

Colette Cook
S.O.L.O.G, Vice President
7362 W Parks Hwy #598
Wasilla, AK 99623
sologroupmom@gmail.com



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Dear Members,

My name is Colette Cook and my son, Jordan, is currently incarcerated at Spring Creek Correctional Center in Seward, Alaska where he is serving a virtual life sentence.

It has been five years since I was last able to give my son a hug. And just shy of a year since I have seen his face. He was transferred to Seward just about the time COVID started shutting everything down, including visitation.

While he was housed nearby, I was able to visit him 2-3 times a week and we talked on the phone 4-6 times a week as well. Now, we try to talk on the phone about once every other day but sometimes we don't manage to connect. He also tries to stay in contact with his brothers and sisters as best he can. It has been a struggle to try to maintain a connection, to try to keep each other spirits up and stay positive through what feels like a never-ending wait.

We have all found ourselves dealing with periods of depression, sadness, loneliness, and frustration. I live in a pervasive state of worry coupled with feelings of helplessness and sometimes hopelessness. Somehow, we do our best to pick ourselves up each day and forge ahead. Being a part of S.O.L.O.G. has been helpful and supportive but none of the fallout from lack of visitation comes without cost to mental, physical, and emotional well-being. I miss my kid so much.



Aside from the one hour of rec each day Jordan spends all his time in the mod. He fills his days with card games, books, working out, listening to music, watching TV and occasionally drawing. There are no programs or classes currently offered other than the AA/NA meeting which he attends once a week. The lack of anything to do wears on him heavily. Because he lives in a PC mod access to programs and classes is extremely limited even outside of COVID. Jordan would really appreciate more opportunities to participate in classes or programs.

As for us, we would be ecstatic if friends and families were to have more options for staying in contact, especially through difficult times such as these. Most other states offer secure options for email communication and video calling. We don't understand why AKDOC won't take steps to facilitate this at all institutions. It would not be a great substitution for in-person visitation but it would be a considerable improvement over what we have now. And given that Alaska is such a big state, and an inmate may be housed several hundred miles away from family and friends, it would be fantastic to have these communication tools put in place permanently to help keep people connected when visitation is not feasible.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



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