



The Prison University Project presents

IS IT SAFE?

ESSAYS by Students in the San Quentin
College Program

PHOTOGRAPHS by Heather Rowley
CURATED by Jennifer Scaife

An exhibition at Alcatraz Island
The Band Practice Room, Main Cellhouse
June 1, 2008-October 22, 2008

To RSVP for the opening reception, email
info@prisonuniversityproject.org or call
(415) 455-8088

To purchase tickets, go to
www.alcatrazcruises.com
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Is It Safe?* Exhibition of Essays and Photographs of students in San Quentin College Program opens at Alcatraz Island**

Exhibition addresses prison education, personal growth

San Francisco, CA (May 29, 2008) The Prison University Project presents *Is It Safe? Essays and Photographs of Students in the San Quentin College Program*, on view June 2, 2008-October 22, 2008, at Alcatraz Island. The exhibition features photographs by Heather Rowley and autobiographical essays by students in the only on-site, degree-granting college program in California's entire prison system.

The student essays explore a wide range of topics, including parenting from prison, practicing non-violence, and becoming a first-generation college graduate. According to Jennifer Scaife, program director of the Prison University Project and curator of the exhibition, "these essays are remarkable not only because they're well written, but also because of the risks students took in order to produce them. People in prison often guard their feelings and their memories closely. Writing a personal essay in such a culture can be a life-altering act."

The exhibition premiered at the San Francisco Public Library in November 2007 (under the title *Who We Are*). The current exhibition at Alcatraz Island has been funded by grants from the Sunshine Lady Foundation, the California Correctional Peace Officers Association, and the Rosenbaum Foundation.

The Prison University Project is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide high-quality higher education to people incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison; to generate public support for prison education and recovery programs; and to increase public awareness about criminal justice issues nationwide. As of May 2008, 69 students had earned their associate of arts degrees at San Quentin. Many students parole before completing the degree and continue their education on the outside.

An opening reception for the exhibition will be held at Alcatraz on June 21, 2008, from 6:30-8:00pm. Space is limited; please RSVP for the opening reception by June 6. To RSVP or for more information, please contact:

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Boat tickets sell out ten days to two weeks in advance. To ensure ticket availability, go to www.alcatrazcruises.com, or call Alcatraz Cruises at (415) 981-7625.