



University of Connecticut
Health Center
CORRECTIONAL MANAGED HEALTH CARE

May 18, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The following letter is written with respect to Ms. Panna Krom, inmate no. 347106. I have worked with Ms. Krom for the last four years in our Social Rehabilitation Program, a unit-based dual diagnostic and trauma treatment program here at York CI. Throughout this period, Ms. Krom has shown a consistency of effort at the highest level. Additionally, she has evidenced significant courage in addressing those issues that contributed to the death of her newborn as well as the great tragedy that this was for her family. Ultimately, I believe this is an extraordinary story of redemption, especially when one considers that Ms. Krom came to us as a 17 year old.

I would like to share some details of Ms. Krom's background which I feel were relevant to her case. Her parents are immigrants from Thailand who came to this country in the early 1980's. Ms. Krom has one sibling, a brother. It is important to note that Ms. Krom grew up in a very traditional Thai-American home, and that this simple fact suggests some of her most inexplicable behavior at the time of her crime. Ms. Krom was a bright and personable adolescent, as she is a young woman, and there was much expected of her. In this context, Ms. Krom's pregnancy was experienced by her as a kind of betrayal of her Thai culture and her family. Again, for Ms. Krom as a 17 year old, this elicited an overwhelming feeling of shame, among other desperate feelings. So she kept her pregnancy a secret from her family and friends. And there was a kind of magical wish that somehow things would resolve themselves. Of course they didn't, and at a most profound and critical moment with Ms. Krom feeling very much alone and overwhelmed, she panicked, as she herself would readily admit. This tragic story could have ended here, with essentially two lives having been lost.

It is also at this point that Ms. Krom's life begins to become a story of redemption. She established very quickly a strong determination to make her incarceration mean something. And her success goes far beyond graduating the Social Rehab Program. She is currently a mentor in our young adult tier; she has become a facilitator in the prison's Alternatives to Violence Program; she has received her high school diploma, and is now pursuing a college degree; she graduated with a certificate from our cosmetology program; she is currently involved with the Judy Dorwin performance group where the women get an opportunity to tell their individual stories in a creative way; and she is currently working in our Data Con Department (where only a select group of inmates can work). Ms. Krom's contributions/efforts have been exemplary with respect to all of the above.

Because I have worked with Ms. Krom as both her individual and group therapy clinician, I feel I have been a privileged witness to both her personal and spiritual maturation which makes writing this letter a very easy endeavor. I should say that I rarely "step out" of my clinical role in my work at York. But after thirty years in this field I cannot think of a more compelling reason to do so. It is, in this sense, my obligation to advocate for Ms. Krom. Her story has touched all who have worked with her and gotten to know her. In this regard, her sense of remorse and her desire to embrace the lessons learned are very obvious. Let me be very clear: I enthusiastically and wholeheartedly support Ms. Krom's application for a modification of her sentence.

If I might be allowed, I would like to make one legal observation. As I thought about writing this letter, I did some research. I came across the case of a young woman from New Jersey named Amy Grossberg. Ms. Grossberg was convicted in 1996 on essentially the same charge as Ms. Krom. Some of the specifics in the case are eerily similar. However, in Ms. Grossberg's case, the state of New Jersey sentenced her to thirty months of which she only had to serve twenty two months. Given the above as a point of reference, while I do not pretend to know the intricacies of Ms. Krom's case, I can only think that "justice has been done" after these five years.

I firmly believe that the Krom family needs the opportunity to begin to heal from their tragedy. I cannot see how this is accomplished with Ms. Krom spending any more time in prison. I have no doubt that the Department of Correction, for the State of Connecticut, has done its job in Ms. Krom's case. And as a result, I believe she will therefore leave prison a young woman with limitless potential and a great deal to contribute back to society.

I thank you in advance for your attention to this most serious matter. If I can be of any further assistance in advancing Ms. Krom's application for a sentence modification, please do not hesitate to contact me at York CI. Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

David DeCostanza, LCSW

David DeCostanza, LCSW
York CI/Social Rehabilitation Program
(860) 691-6785/6780