

10th anniversary of connectdeathrow Time to celebrate!

There have been several hundreds of short-term connections, with three letters back and forth!

Users include:

Individuals interested in getting to know a death row prisoner

Teachers participating with their classes

Pastors writing letters with their confirmation classes

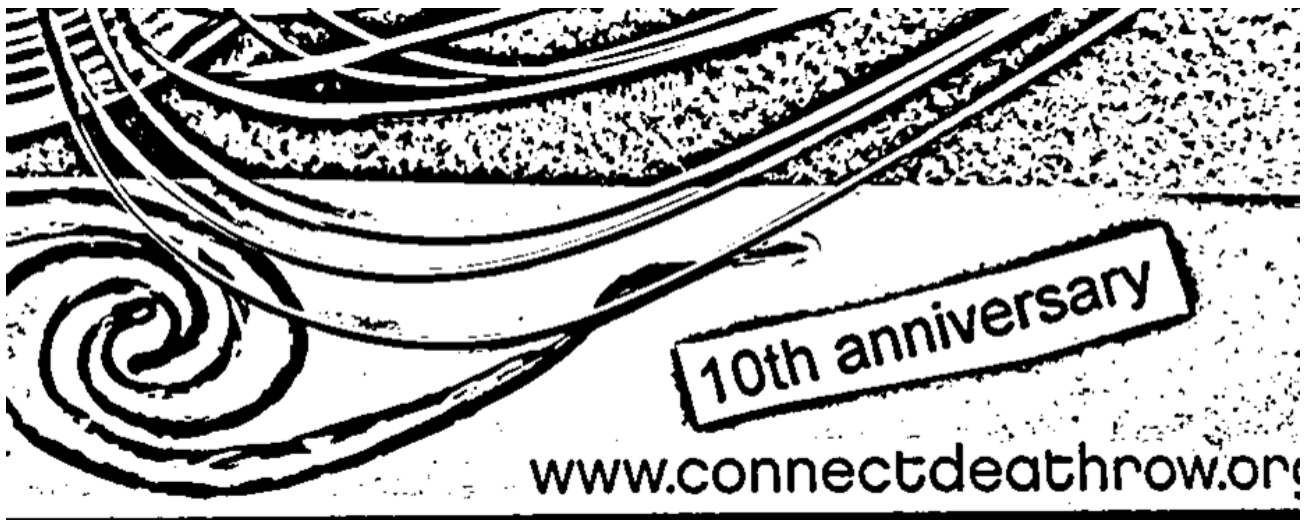
Journalists needing first hand information for their articles



Let's bake an anniversary carrot cake!

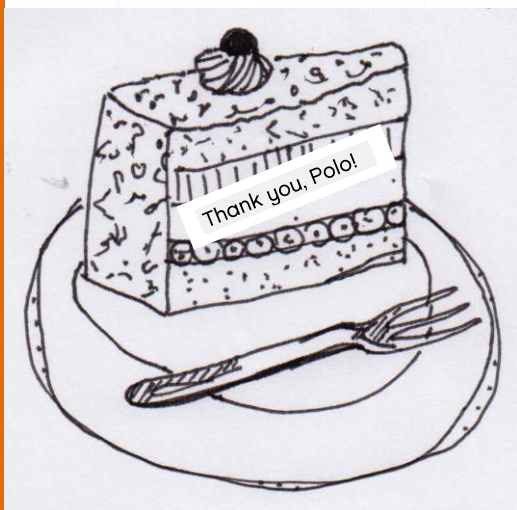
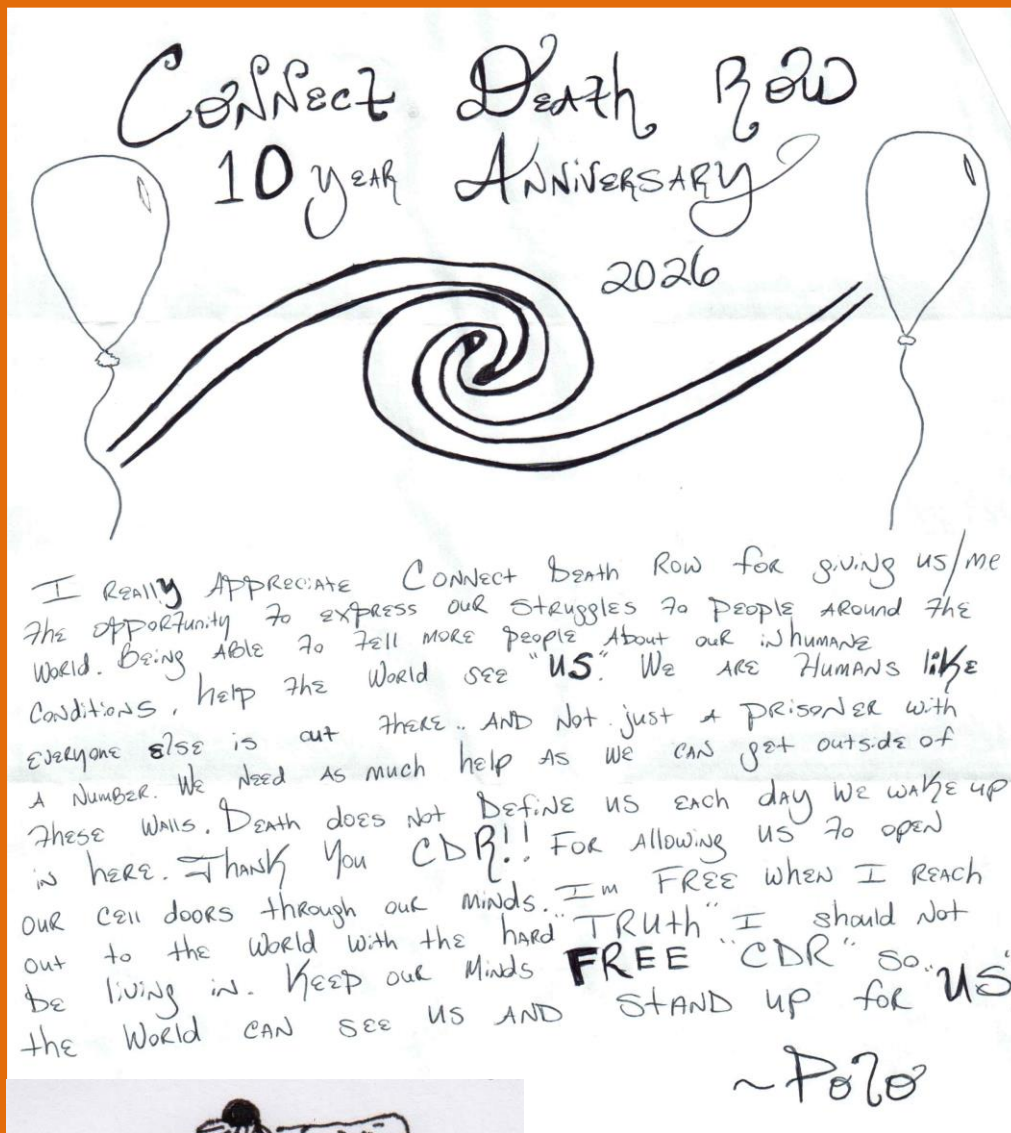


connectdeathrow – Exchanging messages with death row prisoners



Making of the anniversary cake

Words by Polo



Words by Cherokee

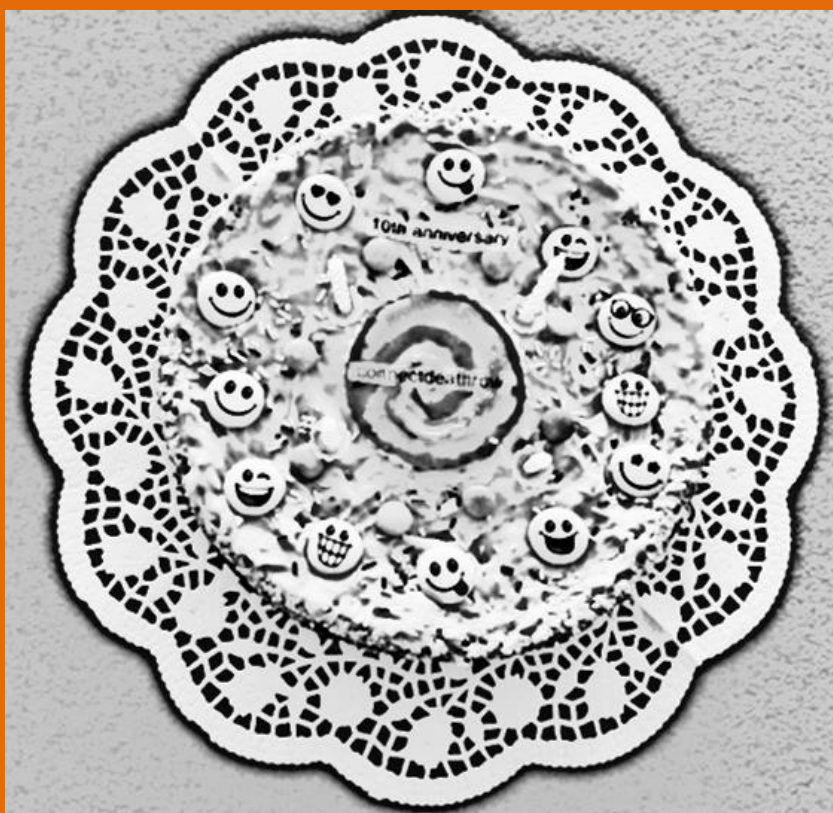


It is a privilege to be a part of connectdeathrow. The students are curious, respectful, and genuinely concerned about things that go on in our prison system.

Being able to tell the students things from our point of view is incredibly rare, and yet so vital.

I would like to thank Ines Aubert for including me in this endeavor, as well as the students for their interest in this subject and the Christmas cards that I've received.

Sincerely, Cherokee



Words by Vanilla Gorilla



What contributing to connectdeathrow means to me is receiving an unexpected piece of peace. I've enjoyed writing to every single person but a few of the people who I only knew briefly had a profound effect on me - one result was bringing me a deep feeling of peace that I'll never be able to articulate.

Of those that had a deep impact on me in particular there were three middle eastern boys who wrote me as a group. These young men showed me an inner strength and determination I found awesome. They all, but especially one, had tremendous difficulties in life and were still showing inner beauty and positivity and.... hope.

As difficult as my own life has been, not only was it not as bad as theirs, but I allowed my struggles make me bitter and mean while they persevered with kind hearts. They made me ashamed of how I'd behaved but more than that they gave me hope that I too can persevere. I will never forget those youngsters.

I went into this with unseen arrogance, only expecting to make a difference for others and not realizing others would be making a huge difference in my own life.

Vanilla Gorilla



Words by Dog

My Experience With CDR

I have been writing for CDR for years now. My experiences with CRD has been great. I enjoy learning about the various demographics of people throughout the world. It can be sad when the third letter comes, however knowing you have impacted a person's life in a positive way makes up for the ending of letters. I look forward to 10 more years of communication.

Dog

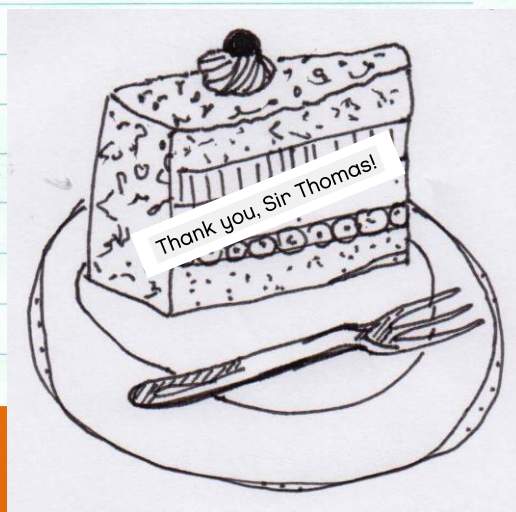
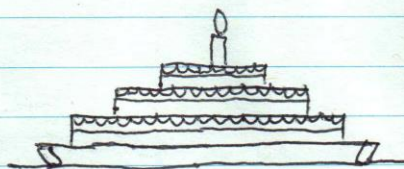


Words by Sir Thomas

Sharing my life experiences from death row through CDR gives me meaning, purpose, and a sense of worth.

Through CDR sharing, I'm always surprised to receive so much compassion and grace from the students and staff.

Even on death row, CDR allows me to matter to someone.



Words by students who wrote three letters

We are very sad that this is our last letter to you. We have grown very fond of you, and we were always happy to receive your letters.

I found this correspondence very beautiful, and I hope you the best, only I am sad that it was also the last letter, but it made me happy that I was also allowed to write some and ask questions.

I just want to tell you that you are a part of my family too!

We all don't know you very long and not very well, but everything we know about you makes us like you very much.

Thank you so much for these great words and advice. You have grown very close to my heart, and I wish you all the best.

Whenever we look into the sky, we think of you and we hope that you, when you have the possibility to look into the sky, always think of us.

I hope that when you go fishing again you catch a really big fish and think of me.

Tips by students

Don't be afraid to take part in this project. These inmates are only human!

Take part! It's worth it!

Have the courage to do it! It's exciting and fun.

It's important to deal with this topic. It will change your perspective in a positive way.

Do it. It's an experience and you can hear the prisoners' side of the story and perhaps learn something too.

In my eyes, they were deranged murderers - now the exchange of letters has changed my prejudices.

Making of the video on the homepage



Nick, Seline and Ines after making the video

Words by a teacher

Dear contributors, I cannot thank you enough for participating in this unique project! It was a true success!

Your letters deeply impressed us, the teenagers and me. Your kind, meaningful and blunt words touched our hearts and made us smile, laugh and some also cry. But most importantly it made the students think about life and justice in our world... I'm sure that right now or in the future, this interaction also caused a shift in their mindset.

By giving helpful advice and sharing your thoughts and experience of life, you offered them a glimpse into your world. Thank you so much for this!

Undoubtedly, writing to you was one of the most authentic and enriching projects the students ever experienced. I'm convinced that no one will ever forget you.

I genuinely believe that this project will let us all grow. Thank you again. Hopefully, I can contact you soon with a new English class.

Seline

Words by a teacher

connectdeathrow – personal development in English lessons in the 3rd year of secondary school:

How impressive it is for 3rd year secondary school students to hold a letter written personally to them from an American death row inmate in their hands.

I witnessed incredulous amazement, excited curiosity, and genuine interest in people who have certainly not been as fortunate as the sheltered young people in my class.

After intensive discussions in English and German, and unforgettable visits from experts from connectdeathrow, the teenagers were left genuinely moved and had grown a great deal as human beings thanks to the project!

Nicole Urscheler, who, throughout the years, wrote letters through connectdeathrow with several secondary classes

Words by Mr. Ed



At first, I was skeptical about becoming a part of connectdeathrow.

I didn't know how I could be of value to anyone from where I now stand. I decided to give it a chance.

I have no regrets about doing so. I've learned from the students. Their questions made me look at the situation from many different perspectives.

I have found purpose, and meaning in a place designed for the complete opposite. I look forward to the questions, and individual personalities of each student/participant.

I appreciate that I was given the opportunity to be a contributor for connectdeathrow. I am amazed by the persistence, and dedication of Ines, and the people behind connectdeathrow.

This is a teaching tool for all that participate. I hope that it continues to grow and reaches out to many more people in the future.

To those of you reading this that may be skeptical, give it a chance.

Mr. Ed

Words by H.B.

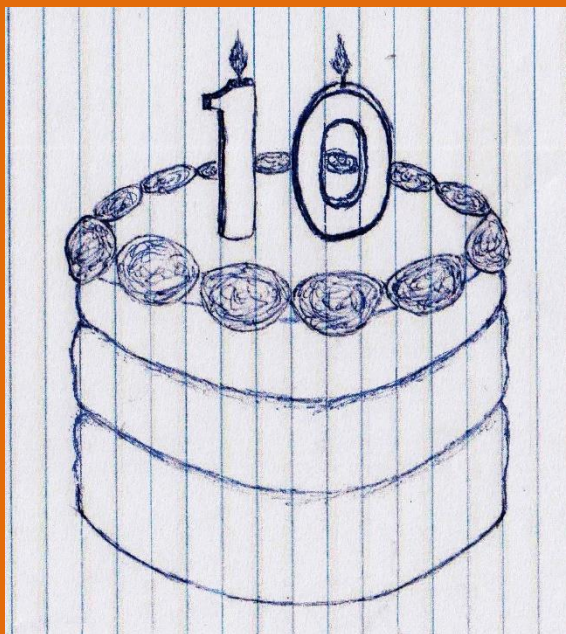
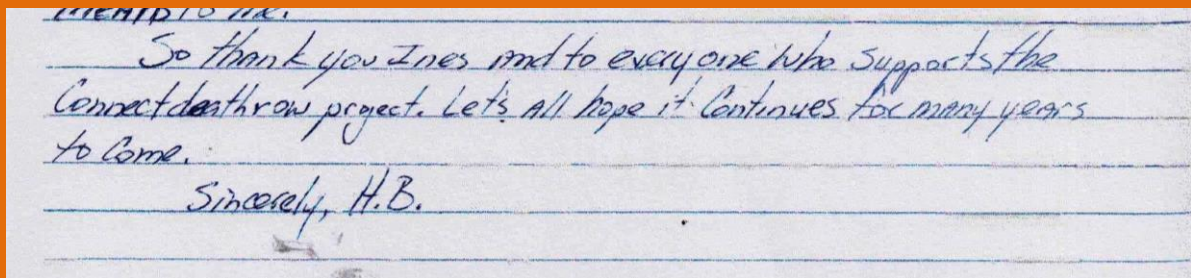
So, whenever I'm able to connect with someone, I cherish them and the interactions we have.

Ines gave me a gift that I absolutely cherish, when she allowed me to contribute to the connectdeathrow project. For that I will always be grateful.

To me, writing to the students was far more than a joy, it touched my heart and provided much needed strength and healing for my soul.

I'll never know any of the students I communicated with, and they'll never know who I am. But I hope I was able to convey to each of them how much their sincerity and curiosity meant to me.

H.B., former connectdeathrow contributor



Words by Musquaw



Ines, huge congratulations on your 10th anniversary, I had no idea how long ago it was, when you started connectdeathrow!

I'm so happy for you, for such a successful project that you created and nurtured to fruition!!

I truly enjoyed reading their letters, along with responding to each and every one of them!! I thank you for the opportunity, to have been part of your grand vision, to show the world death row behind closed doors!!

Musquaw, former connectdeathrow contributor

Words by a supporter

I am extremely grateful to Ines for the work she does with connectdeathrow.org.

Her organization has introduced many people, especially students at schools and universities, to prisoners on death row. These 'toe-in-the-water' contacts have often led to long-term penfriendships via lifespark.

Thank you, Ines and all connectdeathrow contributors!

Nick Bell



Sticker of connectdeathrow, drawn by an inmate

Students talk to cdr contributors

If you could be anywhere in the world right now and do anything at all – no limits – what would it be?

Do you think a book needs a happy end?

Have you ever thought about suicide? Would you prefer to be executed sooner or to keep on waiting?

I'm looking forward to your last letter. It was a pleasure to write to you and maybe we will meet again one day.

Thank you, sir, for everything and I wish you many more letter contacts, so you can share your story once more.

What's something you think has a huge impact on the world but doesn't really affect you personally?

I'm looking forward to your last letter. It was a pleasure to write to you and maybe we will meet again one day. Thank you, sir, for everything and I wish you many more letter contacts, so you can share your story once more.

I hope you get a nice place in heaven!

I have to say I was a bit surprised. The first thing a person reads is that you've been on death row for 24 years, and the next moment you're describing how you use that time and how you manage to feel free, even though you're in a cell? Boy, that's inspiring.



Words by Drago



For years I have worked with this program, and it has brought so much joy to my life, to be able to help students and enlighten and expand their horizons is a responsibility I treasure.

It is wonderful to see the reactions in the letters I get back and see their minds expanding and absorbing new things. This is the best thing ever!!!!!!

Drago

Words by a supporter

I will never forget my own experience when I took part for the first time with my own group of students. They were eighth graders at the time – I remember Ines saying something along the lines of: “Now these young people have the chance to ask the prisoners firsthand questions that no one else can answer, but what do they do? They talk to them about their favorite movies, books, or games...”

Of course, she was right, but I still thought it was good – the students were enthusiastic about the project and learned in a very practical way that their conversation partners are people like you and me, with dreams and desires like we all have.

They are not monsters, despite their serious crimes. And that is an invaluable experience – I can tell them that a hundred times but experiencing it for themselves is simply something else.

It’s a great thing, and of course I hope Ines continues with connectdeathrow for a long time to come. In any case, I am very happy to continue promoting it with complete conviction.

Gabi Uhl, long-term supporter

Words by Jay

I came to know CDR through a friend, Don, who is now gone from this existence to the next. So every time I write a letter and I think about CDR I think about how blessed I am to have known Don. And every time I correspond with a person through CDR Don blesses me again. So in short, thank you Don for introducing me to Ines...and thank you Ines for Connect Death Row. Every time I write someone through your program I feel heard, useful and for a few moments free from my present reality.

So, HAPPY 10th ANNIVERSARY

Connect
Death
Row

