

S.I.T. Down With Us

The Social Impact Team
Monthly Email Newsletter

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:
SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH
POPS the Club

TEAM UPDATES

2020: A Look Back
2021: A Look Ahead

MATCHING CAMPAIGN

Total 2020 Donation Amount!

SOCIAL IMPACT 101: RECOMMENDATIONS

Watch
Listen
Read

GET INVOLVED

Join the Team
Volunteer With Us
Recommendations



"What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains, and is, immortal."

- Albert Pine

SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Interview with Amy Friedman



*Co-Founder and
Executive Director for
POPS the Club*

At its core, what does POPS do? How would you describe the impact you make through your work?

At its core, the idea is to support kids who have parents or siblings who are or were incarcerated and are carrying a lot of secrecy and sorrow around that. They take on the shame of their loved ones' mistakes. Yesterday we had an interview with a reporter in Georgia and she wanted to talk to some of the kids. We currently have a pilot running in a middle school in Georgia. These are 12-13-year olds and they got on a Zoom call for the interview. The reporter asked one of the girls what she likes about POPS. Her response was: "My dad did a bad thing but he is not a bad person and I love him and I miss him." She was then asked how long his sentence is. "He got a 55-year sentence. I just want to help kids that have parents like I do." Some of the kids participating in the interview were online with their parents who had been previously incarcerated and released and you could just see the pride in the parents that their kids could show who they are and could show their strength and their resilience.

The very first club meeting at the very first club, the very first girl walked in, and sat down. Then a second girl walks in. At that moment, they realized they had been friends for many years. They had shared everything with each other, as best friends do, except the secret that they both had incarcerated fathers. They had experienced

some kind of stigma through their lives either from the guards when they visit their parents and others asking them to keep it a secret as "it will look bad on us", and simply from not having a space to talk about it.

There is really no support for these kids and POPS is looking to change that. They experience a sense of relief, community, and are able to understand their own story better. That's where the art piece comes in – they are able to come to understand themselves better through their writing and art. It is designed to educate the public – highlighting the impact of such a high rate of incarceration rather than rehab or addiction treatment.

When the organization was first started, part of my idea was I wanted a way for these kid's voices to be heard. Not just to educate the public but to also educate their loved ones. When you have someone incarcerated you worry about them, you feel their pain, and don't want to hurt them more, so your own pain goes unheard and unacknowledged. The anthologies have had such an impact that a warden in a California prison recently ordered the entire anthology for their library and called it a rehabilitation tool.

What's your role and how did you become involved with this organization?

I am the co-founder along with my former husband, and am currently the Executive Director. It all started when I was a journalist and was writing about prisons. I met a man who was in prison and we fell in love and married.

Interview continues on page 3.

MATCHING CAMPAIGN

A heartfelt thank you everyone who donated at the end of last year – with added appreciation to Ken Kelly for initiating the matching challenge!

We are proud to announce that in aggregate we were able to donate a **total of \$16,775.12** to our selected organizations! The impact we have made will be felt by many individuals in need. We look forward to increasing that impact in 2021 and continuing to embody our core values to Practice Compassion and Be Better Together!

Notes from 2020: A look Back

*Holiday Party Activities

- Zoom Christmas Carol recording for seniors.
- Recorded a message thanking the troops.
- Wrote and sent out cards with messages for children in hospitals, troops, and elderly.

SOCIAL IMPACT 101: RECOMMENDATIONS



Meet The Mole People Living Beneath the Las Vegas Strip

Learn about the community of homeless people who live in sewer tunnels beneath the Las Vegas strip.



Leadership for Society: The Podcast

Season One of the podcast, titled Race and Power, examines the way race interacts with structures of power, and how systemic racism manifests itself in institutions and our daily lives.



Dream Catchers:

POPS the Club Anthology

An enlightening and inspiring collection of art, prose, and poetry by high-school students with the unique perspective of encountering the pain of the prison system.

TEAM UPDATES

2020: A Look Back

AUGUST

The initial kick off call to create the Social Impact Team was held.

SEPTEMBER

The Social Impact Team was formed.

OCTOBER

The Team began compiling a list of organizations to work with. The SIT logo was designed.

NOVEMBER

The SIT Newsletter was crafted and sent out to CP announcing the Social Impact Team. The Team finalized their initial list of organizations to donate to.

DECEMBER

*The SIT external flier was created. Donations were disbursed and matching campaign was announced. Held the 1st Annual SIT Holiday Party.**

2021: A Look Forward

INCREASE AWARENESS

- Social Media Marketing
- Page on CP website
- Grow SI Membership

INCREASE IMPACT

- Create volunteer opportunities
- Increase financial donations
- Launch organization partnerships

INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE

- Launch SI Book Club
- Provide educational opportunities
- Match with partner organizations

RECOMMENDING ORGANIZATIONS



socialimpact@cpsych.com

Email us any organizations that you would recommend our team look into.

VOLUNTEERING



[Volunteer Survey](#)

Interested in volunteering at future events? Click the link to fill out our volunteer sign up form.

JOIN THE TEAM



socialimpact@cpsych.com

Passionate about making an impact? Join the Social Impact Team by emailing us today!

SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Interview with Amy Friedman (cont.)

I raised his kids and saw the impact directly on them from having their dad incarcerated. They were told to keep their mouth shut about him and have dealt with so much as a result (mental health, stigma, shame). We eventually divorced and I remarried a high school teacher. We started talking about the kids teachers interacted with on a daily basis that had incarcerated parents. Right now, 1 in 14 kids has a parent who is or has been incarcerated – which means when you walk into any classroom there are a lot of kids that fall into this category - but nobody knows this because it is such a big secret.

My husband had a beloved student who was a genius writer and became like a son to us. At the age of 17 he was charged with murder and took a 22-year sentence. He got a commutation after 9 years, went home, went to college and grad school, and is now very successful. When my husband went to visit him in jail is when he really felt what that was like. He shared this with his class after that visit. One girl in the class that was always extremely quiet, never participated and not engaged, all of a sudden came alive. She raised her hand and shared that her brother was in the same prison and wondered if maybe they knew each other. His sharing that experience made it OK for her to share hers as well.

We ended up partnering with the guy who started the very first LGBTQ club in a high school and modeled POPS after his plan. There were, and are, three main tenets for the club: 1) must always have food 2) anyone is welcome, and 3) you don't have to say why you are there. Some kids come to the meetings and never say anything, but years later share how POPS saved them.

Everything I do for the club comes from wishing my kids had this. I truly believe that if they had, their lives would look very different now.

What differentiates POPS from other organizations?

There are not many organizations serving this population and the majority are not in the schools. The main distinguishing feature is that we have designed clubs to be reasonably easy to implement. It is more nuanced and complex than meets the eye at first, but it is pretty nimble relative to other organizations that are serving this population and a little easier to replicate.

POPS does not provide all necessary services for these kids so there are other groups that go hand-in-hand with us – we need each other to complete the services. For example, POPS does not provide mentoring or deal with small kids, so there are other organizations that meet those needs.

Even though we are not in elementary schools, these kids are still impacted. One high school girl who was a POPS member had a sister who was in the 4th grade. She hated reading and struggled with the subject, but loved the POPS anthologies and would read them all the time. She would take the books to school and through it met a boy who also had an incarcerated father and they started meeting on their own. They kept meeting for years and are now in 9th grade and members of POPS.

What do you think people benefiting from your programs would say is the best thing about your organization?

Many of them call POPS family. Many of them, who were on the brink of dropping out of high school, say "I would not have stayed in school if it were not for POPS". They would come to school just to be at the club meetings. It is an avenue for them to make friends and give them a connection. Individual self-esteem is highly impacted, but an additional and important impact is the school culture itself. After POPS has been at a school site for a while other teachers and kids know about it and see what an impact it makes on the kids - that there is food, there are great books that get written, and kids come out laughing from the meetings.

What does POPS hope to accomplish in the next 3-5 years?

- Keep everything working well and to keep going – COVID has made the last year extremely financially difficult.
- Spread further – get into more schools. We are currently in conversations with other districts in California and elsewhere and are actively working on a strategic growth plan to make sure we don't grow so fast that the impact of the organization is diluted.
- We have research partners at CSUN and USC helping us put together a 3-year grant proposal to get funding. This means gathering solid data from current clubs and showing the long-term impact.

What are the biggest barriers that might get in the way?

Money – very simply. Getting the necessary funding. Launching a club costs schools nothing at this time. We are entirely funded by foundation grants and individual donors. We have not had too much corporate support yet and are hoping to increase that with key organizations. We are being challenged in not just getting the funding, but also to steward the money in the right way. How should we staff the expansion? Should we hire local managers in the various regions? What other support could make an impact?

One of the expenses that is a challenge for us is the food provided at each meeting. There are only two local restaurants that donate weekly meals, but all other club lunches are funded by POPS. Finding a food corporate partner would be a huge asset.

Another challenge is that there are still principals and school districts that do not accept us. As an example, we did a presentation at a private school. After the presentation, the librarian came to them and told me they really need us – she could think of at least 25 students who could use it immediately. But, because of the socioeconomic location and demographics of the school, the principal did not want to launch for fear of the backlash from the community. We need to be able to show the long-term impact.

How can people learn more or get involved with POPS?

The best way is through the POPS website. Anyone can also email info@popstheclub.org and will get a response very quickly. Multiple individuals manage this inbox and are very quick at responding.

But, the best way to understand POPS is through the books. Books are available at all sites (Amazon, BN, independent stores) with links from [our website](#) as well.