



CYD CHARISSE BERGER

SCI Cambridge Springs



STATUS:

- Incarcerated in 1980 at the age of 25
- Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

OBJECTIVE: I would like to re-establish my bond with my family. Secondly, I would like to attend graduate school. But, my passion is for people. I have a heart for those who are lost and I would one day like to open a safe house for women who are suffering from abuse and who have nowhere to go.

Education:

Degree: Associates: Letters, Arts and Sciences, Penn State University, 1991

Advanced Typing, Word Processing and Bookkeeping I, 1984

Sewing: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced, 1985

Business: 1985

Automated Accounting

Mini Computer: I and II

Word Processing

Palmetto Insurance: Office Simulation

SuperScripsit Word Processing, 1986

Business: 1987

Record Keeping

Elements of Financial Records

Small Business Management

Computer Programming:

Pascal I and II

Computer Aided Drafting, 1998

Apprenticeship: Journeyman's Upholster's License, 1990

CPR and First Aid, 1991

Business Management, Certificate, Penn State University, 1992

Catering, 1993

Vocational Photography, 2001

Photography II, 2003

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Work History:

Laubach Literacy-Instructor, 1984
Clerk Typist II, 1984-1989
Tutor, SAT Prep, 1985
Aerobics Instructor, Activities Department, 1986-1998
Teacher's Assistant, Project IM-Pact, 1988-1998
Upholsterer, 1989-1998
Grounds Keeper, 1998
Teacher's Aid, Building Trades Department, 1998-1999
Assistant to Photographer, 2003-05
Assistant to Electrician, 2005-07
Activities Department at Cambridge Springs, Administrative Assistant: 2007-present
 Special Events Planning
 Assisting Adapted Wellness Class
 Video Taping Events
 Planning and Implementing movies for facility
 Assisting with contests and Craft Saturday
 Trivia Contest on Channel 45

Programs:

1984: Vital Issues Project, Facilitator
 Stress Group, Co-Leader
1988: Time to Read
1992: Tuberculosis Peer Education
1997: HIV/AIDS Peer Education
 House of Hope
 Human Sexuality

Groups:

1994: Adjustment
1997: Understanding Relationships
1998: Breaking Barriers
 Anger Management
 After Care-Abuse
 Long Termers Support Group: Created and Implemented
 This group assisted women in coping with their incarceration and
 provided speakers to address Youth at Risk and students
2006: Thinking for a Change
2013: Violence Prevention

Workshops:

1985: Poetry
1986: Calico Crafts
 Painting
1993: Interior Design
 Catering
1987: Vegetarian
1989: Microwave Cooking
 Crepes and Food Garnishing

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Community Engagement:

Project IM-Pact: SCI Muncy, Assisted in Planning and Implementation, 1985

One of the first of its kind within the Department of Corrections, this center was created to strengthen the bonds between mothers and their children.

“The Search For Signs of Intelligent Life In The Universe,” Cast Member of SCI Muncy’s first adaptation of a Broadway musical, 1993.

African American Women’s History Event Talent Show, 1995

Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA:

Attended art exhibition and participated in a panel discussion focused on life sentenced women, facilitated by Artist, Mary Dewitt, 1991.

“I Face Myself, I Face You,” Participant, PA Prison Society Arts Program: 1995

Artist Mary Dewitt, Director. Exhibition at City Hall Courtyard, Philadelphia, PA.

“The Other Side,” Participant, Directed by Photographer Howard Zehr, photo-essay and traveling exhibit depicted life sentenced prisoners which led to the publication of Life Sentences, 1995.

“Forever After,” Participant, Documentary Produced by Judith Good, in association with The Victims Impact Program, 2001.

Canine Partners For Life: Puppy Handler and Trainer. 2002-present

SCI Cambridge Springs B-Unit Quilting Outreach Program, Participant and Instructor; Teaching skills and providing quilts to non-profits; 2007-present.

City On The Hill Choir, Director; 2007

Choral Instruction and Performance, 2008

Adapted Wellness Spring Talent Show, Vocal Director and Costume Designer, 2013

Impromptu Speech Competition, 2nd Place Winner, Topic: Politics, 2013

Unit Representative for B-Unit Progressive, 2012-14

PLA: Pennsylvania Lifers Association

Costume Designer and Seamstress, SCI Muncy Performances

Physical Fitness:

Volleyball

Softball Umpire Weightlifting

Pickleball

Speedball

Aerobics

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Spirituality:

Being a Christian is not about religion, but about a relationship with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. While I have been serving a life sentence at SCI Muncy, I participated in Yokefellow Prison Fellowship, Bible Studies, Life in the Spirit, Midweek Prayer, Sunday morning and afternoon worship services, and I have also had the privilege to attend Catholic Mass.

Since being at SCI Cambridge Springs, I attend Saturday morning and Sunday evening services. I have been a part of a worship team called, "Gatekeepers." I have attended Women's Aglow International Fellowship, Mom's in Touch prayer group, independent Bible Studies, Spiritual Maturity Bible Study, Kairos Retreat and update-Metanoia Retreat. I currently sing on the Protestant Choir and have had the opportunity to direct the choir and am the worship leader. I attend United Fellowship Bible Studies on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month and have attended many speaking engagements and seminars through the religious services area. I also participated in a journaling seminar led by Sister Natalie Rossi.

THE WOMAN I AM NOW: When I first came to prison, I was only a shell of a woman. I was broken, abused, had low self-esteem and I thought of myself as a victim. The years I have spent behind bars has revealed the person I am. I am no longer a victim but a victor. I am no longer broken, rather, I am mended. No longer do I have low self-esteem; I have strength, courage, and like a Phoenix rising out of the ashes, I have risen above circumstances.

I am a leader. I have ceased hiding in the shadows and embrace the front line. The face that had no voice, is no longer silenced, but speaks with truth and conviction. The woman I am now is proud of who she has become and now that woman who looks back at her in the mirror, can smile and say, "I love you and I celebrate you." As Helen Reddy sang, "I am woman. Hear me roar!" Today, I can tell you that I LOVE MYSELF AND THE LORD. I am not angry or mad at the world or the cards that I have been dealt. Being inside these walls has given me the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people from all walks of life. They have told me that I inspire them, but really, it is me who is inspired the most.