't regret allowing me taking part in it. He's glad my mother convinced him to let me do it.