



JSTOR

Attention JSTOR Second Chance Month
165 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10006

Dear JSTOR Second Chance Month,

Enclosed, please find my submission to
your call for work on *Reclaiming Identity
Through Learning*.

Thank you for the opportunity to share
my work and I hope you will find it useful.

Yours,





Wings to "SOAR"

Gary Farlow

In 2022, the Rand Corporation reported that access to education reduces prison recidivism by 43%, yet, as many incarcerated will attest, rehabilitation is left largely up to the prisoner. There are no road maps to navigate the minefield called prison.

Amidst the plethora of correspondence, print-based, and on-site opportunities exists an absence of programs and education for one particular group of inmates.

Sex offenders. It is a crime that no one wants to talk about. It is the proverbial "pink elephant in the living room" that remains largely ignored. Despite the fact that, statistically, according to the Safer Society of Brandon, Vermont, sex offenders who engage in educational programs are a full 85% less likely to reoffend.

One such program amidst the dearth of education for sex offenders is the Sex Offender Accountability and Responsibility program, or "SOAR."

Started in 1993 at N.C.'s Harnett Correctional Institution in Lillington, N.C., the SOAR program employs educational modules

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behavior.

Most often victims of abuse themselves, program participants develop healthy self esteem, learn to forgive, and avoid toxic shame.

SOAR gave me a new lease on life. I did not attend to "look good for the parole board" or for any purpose other than a recognition that /needed help.

SOAR aided me in rebuilding broken relationships within my family, a healthy self-esteem with other inmates, a recognition of the how my crime harmed my victim, my own family, and society as a whole. It has allowed me to see the necessity to emerge from the shadows, reach out to others who are suffering, and break the cycle of abuse.

Since completing SOAR and serving as a Peer Counselor in the program and two "spin-off" programs in N.C., I have devoted countless hours toward heightening public awareness of the dire need of such educational programs in every correctional institution.

My own path has influenced others to step forward and seek the help necessary to

The Key To The Future

Hope is the prisoner who sits in a cell
mining the riches within textbooks
believing in a life beyond barbed-wire
a redemption in education . . .

Hope is looking beyond the immediate
that you are not defined by your crime
that you may be in prison but not of prison,
far beyond the walls of confinement . . .

Hope is the assurance that you can
pick up the pieces of a broken life
believe in the knowledge of a future
to live again - not as a number, but as you . . .

Hope is like the air - invisible
yet, like education, fundamental to life
because without it one is doomed
to struggle in ignorance, gasping against despair.

