Literacy Efforts in Prison, Episode 310

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SPEAKERS

- **Kavitha Cardoza**, public editor and host, EWA Radio
- **Natalie Pate**, a former reporter for the Statesman Journal

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Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 00:00
Join the most innovative and passionate education community at South by Southwest EDU 2023. Take part in impactful community driven programming, unparalleled networking opportunities and unexpected discoveries March 6-9, 2023 in Austin, Texas. Visit SXSWedu.com to discover more than 200 sessions already revealed featuring inspiring thought-leaders in education. Register today.

This is the web radio podcast of the Education Writers Association. I'm public editor and your host, Kavitha Cardoza. Longtime education reporter Natalie Pate wrote about the connection between prison and literacy for the Statesman Journal. We're very proud to claim this as an EWA Fellowship project as well. Natalie began looking into the connection between low literacy and people in custody in the fall of 2021, a full decade since journalists had written about the issue in Oregon. She found, even though adults in custody who test below the eighth grade level in reading qualify for mandatory literacy education in the state, nearly half of those eligible have never been enrolled in classes, hundreds are on waiting lists. There was someone on the waitlist for 266 days. Natalie, thank you so much for making the time to chat with us about your wonderful piece.

Natalie Pate 01:38
Thank you for having me.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 01:39
So I loved reading it, because low literacy is a topic very close to my heart. Millions of adults in the US can't read or write at a basic level, including reading a menu or a bus schedule or a pay stub. And that can make life very, very difficult. I remember reporting on this issue, and one man telling me that he went to a doctor's office for a visit and he couldn't read the form. So he just ticked every box. And the receptionist said, you've ticked that you're pregnant. And everyone in the waiting room laughed. And he said he just left and never went back. So, in your project you've concentrated on prisons and literacy. How did you come up with this idea?

Natalie Pate 02:31
So my editor at the time, Alia Rau, and I had been talking about this statistic that couldn't quite get out of our heads. We've seen that nationwide, an estimated 70%, or more of incarcerated people can't read

at the fourth grade level. And we just couldn't get that data point out of our head. And we kept thinking, what is the connection between the two? And what isn't being done for these students as children before they become adults and find themselves in this position? And furthermore, what's happening once they're in that position? So it came from a collaboration between myself and my editor really kind of asking, Why is this? And what else do we need to know about it?

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 03:23
And so we met so many people who are serving time through your piece, and some of their stories are so poignant. I would love it if you could read your lede.

Natalie Pate 03:36
Yeah, thank you. I would love to do that. So, it begins with a vignette about a man named Vincent Valdez. "Vincent Valdez's childhood memories are tinted by the vodka-filled water bottle he brought to class. 'I thrown up a couple of times in the middle of the classroom,' he said. 'I fallen over on the bus.' Valdez grew up in what he described as a small Montana mining town. He was enrolled in special education starting in first grade, and continuing through middle school. He began drinking around age 10. He barely passed the eighth grade, he said, attributing the accomplishment to his brother helping him complete a report about Yellowstone National Park. 'I've always been a slow learner,' he said. 'It didn't matter how hard I tried, I would not get it. I can look at a word and you know, I've seen that word a million times. But I still won't know the definition or how to put it in a sentence or anything like that.'"

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 04:32
I thought that was just so painful to read, Natalie, to see how he was failed as a student. And we know so much now about the pipeline to prison and things like that. Tell us about some of the people you met.

Natalie Pate 04:48
Sure. So we found it particularly important with this project to speak with the students who are current adults in custody, and a large reason for that is, just like any other education reporting, it's incredibly important to show the decisions and curriculum and all these things that we're covering -- how they're impacting the students, keeping the students at the heart. And for us, even though we were talking about prisoners, that was still the case, very much so. And in this case, we know that adults in custody are voices we very rarely get to hear from. So, we made it a point in any prison we went to, to talk to as many people as we were allowed to. We went to three different prisons in Oregon, and one in California. And we spoke with several adults who some, you know, both men and women, we spoke with folks who grew up with varying degrees of education, varying degrees of literacy. Some had special needs some, some were in addiction recovery, some had mental health conditions that were working with are living through. So, it was a wide variety of people, no one person that we talked to was the same as another, except for the shared common experience between all of them in that they were incarcerated.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 06:09
You were talking about some of the numbers like the 70% number is really stark. You found, though, that Oregon numbers were almost the inverse of national statistics, right? Why is that?

Natalie Pate 06:23
Yeah, so we found from our analysis that about 15% of adults in Oregon prisons read below an eighth grade level. Now that's compared to that national statistic of 70% or more of incarcerated people nationwide reading at the fourth grade level. And, through all our research, we could not find anyone who could explain why Oregon's numbers were so different. It wasn't clear whether Oregon prisoners are actually more literate, since there's no state by state comparative data, there's no federal oversight for it. They couldn't explain why the Oregon numbers were so different from national surveys. However, one thing that I think is particularly important to remember is that because each state and even sometimes down to each prison classifies these things differently: What does illiteracy mean? Are we talking the fourth grade level, we're talking the eighth grade level, third grade level. I mean, it really depends on the state and the individual prison. But one thing that Oregon does, that a lot of other states don't do, is they test all prisoners as they come into the facility, regardless of their education background, so they could have a GED or higher education. But regardless, they test them, whereas in other states, they might test them upon entry, but they only do it -- such as Washington State for an example -- they only test incarcerated adults, if they've confirmed that they don't have a high school diploma or equivalent. So, the pool of people who they're testing, what level they're testing them at, what system they're using to test them...All of that differs dramatically state to state and prison to prison.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 08:08
That is very progressive because we know having a high school diploma or a GED doesn't mean that you're literate

Natalie Pate 08:16
Correct. In Oregon, and a lot of states do use this system, but it's referred to as CASAS ["Cassis"]. And it's the comprehensive adult student assessment systems, C-A-S-A-S. They come in to the facilities, typically they undergo these assessments, and it's a paper-pencil test within the first three days of them coming in to an Oregon Department of Corrections facility. And they're gauging them on a score around 235. 235 is the the key number for this equation in that an adult who scores less than 235 on the reading portion of the test is considered to be reading under an eighth grade reading level, and they are assigned those mandatory literacy courses. And so we have students that we spoke to such as Cody Madrid, as an example, who, he completed high school, he earned his diploma, but yet he, now at 23, when we interviewed him had not been able to score higher than 232, even though he had taken the test multiple times.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 09:30
Is he the one who took it like 10 times?

Natalie Pate 09:33
I don't know at this point, how many times he's taken it, but as of June of this last year, he had taken it, taking it multiple times. And his biggest thing was he could read quickly, but he didn't retain what he was reading. And that was his biggest struggle that he was working on was he could read, you know, a memo or an email or a large chunk of text, but he didn't retain any of it. So when he took the

assessment for reading comprehension and decoding, and you know, all those things that higher level readers do on a day-to-day basis, it just wasn't completely computing for him.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 10:11
I often say you can't cover education if you don't cover adult education. And that includes low literacy and people who aren't literate at all. And so what I loved about your pieces -- this is a story that every education reporter could do. So, I would love it, if you could get really granular, Natalie, and tell us how you went about reporting the story. Like, how did you contact correctional facilities? How long did they allow you to stay? You said, you spoke to as many people as you were allowed to, like, what was that like?

Natalie Pate 10:46
So, at the beginning, this was, you know, January and February of 2022, when we were really getting into the nuts and bolts of things. And up until that point, through the fall of 2021, a lot of my work was kind of the bigger picture, more academic research in understanding. You know: What are the core evidenced-based teachings behind literacy, education. You know, the very, very big-picture academic stuff. And so at the start of 2022, I wanted to take that the next step closer to the students and say, "Okay, I need to understand the systems at play." So, I started emailing and calling the media contacts for the Department of Corrections here in Oregon, and trying to basically get a call with anyone who would talk with me. And thankfully, they were extremely helpful. And they connected me with some of their education coordinators, the folks who actually make sure that the classes are, you know, that there are instructors at the prisons, teaching XY and Z classes. And so, I was speaking with both state agency officials, but I was also speaking with people who worked in the prison themselves, who planned their curriculum, who worked and graded the students to get a sense of what did these classes actually look like? What classes are offered? How are they testing these students? All of those kind of – the nuts and bolts of the program so I can understand it. And when I learned that the instructors for these courses are typically brought in via partnerships with community colleges, I went to the state's Higher Education Coordinating Commission. And I asked for information on their end and how are they training these instructors? Are these educators qualified to teach in these environments? What are they doing to prepare to get here? And a lot of that didn't make it in the story. But it gave me some very, very important much-needed background knowledge. So, when I did talk to the instructors, I knew where they were coming from. I knew what their goals were with the students. I could ask much more in-depth questions. Getting into the prisons was absolutely the hardest part other than being in the prisons themselves. So, we've been requesting for months, you know, over email, over phone, checking in with our media contacts, repeatedly, calling individual prisons, trying to reach out to contacts across the country and other states, trying to find pretty much anyone who would let us into their prisons. And we were doing that in several different ways. I mean, Reading Horizons is a program that Oregon is adopting as a supplementary literacy program for their adults in custody. And so, we went to Reading Horizons and asked if they could make introductions of us between, you know, us and their partners. Like, we were trying to think outside of the box as much as we could to get in. But the number one reason that kept being stated to us was that because of COVID, they weren't letting in any outside visitors. And so, for a while, it felt like we just kind of had to sit and wait and do basically any other work that we could. So, that's when we were, you know, going into elementary school classrooms and observing literacy lessons and talking to parents and talking to people in the K - 12 system and talking

to social workers and attorneys and all the people who work with folks who are incarcerated, other than those who are incarcerated themselves, or people who've been released. Basically, everyone outside the prison. But because of the nature of the story, we knew we had to get into the prison. So, we just kept pushing and pushing and pushing. And as soon as they gave us the green light that we could go in that the COVID restriction had been lifted, that's when it got very, very detailed. We had to you know, send lists of all the equipment that we plan to bring with us. There was very specific, you know, clothes we couldn't wear. We weren't supposed to, you know, wear certain colors or certain materials based on–

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 14:54
What do you mean?

Natalie Pate 14:55
For the clothing?

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 14:57
Yeah!

Natalie Pate 14:57
So, there were some things, for example, that you can't wear when you go in because of the metal detector. So underwire bras, metal in your belts, things like that. There's also you know, they don't want you to wear too tight of clothing, too revealing of clothing. There's, depending on which prison you go to, the prisoners tend to wear a specific color. A lot of the ones that we went to it was blue or denim. So we weren't allowed to wear any blue or denim. Because if there's an emergency, the guards can't mistake you as a prisoner. So, yeah, there was a lot of like, very, very, very specific things like that. A lot of the places I couldn't bring in a recorder or my phone, so I had to really take good notes. Very, very good notes. But the other thing that was really surprising to me, and that I would want reporters to be aware of going into any reporting like this, this isn't to scare them. But it was a shock that when I first got there, they read off -- you know, you have to do a background check; they're preparing you for going in with people who have convicted crimes -- and depending on where you're going, if it's a medium- or maximum-security facility, there are additional risks. And they do, you know, we always had a media liaison and a guard with us at all times. But you're still going into a high-risk facility. And it is a hard balance between, you know, you want to be professional, you want to be respectful to your subjects, but you also have to be on alert. And they tell you when you go in, you know, you could be held hostage, you could be attacked, you could be harmed, and by going in, you are acknowledging that this could happen to you. And then once we were actually in there, the thing that was so hard was we would get, depending on the prison, and depending on, you know, if we're observing a class, or if we're just speaking to a group of students, you have very little time to get this subject to trust you. You know, you're sitting down and you are diving into a very complex issue. You're talking to them about their relationship with learning and with reading and feeling capable and successful in the world. Like we're talking about heavy subjects, subjects that can be stigmatized, that can be embarrassing. And they already have the added power dynamic of here's a reporter coming in to interview them as a prisoner, as an incarcerated person. So, building that trust in a matter of seconds or minutes, is a challenge. You know, all of it, it comes down to even body language, making sure that you, you know, it

was a big deal for our photographer Brian Hayes and I, we felt very adamantly about introducing ourselves and making eye contact and shaking their hands. And all that stuff sounds so basic, but it's a sign of respect, to come in and treat them like you would any other source or subject. You know, we didn't ask them what they were incarcerated for. We dealt with that on our own as a background check or vetting later. But when we're in that room with them in that moment, that's not ultimately what we care about. We're talking to them person-to-person. We want them to trust us with their stories, and we need to show them that we are deserving of, you know, we can take their vulnerable stories, and we're going to do our absolute best to present them in a thorough, accurate way.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 18:30
What is class like in prison?

Natalie Pate 18:33
I was surprised how similar it was to a class that I would observe in a high school or a college. I mean, the instructors who work there go -- and this was true of every single prison we visited -- they went through so much care to make their classrooms feel as comfortable an environment as possible. And I'm the daughter of a retired teacher. I remember spending my summers helping my mom set up her room. And she was always so excited when she found a new, like, puzzle or poster to put on the wall. And she arranged the seats so that it was the most conducive to learning for her classes. And, and these instructors do the exact same thing. I mean, we went to one that had calendars of sloths all over the walls and, you know, books everywhere and tables and colorful rugs and you know, like, in a lot of ways it felt like any other classroom. But, at the same time you had, you know, reflective mirrors in the corners so that the guards can see people coming around the corner. You have security guards present. You can hear the sounds of security doors, opening and locking. I mean, it's, it is a different environment, but it's mixed in with a lot of the normal things that we're used to seeing in a classroom. And in terms of the interactions between the students and the teachers... again, very similar to what we'd see in any other classroom, the students come in for their classes. And the teachers are often up front and they're teaching a lesson, or the students are working one-on-one with a peer tutor. They're working in small groups, and they're laughing, and they're talking and they're having conversations or debates. But, again, you're dealing with a population that's disproportionately experienced trauma. That's in an environment that, you know, isn't ultimately there to educate them, they're learning against the odds in this environment. And, so, you also have people who, you know, class would get paused because there was a fight in the yard and security had to go deal with that. Or, you know, they would have to stop class so that they could go make count, where they, you know, they all have to be in one place when the security is counting them. So, there are definitely a lot of barriers in that environment that a traditional classroom would not have to deal with. But there were a lot of similarities, too.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 21:03
Talking about barriers, you write that funding and access to these programs are not prioritized. What did you mean?

Natalie Pate 21:13
Yeah, so to start -- in terms of the limited state funding and the assertion that we make that the funding is not prioritized -- that largely came down to the Oregon Department of Corrections' budget. They

operate on an approximately $2 billion dollar budget per biennium. And of that, about 11 million of the budget -- so about 5.5% -- is allocated to adult basic skills development education. And that is a very broad umbrella category that covers everything from basic reading skills to GED prep. So, there's no funding allocated specifically for low-level readers in Oregon prisons at the time that we published this series. Now, they estimated that that money when it's broken down per student, we're looking at about $3,000 to $3,500 per student for these services. But if you look at per-pupil spending for K - 12 students, US Census data show that it's closer to $12,450 per student. So a very notable big difference between the two. Yes.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 22:29
And what about partnerships with -- you had written somewhere that, you know, these facilities had partnerships with housing and employment organizations, but not with literacy?

Natalie Pate 22:46
Correct. Yeah. So, one of the things that I thought was particularly interesting was that the Department of Corrections has established partnerships with groups that can help them with things like work placement. It can help them with navigating housing, like you mentioned, too, and there's various things that could be done to help students in terms of continuing their education upon release. But at least at this point, the DoC doesn't have any established partnerships to continue literacy education, specifically. And, so, one of the folks who we talked to is Vivian Ang. And she's in charge of the Mid-Valley Literacy Center here in Salem (OR). And she said that they've worked with people from the county jail and from the county adult drug court, and that they've wanted to partner with the DoC for years, and it just hasn't happened. And, you know, there are groups like that, who are wanting to help, who are saying, you know, we won't create any barriers, if there's an adult who's released from prison, who wants to continue their adult literacy education with us. We are here, we want to offer you scholarships, we want to offer you opportunities to be tutored. And, so far, Corrections has not made that a formal partnership the way that they have for other services.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 24:14
What are some of the resources, say someone, I don't know in Illinois, say, who wanted to report on this issue in their area would look at? What are some of the national resources you can think of?

Natalie Pate 24:32
Yeah, I mean, I spoke with some folks at the federal level to get a sense of, you know, what we can be looking for in the future. I will say that on a national level, it's very limited. However, I spoke with Sean Addie, who's the director of correctional education for the U.S. Department of Education, and he was extremely helpful in being able to explain even, like, the lack of federal or state-by-state comparison data. But he was able to point me to some comparative data that's available through the National Reporting System for Adult Education. And they track the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, which is also known as Title II. And Title II programs, you know, they receive set funding, because of the type of programs that they have. They have to meet certain criteria. And the states report back to the federal systems in order for all of this to be collected for national data. The big caveat I will give reporters, though, is states are only required to report on a set list of outcomes. And they're not required to use federal funds for correctional education. So, again, that's the one that's one of the few

national systems I can really point to, to get started, but it has these big, you know, gaps in it to say, if you're in Illinois, or if you're in one of those states, definitely try to find those databases. Just know that it's extraordinarily limited. Find as many national sources as you can. You can call -- we spoke with Professor Michele Deitch down at, she's a senior lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin. And she's the director of the school's Prison and Jail Innovation Lab. Now, I am not a Texas reporter. However, she is an example of someone who -- she's a national expert on this, she's looked at it in several states. And she was able to really provide context and understanding to what I was learning through my research. So, there are people like that, that you can find in any state and across the country who want to help. There's a very dedicated group of people out there looking at this. It's just not really coordinated across the board.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 26:53
Another helpful resource might be the National Adult Literacy Survey.

Natalie Pate 26:57
Mm-hmm. You just have to be careful on when they came out who all they interviewed. And to the point that we made sure to mention earlier was: What are they defining as literate or illiterate? So, if it's the fourth grade level, okay, if it's the third, the eighth. You know, you want to make sure that you're clear on that, because a lot of times you don't get that apples-to-apples comparison.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 27:20
Did anyone you interviewed from prison read the article? And what were their reactions?

Natalie Pate 27:29
Yes. So, we were very adamant that we wanted the folks who we talked to, to be able to read it. You know, a lot of times, though, it's limited when we get to talk with prisoners. A lot of times when we are talking to them, it's not about positive news. And in this case, this was an opportunity for them to say what they're learning, and why they want to learn. Why are they in those classes? And why is it important to them to learn to read? And how are they going to use this to better their future? So, I was surprised by how many of them were excited to speak with us, and equally wanted a copy. You know, they wanted to read it, they wanted to send it to their family, they wanted their family to put it in a scrapbook. They were so excited for the article to come out. And so, on the day that it published in print, I drove all around Salem, and bought as many physical copies as I could, that I could send them to the prisons. A lot of them have limited Internet access. And, so, I wasn't sure if they'd be able to read the full story online. But I made sure that all of our agency contacts -- anyone who worked with the prisoners, but had access, you know, to email and, and Internet outside of the prison -- I made sure they got the link, but then I sent four or so copies to every prison that we went to. So the classes could see it as well. And, it was a very -- it was very meaningful for me to hear from, not only folks who we interviewed, but other incarcerated adults or formerly-incarcerated adults who were peer tutors, or who had graduated from those types of programs, who emailed us and called us and thanked us for writing it and thanked us for, you know, having that be part of the broader conversation. And I think that was the most meaningful reaction for me.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 29:24

You have this beautiful quote when talking about why prison literacy is important. Someone said "education offers humanity" and I thought that was so, just so beautiful. Because there is still such a school of thought that says, "Oh, these people have committed crimes like life should be as hard as possible. We shouldn't be, you know, spending on programs like this." And, yet there are so many benefits, right?

Natalie Pate 29:54
Yes, definitely. That was one of the, I think, the biggest challenges about writing this story is a lot of people will care about the sweet second graders who are learning to read and are facing a whole life of potential in front of them, right? They're learning to read for the first time, and they're going to be opened up to this whole world, and they have every opportunity in front of them. And getting people, readers to care about adults who are on the precipice of that opportunity, especially adults who have convicted crimes in their background is an extremely difficult task. I will not tell any reporter out there that that's easy. However, there is so much research behind why this type of education is so critical. We found a 2013 study that showed incarcerated individuals who participate in correctional education programs are 43% less likely to recidivate. And in addition to that, these programs play a large role in reducing the rate of violent interactions within the prisons. And the people who are released are far more likely to find gainful employment, for their children to complete high school and graduate at higher rates. You're talking about people being able to earn higher wages and contribute to the economy, pay taxes, reduce dependency on public assistance. I mean, the benefits are astronomical, not just for the students who are part of it, but for the people around them for the communities that they return to if they're being released. But I think, as important as all of those statistics are, and as true as they all are, one thing that really stood out to me that I had a hard time kind of putting my finger on when I first started this project, because I know as someone who uses writing every day, I know the importance of it, but putting into words what it means in terms of us as people, and our possibilities and our opportunities was hard. And when I think about someone who's serving a life sentence, it's hard to make the recidivism argument because, of course, they're not planning to be released. So, why invest money and time and energy into someone who's going to spend the rest of their days in prison? And, I think one of the biggest takeaways for me, is at some point, the education that's offered to these individuals is not a reflection on their past actions. It's a reflection on the system that's meant to be serving them. And I spoke with Kevin Bradley, who is the corrections education director for Portland Community College. And the way he put it was, "we all have those thresholds that we don't see ourselves going beyond. But learning in prison allows these adults to enter a world that they thought was closed to them." So, it's a quote -- we're talking not just about learning about grades, about education as a larger system, we're talking about self-confidence. We're talking about someone's belief in themselves to be a positive force in the world. And, to me, like, that's the most important thing we could write about.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 33:17
You know, Natalie, I was going to -- my next question was also going to be my last. It was about giving you the last thought: What is the one thing you will take away from this experience? But I think you just answered it.

Natalie Pate 33:32

Yeah, I think that a huge takeaway for me... another thing that I would say that was so eye-opening to me through this experience as a reporter... You know, we education reporters are used to interviewing such a wide range of people, right? We talk with elected officials, and superintendents and principals, people who are media-trained and who are used to talking with us. But we also talk with five-year-olds and scared parents or grieving families. Like, we have such a large range of people who we interview. And, for me, this goes back to what I was saying earlier about making our subjects feel comfortable. But this one was so different because it wasn't as black-and-white as I think a lot of people want to make prison issues out to be. You're a good person or you're a bad person. You did a bad thing or you didn't. And in this case, you know, I was talking with people who have severe crimes on their records, violent crimes, crimes that would you know, you wouldn't want to ever interact with someone theoretically who has done those crimes. But here I was talking to them and laughing with them and making jokes with them. And befriending them the way I would another subject or source and I think it was a very humbling reminder of the complexities of who we are as people. That we can be, you know, we can have past errors and mistakes. I don't think a single person I interviewed tried to convince me that they weren't guilty, or that -- you know, anything about their crime, right? No one was saying that they hadn't made a mistake, or that hadn't done something wrong. But they were trying to show that they could be better, that they could learn that they could take this educational experience and become a better person and that that's what they wanted. And I think at the end of the day, that was ... whenever I lost sight through the reporting process, "okay, why are we doing this? What do I want the focus to be?" I kept coming back to them. And I think that was huge.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 35:46
I loved your project. And I'm so excited that you've been invited to and you're going to be presenting your work in April, at Oxford University for the 2023 World Literacy Summit.

Natalie Pate 35:59
I am still absolutely just trying to wrap my head around it. I am so excited. I cannot believe it's happening. But the World Literacy Summit is is going to be bringing leaders from around the globe who focused on access to literacy, all to one place to talk about it. And I submitted our findings as research that could be presented. So, I'll be going and speaking with folks about it. And I really hope that they walk away with a deeper understanding of the problem, but also hopefully a renewed sense of why this area of literacy education and adult education matters so much. And and I hope to see some major changes. I mean, we've seen some legislative movements and conversations with legislators that are happening. And, so, I'm going to be keeping a close eye during the 2023 sessions to see if anything changes as a result of our coverage. I would love to see some very tangible actions come out of this. So, I'm cautiously optimistic. I'm excited to get the word out there.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 37:05
We've been talking with Natalie Pate who was a reporter for the Statesman Journal in Oregon. You can follow her on Twitter @NataliePateGwin. Thank you so much for making the time to chat, Natalie, and please send us a postcard.

Natalie Pate 37:19
Definitely. Thank you.

Kavitha Cardoza, EWA Radio 37:21
That wraps up this episode of EWARadio. I'm Kavitha Cardoza. Do you have any questions for Natalie? Let's continue the conversation on Twitter, @EdWriters. And if you'd like to learn more about reporting on people who are incarcerated in general, EWA member Charlotte West has some great tips on our website a EWA.org, Special thanks to Angelina Liu and Kristan Obeng from EWA and Raul Garcia for production assistance.

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