



## CYD CHARISSE BERGER

451 Fullerton Avenue  
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403



### STATUS:

- Incarcerated in 1980 at the age of 25
- Cyd has served 35 years of her life sentence
- Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

**OBJECTIVE:** I would like to re-establish my bond with my family. Secondly, I would like to attend graduate school. But, my passion is for people. I have a heart for those who are lost and I would one day like to open a safe house for women who are suffering from abuse and who have nowhere to go.

### EDUCATION:

Degree: Associates: Letters, Arts and Sciences, Penn State University, 1991

Advanced Typing, Word Processing and Bookkeeping I, 1984

Sewing: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced, 1985

Business: 1985

Automated Accounting

Mini Computer: I and II

Word Processing

Palmetto Insurance: Office Simulation

Superscript Word Processing, 1986

Business: 1987

Record Keeping

Elements of Financial Records

Small Business Management

Computer Programming:

Pascal I and II

Computer Aided Drafting, 1998

Apprenticeship: Journeyman's Upholsters License, 1990

CPR and First Aid, 1991

Business Management, Certificate, Penn State University, 1992

Catering, 1993

Vocational Photography, 2001

Photography II, 2003

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SCI Cambridge Springs

**WORK HISTORY:**

Laubach Literacy-Instructor, 1984  
Clerk Typist II, 1984-1989  
Tutor, SAT Prep, 1985  
Aerobics Instructor, Activities Department, 1986-1998  
Teacher's Assistant, Project IM-Pact, 1988-1998  
Upholsterer, 1989-1998  
Grounds Keeper, 1998  
Teacher's Aid, Building Trades Department, 1998-1999  
Assistant to Photographer, 2003-05  
Assistant to Electrician, 2005-07  
Activities Department at Cambridge Springs, Administrative Assistant: 2007-present  
    Special Events Planning  
    Assisting Adapted Wellness Class  
    Video Taping Events  
    Planning and Implementing movies for facility  
    Assisting with contests and Craft Saturday  
    Trivia Contest on Channel 45

**PROGRAMS:**

1984: Vital Issues Project, Facilitator  
    Stress Group, Co-Leader  
1988: Time to Read  
1992: Tuberculosis Peer Education  
1997: HIV/AIDS Peer Education  
    House of Hope  
    Human Sexuality

**Groups:**

1994: Adjustment  
1997: Understanding Relationships  
1998: Breaking Barriers  
    Anger Management  
    After Care-Abuse  
    Long Termers Support Group: Created and Implemented  
        This group assisted women in coping with their incarceration and  
        provided speakers to address Youth at Risk and students  
2006: Thinking for a Change  
2013: Violence Prevention

**WORKSHOPS:**

1985: Poetry	1987: Vegetarian
1986: Calico Crafts	1989: Microwave Cooking
Painting	Crepes and Food Garnishing
1993: Interior Design	
Catering	

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**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

Project IM-Pact: SCI Muncy, Assisted in Planning and Implementation, 1985

One of the first of its kind within the Department of Corrections,  
this center was created to strengthen the bonds between mothers  
and their children.

“The Search For Signs of Intelligent Life In The Universe,” Cast Member of SCI Muncy’s first adaptation  
of a Broadway musical, 1993.

African American Women’s History Event      Talent Show, 1995

Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA:

Attended art exhibition and participated in a panel discussion focused on life sentenced women,  
facilitated by Artist, Mary Dewitt, 1991.

“I Face Myself, I Face You,” Participant, PA Prison Society Arts Program: 1995

Artist Mary Dewitt, Director. Exhibition at City Hall Courtyard, Philadelphia, PA.

“The Other Side,” Participant, Directed by Photographer Howard Zehr, photo-essay and traveling  
exhibit depicted life sentenced prisoners which led to the publication of Life Sentences, 1995.

“Forever After,” Participant, Documentary Produced by Judith Good, in association with The Victims  
Impact Program, 2001.

Canine Partners For Life: Puppy Handler and Trainer. 2002-present

SCI Cambridge Springs B-Unit Quilting Outreach Program, Participant and Instructor; Teaching skills  
and providing quilts to non-profits; 2007-present.

City On The Hill Choir, Director; 2007

Choral Instruction and Performance, 2008

Adapted Wellness Spring Talent Show, Vocal Director and Costume Designer, 2013

Impromptu Speech Competition, 2nd Place Winner, Topic: Politics, 2013

Unit Representative for B-Unit Progressive, 2012-14

PLA: Pennsylvania Lifers Association

Costume Designer and Seamstress, SCI Muncy Performances

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**PHYSICAL FITNESS:**

Volleyball  
Pickleball  
Aerobics  
Softball Umpire  
Weightlifting  
Speedball

**SPIRITUALITY:**

Being a Christian is not about religion, but about a relationship with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. While I have been serving a life sentence at SCI Muncy, I participated in Yokefellow Prison Fellowship, Bible Studies, Life in the Spirit, Midweek Prayer, Sunday morning and afternoon worship services, and I have also had the privilege to attend Catholic Mass.

Since being at SCI Cambridge Springs, I attend Saturday morning and Sunday evening services. I have been a part of a worship team called, "Gatekeepers." I have attended Women's Aglow International Fellowship, Mom's in Touch prayer group, independent Bible Studies, Spiritual Maturity Bible Study, Kairos Retreat and update-Metanoia Retreat. I currently sing on the Protestant Choir and have had the opportunity to direct the choir and am the worship leader. I attend United Fellowship Bible Studies on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month and have attended many speaking engagements and seminars through the religious services area. I also participated in a journaling seminar led by Sister Natalie Rossi.

**HEALTH REPORT (2018)**

I am healthy as an ox! However, I take high blood pressure and cholesterol medication. I have just the normal aches and pains that come with aging. I still exercise every day and work with the dogs. Plus, my detail is one that can be physically demanding.

**THE WOMAN I AM NOW:**

When I first came to prison, I was only a shell of a woman. I was broken, abused, had low self-esteem and I thought of myself as a victim. The years I have spent behind bars has revealed the person I am. I am no longer a victim but a victor. I am no longer broken, rather, I am mended. No longer do I have low self-esteem; I have strength, courage, and like a Phoenix rising out of the ashes, I have risen above circumstances.

I am a leader. I have ceased hiding in the shadows and embrace the front line. The face that had no voice, is no longer silenced, but speaks with truth and conviction. The woman I am now is proud of who she has become and now that woman who looks back at her in the mirror, can smile and say, "I love you and I celebrate you." As Helen Reddy sang, "I am woman. Hear me roar!" Today, I can tell you that I LOVE MYSELF AND THE LORD. I am not angry or mad at the world or the cards that I have been dealt. Being inside these walls has given me the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people from all walks of life. They have told me that I inspire them, but really, it is me who is inspired the most.