

# Beyond the Bars 2019

## Until She's Free

### Speaker Bios

**Afua Addo**, MHC, is Manager of Gender & Family Justice Initiatives and operates Project SAFE (Services and Fundamental Enhancements) for Criminalized Black women: addressing the needs of system-involved women with histories of domestic violence and/or sexual assault; partnered with Black Women's Blueprint & The National Black Women's Justice Institute funded by the U.S. Dept. of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. Afua is a trauma-focused consultant who facilitates the NYC Human Trafficking Intervention Court Task Force and sits on Close Rikers: Women & Girls Off Rikers Task Force. Afua provides national training & technical assistance on the intersections of trauma, race, gender & sexuality and trauma-informed provision to judges, legal stakeholders, law enforcement & direct service personnel. She facilitates a range of consulting projects at the Center on specialty court strategy, evidence-based practice, prosecutor-led diversion & service plan design and implementation.

**Barbara Allen**, Founder/director at Prison Families Anonymous

**Taína Asili** is a Puerto Rican singer, filmmaker and activist carrying on the tradition of her ancestors, fusing past and present struggles into one soulful and defiant voice. Taina Asili's music is a powerful force for social change. In January 2017, Taina performed at The Women's March on Washington. Her music video "No Es Mi Presidente," which she wrote and directed, premiered in Rolling Stone and received national acclaim. The Huffington Post named her in a list of in a list of "12 Freedom Fighting Bands To Get You Through the Trump Years", and Billboard Magazine featured her in a list of "11 Songs of Protest & Resistance by Latino Artists." Taina is a member of Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration in Albany, NY.

**Rose Berry** is a Black, Afro-Latinx, femme organizer that committed their life to the fight for liberation at the age of 16. They were born in Panama and grew up in Boston, where they organized for 11 years around immigrant and women's rights, and racial and socio-economic equity. As one of the founding members of a young women's organization called Reflect and Strengthen (R&S), they devoted their time as an organizational leader at R&S for 8 years before moving to Oakland and becoming a national organizer, fighting for the decriminalization of Black and Brown youth and for the liberation of all Black people. Rose currently serves as a Steering Committee Member with Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP), as well as a national member and board member with the C4 Board of BYP100. They are the former Black Immigrant Women and Girls Program Specialist with The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI). Rose has a deep commitment to social movement and has made a life-long pledge to invest in the work that will eradicate social inequality on a global scale. In addition to being a social justice freedom fighter, Rose's other passion is writing. As a poet, spoken word artist and

published author, they believe that art is not only a tool for social change, but a foundational piece of operative resistance.

**Janaé Bonsu** is an organizer and researcher from Columbia, SC, but lives and builds in Chicago. Janaé is honored to serve as the National Co-Director of BYP100, a national member-based organization of 18 to 35-year-old liberationists organizing through a Black Queer Feminist lens. She is also a PhD candidate in social work at the University of Illinois-Chicago whose research focuses on the relationship between Black women and femme's experiences of interpersonal and state violence, institutional trust, and safety-related empowerment. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @janaebonsu or contact her at janae@byp100.org.

**Luz Piedad Caicedo** Feminist anthropologist, with a master's degree in Inter-disciplinary Development Studies, Specialization in Political Science, and a Master's in History. She is a founding member and deputy director of Corporación Humanas, Colombia. She has been a university professor in history and social communication departments. In her work at Corporación Humanas, she has documented cases regarding the impact of armed conflicts on the life and safety of women in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Rwanda. She has led research projects regarding the impact of the demobilization of paramilitaries on women in receiving communities, access to justice for women, and monitoring the Colombian State's compliance with UN Resolution 1325. She has also been a researcher in projects regarding indigenous migration, sexual violence, citizen security, urban violence, and the situation of women deprived of liberty. She has co-authored various publications in Corporación Humanas.

**Johanna Calle** is the Director at the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice (NJAIJ), a coalition of close to 40 organizations that work on advocacy campaigns including expansion of access to driver's licenses and protecting families against deportation. Johanna's professional experience includes working as a Leadership Gifts Coordinator at the American Civil Liberties Union and participating in the ACLU of Northern California's MiACLU campaign, visiting various affiliates fighting for immigrants' rights. Johanna currently serves as a Trustee on the Hackensack Board of Education. She is also a Board Member at the Anti-Poverty Network. She graduated from The College of New Jersey with a double major in Sociology and Political Science, and a Masters in Criminal Justice from Rutgers University.

**Andrea Casamento** It all started with the arrest, by mistake, of his 18-year-old son back in 2007. Since she did not find an organization or public office that would assist her and her peers at the time, she decided to create **ACIFAD** (Relatives of Prisoners' Civil Association - for its initials in Spanish). ACIFAD is today a community-based organization in Buenos Aires, Argentina led by and dedicated to the needs of women and children with incarcerated loved ones. The organization serves as a reference point for and empowers the family members of imprisoned individuals through collective organizing. ACIFAD's model integrates three key strategies to advance the rights of the incarcerated and their families. First, it facilitates weekly support groups that provide peer-to-peer guidance and emotional support as families navigate the criminal justice process. Second, it engages in national and international advocacy to promote public awareness about the effects of the prison system on both women and children and

incarcerated individuals themselves. Finally, ACIFAD relies on a team of volunteer professionals, including lawyers, psychologists and social scientists, to assist individuals with legal and other inquiries related to the criminal justice system. Based on the contributions of the families that participate in the organization, ACIFAD has developed a dynamic model fueled by the needs and realities of those directly affected by the issue it tackles. Due to her life story, work and passion Andrea's work has been portrayed in several media articles, she has been invited to congresses and seminars in different Latin American Countries and, in 2017, she was selected to present at the [TEDx RiodelaPlata](#) event where she shared all this in front of 10.000 people. ACIFAD has also become a key CWS ally and leader in the region in advocating for the rights of children with incarcerated parents and an important and unique member of the CWS supported "[Plataforma NNAPES](#)".

**Shawnda Chapman Brown** is a lead program specialist in the Center for Youth Justice (CYJ) at the Vera Institute of Justice, where she supports ongoing work on a federally-funded initiative aimed at preventing and ending girls' incarceration in New York City and developing a model for ending the incarceration of girls nationally. Prior to joining Vera, Shawnda worked as a research analyst at the Institute for State and Local Governance at CUNY. With particular focus on marginalized and vulnerable populations, Shawnda has broad experience developing as well as implementing research, monitoring, and evaluation materials both domestically and internationally. Her expertise includes quantitative and qualitative study design, data collection, and analysis. Partially based on her own experiences, her work has focused on racial justice, gender justice, and understanding the ways girls of color get pushed into the criminal justice system. Shawnda is also the co-director of the Beyond the Bars Fellowship at the Center for Justice at Columbia University and a 2015-2016 fellowship alumna.

**Cori Chertoff** is a Sentencing Mitigation Specialist and Parole Advocate trained in restorative justice practices. Along with Kathy Boudin, Chertoff co-authored and developed, *Coming to Terms: The Longtermers' Responsibility Project* for The Osborne Association. The program facilitates a process through which people who have committed homicide-related offenses and are serving long sentences in New York State prisons can explore their specific responsibility in their crime, the ripple effect of the harm caused and their remorse. She facilitates these groups in the prisons and is currently training new facilitators with the intention of expanding the program to more prisons in New York State. Chertoff also trains and supervises mitigation specialists and sentencing advocates, attorneys and case managers for advocacy organizations and law firms.

**Gina Clayton-Johnson** is the Founder and Executive Director of Essie Justice Group (Essie). An award winning social entrepreneur, attorney, activist, and advocate for women, Gina launched Essie (named after her great grandmother, Essie Bailey) in 2014 to support and empower women with incarcerated loved ones. Gina's experiences as an organizer and civil rights activist in Los Angeles led her to pursue the law. She interned and studied under some of the country's most respected criminal justice reform organizations and leaders during her time at Harvard. After law school, Gina dedicated herself to working directly with low-income women and families impacted by the criminal justice system. In addition to a J.D. from Harvard Law

School, Gina holds a B.A. in American Studies and Ethnicity, with a minor in Education, from the University of Southern California.

**Erin Cloud** is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of Movement for Family Power, a non-profit dedicated to fighting the policing power of the Foster System. She is also a Team Leader and Supervising Attorney at Bronx Defenders where she has represented parents entangled in the Foster System for nearly a decade. In addition, she serves on several committees, such as the Black Mamas Matters Alliance, the Women Who Use Drugs Committee of the Office of Drug User Health at the NYS Dept. of Health's AIDS Institute, and the NYC Dept. of Health's Sexual and Reproductive Justice Community Engagement Group. She is the Co-Director of the Holistic Defense Externship Program at Columbia Law School, a mother, hails from the great city of Baltimore, and a current resident of the Bronx.

**The Conquerors**, Veronica Scaief, Barbara Scott and Jacqueline H Williams, met in 1998 in Harrison County Jail. They are from different parts of the Country, yet they met at one of the lowest points in their lives. The Conquerors started singing in jail and continued their ministry of music and testimony, traveling around the US, giving God the glory for their new lives, and giving hope to families and individuals who have been destroyed by drug use and separation from their loved ones because of incarceration. It's never too late to get back on track and do what God has for you to do. The Conquerors are proof of that. Call: (228) 365-0203 to contact the Conquerors.

**Wakumi Douglas**, As the daughter of an undocumented immigrant serving 30-to-life in a New Jersey prison, Tanisha "Wakumi" Douglas has dedicated her life to building leadership among youth most impacted by mass incarceration and other oppressive systems. She is the Co-founder and Executive Director of S.O.U.L. Sisters Leadership Collective and is based on Miami, FL. Prior to that, she was the Clinical Supervisor for the alternative-to-incarceration program for youth at the Center for Community Alternatives in Brooklyn, NY. She has worked as restorative justice circle keeper, social worker, community organizer, trainer and popular educator for organizations including the Dream Defenders, Harlem Children's Zone and Children's Defense Fund. She has a master's degree from Columbia University School of Social Work and bachelor's from Georgetown University. She has also studied with renowned African-centered holistic healers and holds womb wellness circles, soul sweats and spiritual ceremony.

**Soffiyah Elijah** is the Executive Director of Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ). Established in 2016 in NY, its mission is to support families of incarcerated people and people with criminal records, empower them as advocates and mobilize them to marshal their voting power to achieve systemic change. Prior to founding AFJ, Ms. Elijah was the Executive Director of the Correctional Association of NY (CANY) where she was the first woman and the first person of color to lead the 170 year old organization. Ms. Elijah has dedicated her life to human rights and social justice, and is a frequent presenter at national and international forums on criminal justice policy and human rights issues. Prior to leading CANY Ms. Elijah served as Deputy Director and Clinical Instructor at the Criminal Justice Institute at Harvard Law School. Before moving to Harvard, she was a member of the faculty and Director and Supervising Attorney of the Defender Clinic at the City University of New York School of Law. Ms. Elijah has also worked

as a Supervising Attorney at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, a Staff Attorney at the Juvenile Rights Division of the Legal Aid Society, and in private practice. She can be reached at [soffiyah@afj-ny.org](mailto:soffiyah@afj-ny.org)

**Greer Ellis** received her Bachelor's degree from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA and her Master's degree in Social Work from Fordham University. She is also SIFI Certified. Greer is an advocate for human justice. Currently she works as a Program Coordinator with the Center for Justice at Columbia University, where she conducts Restorative Justice Workshops for people who are arrested for misdemeanor offenses. Upon completion of the workshop, all charges are dismissed. Additionally, she facilitates weekly Peacemaking Circles and supervises interns from Columbia University School of Social Work. Greer has lectured at Columbia University and New York University School of Social Work. She moderates panels and speaks extensively on children of incarcerated parents, strengthening families and Restorative Justice. Having held several leadership positions at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, she now leads the Exodus Restorative Ministry, which supports and empowers those impacted by mass incarceration. She is married with two sons.

**Eve Ensler** is a Tony Award-winning playwright, author, performer, and activist. Her international phenomenon *The Vagina Monologues* has been published in 48 languages and performed in more than 140 countries. She is the author of the NYT bestseller *I Am an Emotional Creature*, the highly praised *In the Body of the World*, and many more. In May of 2019 Bloomsbury Publishing will release her new book, *The Apology*. She is founder of V-Day, the 20 year old global activist movement which has raised over 100 million dollars to end violence against all women and girls (cisgender, transgender and gender non-conforming), and the founder of One Billion Rising, the largest global mass action to end gender based violence in over 200 countries. She is a co-founder of the City of Joy, a revolutionary center for women survivors of violence in the DRC, along with Christine Schuler Deschryver and 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Denis Mukwege. She is one of Newsweek's "150 Women Who Changed the World" and the Guardian's "100 Most Influential Women."

**Woods Ervin** is currently in New York City and acts as an organizer with Critical Resistance, an organization committed to abolishing the Prison Industrial Complex. Woods is originally from Memphis Tennessee by way of Oakland, California. While in Oakland, Woods organized with the Transgender Gender-variant Intersex Justice Project, an organization that works with currently and formerly incarcerated transgender people. Woods is currently doing active work to dismantle the prison industrial complex and come up with transformative practices for addressing legacies of community and systemic harm.

**Shireen Essawi** A Palestinian woman. I studied law to defend human rights after I lived the occupation and violations of our rights. My brother was killed when he was 16 years old by Israeli soldiers. My brother Samer issawi was on a hunger strike for 287 days against his arrest by the israelis, I was arrested in 2010 and sentenced to one year for defending the rights of Palestinian prisoners. In 2014 she was again arrested and sentenced to four years with the same charge. Where my work focuses on defending Palestinian prisoners and sending reports on

torture and violations against them, especially children. I spent most of my time in solitary confinement..

**Kassandra Frederique** is New York State Director at the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA). Frederique previously ran the day-to-day operations of the statewide campaign to end New York's racially biased marijuana arrests, which cut the number of NYC marijuana arrests in half. Frederique also represented DPA as a member of Communities United for Police Reform, which focused on addressing Stop & Frisk and broader police reform/accountability measures bridging the gap between the War on Drugs and policing. In addition to working for policy solutions to reduce the harms associated with drug use, Frederique works with communities throughout the state to address and resolve the collateral consequences of the War on Drugs – state violence. As a co-author of Blueprint for a Public Health and Safety Approach to Drug Policy and as technical advisor to Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick's The Ithaca Plan, Frederique cultivates and mobilizes powerful coalitions in communities devastated by drug misuse and drug criminalization to develop municipal strategies to foster healthier and safer communities. Frederique's professional focus includes building a reparative justice framework that positions Black and Latinx leaders to create solutions that not only end and repair the harms of the drug war but also create accountability structures between policymakers and people who use drugs. She is currently working on an emerging body of work that discusses Black recreation and drug use. A native New Yorker, Frederique holds a M.S. in Social Work from Columbia University and earned a B.S. in Industrial Labor Relations at Cornell University.

**Selina Fulford**, has been an advocate for social justice since she returned to society in 2000, working to end the incarceration of women and girls. She has been supporting our homeless population for over 18 years and is currently a Social Worker in the NYC homeless shelter system. Selina has earned 3 Master's degrees and is inspired to obtain a PHD in Social Work.

**The Graduates**, founded in 2012, is a performance ensemble composed of four formerly incarcerated women from Louisiana, who were former members of the 23-year-old Drama Club at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) in St. Gabriel: Taece Defillo, Carry Emerson, Fox Rich and Jacqueline H Williams. The Graduates and the LCIW Drama Club are co-directed by Kathy Randels of ArtSpot Productions and Ausetua AmorAmenkum of Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective and co-produced by these two companies. Their performances focus on the experiences that women from Louisiana have when they interact with the prison system and are designed to move and motivate audiences to become active in helping to end mass incarceration in Louisiana. We are Robert Rauschenberg Racial Justice Fellows and our work has been supported by Alternate ROOTS, The Mellon Foundation, and Emerging Philanthropists of New Orleans. Visit [www.thegraduates.net](http://www.thegraduates.net) and our *Won't Bow Down!* Facebook page for more information.

**Joss Greene** studies gender, race, and punishment as a PhD student in Sociology at Columbia University. He's developed his abolitionist theory and practice as a volunteer with Justice Now, the TGI Justice Project, and the Parole Preparation Project, as well as through his work as a former core collective member with the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. He is a primary advocate for

his chosen family member, a phenomenal human currently enduring the violence of NY state prison.

**Arissa Hall** is a born and raised New Yorker, mama, wife and sister-friend who is passionate about realizing collective freedom dreams and base building. These passions and commitments have been inspired by both her personal and professional experiences, while guided through an Black queer feminist lens. Currently, she directs the work of National Bail Out- a collective of Black organizers, communicators and culture workers, committed to ending cash bail and pre-trial detention through the use of tactical bail outs and other strategic interventions. Her leadership in this collective helped birth the National Black Mama's Bail Out which resulted in the release of over 240 Black mothers and caregivers in addition to over 100 more Black folks in subsequent bail outs and campaigns. Arissa is your around the way freedom fighter who is committed to resisting, intervening and creating until liberation. Arissa is also a founding member of the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), NYC chapter where she played an integral part in building the chapter as a founding Membership Co-Chair and Social Chair.

**DeAnna R. Hoskins** is President & CEO of JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA). Dedicated to cutting the U.S. correctional population in #halfby2030, JLUSA empowers people most affected by the criminal justice system to drive reform. DeAnna is a nationally recognized leader and a formerly incarcerated person with experience as an advocate and policy expert at the local, state, and federal level. Prior to joining JLUSA as its President and CEO, DeAnna served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the U.S. Department of Justice, managing the Second Chance Act portfolio and serving as Deputy Director of the Federal Inter-Agency Reentry Council. Before that, she served as a county Director of Reentry in her home state of Ohio. DeAnna has always worked alongside advocates who have been impacted by incarceration, and knows that setting bold goals and investing in the leadership of directly impacted people is a necessary component of impactful, values-driven reform. Twitter: @MzDeHoskins.

**Kiara Jean** is a 17- year old Haitian-Bahamian youth from North Miami, FL currently attending Penn Foster, an online-based high school. Kiara enjoys advocating for the rights of Black Girls and has been a part of S.O.U.L Sisters Leadership Collective's Sisterhood Academy and the Youth Leaders Board program where she advocates for changes in her community. Kiara feels strongly about the importance of the #METOO Movement because she feels that girls shouldn't go through sexual abuse alone and is also interested in issues surrounding the deportation of Haitian Immigrants. Kiara enjoys dancing and singing and is excited for the future where her voice will be heard on different issues affecting women of color.

**Andrea James J.D.** is the Founder and Executive Director of the National Council For Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, Founder of Families for Justice as Healing, author of Upper Bunkies Unite: And Other Thoughts on the Politics of Mass Incarceration, a 2015 Soros Justice Fellow, and recipient of the 2016 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights award. As a former criminal defense attorney and a formerly incarcerated women Andrea shares her personal and professional experiences to raise awareness of the affect of incarceration of women on themselves, their children and communities. Her work is focused on ending

incarceration of women and girls as we know it today, and contributing to the shift to a justice system led by community solutions.

**Kirk Anthony James** is a writer, educator, clinician, and speaker on issues pertaining to social justice. His research focuses on deconstructing issues of mass incarceration, particularly as they pertain to trauma, cognitive development, and culpability. He examines systems that perpetuate racial injustice within the criminal justice system. Dr. James founded and co-leads EVOLVE, an organization that uses transformative education to end mass incarceration. His doctoral dissertation, “The Invisible Epidemic in Social Work Academia,” examined the complex phenomena of mass incarceration through a historical and contemporary analysis, and developed curricula for master’s level students to increase awareness, activism, and holistic practice. Courses developed from his dissertation have been implemented at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. During his doctoral studies, Dr. James developed and directed the [Goldring Reentry Initiative](#) (GRI). The GRI aims to reduce recidivism for individuals transitioning from Philadelphia jails, and to train clinical and macro-level social work students to work with incarcerated individuals before and after release. The GRI developed “Breaking Down Walls,” an annual conference for activists, practitioners, and community members in Philadelphia that aims to create a dynamic dialogue and to inform a socially just response to one of the greatest social injustice issues of our generation. Dr. James earned his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in 2013. He is formerly incarcerated, having been entrapped as teenager and sentenced to life in prison under the New York State Rockefeller Drug Laws.

**Janetta Johnson** is an Afro-American trans woman who was raised in Tampa, Florida. She is a healer through her work at the Transgender Gender Variant and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project and facilitator invested in decolonizing spaces. Since 2006, she has been organizing around the intersections of violence she and her trans and gender non-conforming communities of color face developing opportunities for formerly incarceration black trans GNC non binary coming out of jails and prisons and other locked facilities working towards. She has been both politicized and mentored by Miss Major who has been deeply influential in her life, and she is honored to have accepted Miss Major’s former position as Executive Director of the TGI Justice Project. The spiritual force that drives her to dismantle the violent systems that black trans people are subjected to and oppressed by is one that awakens me. I use she/her pronouns. Johnson, is one of the founders of the first ever Transgender Cultural District communities of color, trans people, the working class, and the poor.

**Mrs. Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin** joined the Housing Authority in 2015, her current role is Chief of Housing Community Activities. This position gives her an opportunity to work on systemic change by reunifying formerly incarcerated people with their families. This unique program is one of the first across the United States and is the lead for duplication across the country. Prior to her current role Mrs. Johnson-Peterkin was the Director of Operations for Re-Entry at the Women's Prison Association for ten years, a service and advocacy organization committed to helping women with criminal justice histories realize new possibilities for themselves and their families. Mrs. Johnson Peterkin and her peers published an article in the Race/Ethnicity Journal Titled [Life Capacity Beyond Reentry: A Critical Examination of Racism](#)



and Prisoner Reentry Reform in the US. Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin holds certification in various training from Orbis Partners, Inc. (Ottawa, Ontario) and the National Institute of Corrections. These certifications provide evidence-based approaches for people with criminal justice involvement and working with challenged populations. Orbis projects and philosophy of core practices are to engage, assess, enhance motivation, and implement evidence-based practices. The model's goal is to change the way we work with people, using proven approaches. Mrs. Johnson-Peterkin received her Masters degree in Social Work from Hunter College. She has received honors from the Correctional Association of New York, Citizens Against Recidivism, and the NAACP. Mrs. Johnson-Peterkin is an active alumna and Board Member of the College and Community Fellowship program where the mission is to help formerly incarcerated women achieve their goals through higher education. Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin has been described as the "Ambassador of Freedom".

**Mariame Kaba** is an organizer, educator and curator who is active in movements for racial, gender, and transformative justice. She is the founder and director of Project NIA, a grassroots organization with a vision to end youth incarceration. She has co-founded multiple organizations and projects over the years including We Charge Genocide, the Chicago Freedom School, the Chicago Taskforce on Violence against Girls and Young Women, Love & Protect and most recently Survived & Punished. Mariame is also a co-organizer of the Just Practice Collaborative, a training and mentoring group focused on sustaining a community of practitioners that provide community-based accountability and support structures for all parties involved with incidents and patterns of sexual, domestic, relationship, and intimate community violence. She is on the advisory boards of the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, Critical Resistance and the Chicago Community Bond Fund. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications including *The Nation Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *In These Times*, *Teen Vogue*, *The New Inquiry* and more. She runs Prison Culture blog. Mariame's work has been recognized with several honors and awards. As a Researcher in Residence, Mariame Kaba will work with Andrea J. Ritchie, fellow Researcher in Residence, on a new SJI initiative, *Interrupting Criminalization: Research in Action*. For more on this work, visit the Interrupting Criminalization page.

**Debbie Kilroy** After her release from prison in 1992, Debbie Kilroy established Sisters Inside to fight for the human rights of women in prison and to address gaps in services available to women and their children. Since then, Debbie has completed tertiary qualifications in social work, forensic mental health and law. Debbie is the first and only former prisoner to be admitted as a legal practitioner in Queensland. As the Chief Executive Officer of Sisters Inside, Debbie is a tireless advocate for the rights and interests of women and actively works to end violence and dismantle the prison industry. Debbie has spearheaded numerous ground-breaking programs to break the cycle of imprisonment. Debbie uses her position to empower criminalised women and girls to have their voices, interests and priorities heard. Debbie is passionate about supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls to become leaders. In 2013, Debbie opened her own legal practice that sits alongside Sisters Inside. The law firm practices predominantly in criminal and child protection law. Debbie was awarded the Order of Australia in 2003 for her work with criminalised and imprisoned women and girls and the Australian Human Rights Award in 2004. Debbie was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2013 and was an

Australian of the Year Finalist for Queensland in 2016. Debbie is currently a member of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council and sits on various committees relating to law and social matters. Debbie is a sought after speaker at national and international conferences and events.

**Jane kuria** is the Executive Director of Faraja Foundation, a Non- Profit organization incorporated under the Companies Act (CAP .486) of the laws of Kenya that works on rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and children in conflict with the law in a rights –based approach through capacity development, advocacy, and community adaptation interventions. Faraja is a Kiswahili word in Kenya’s national language that means consolation, encouragement & empowerment. Ms. Jane is a social transformation professional with over 20 years of engagement with the education, human rights, and governance and democracy fields among others. Since 2009- Jane has been at the helm of Faraja Foundation, has seen life’s of many of those incarcerated and others that have served their terms transformed through interventions like behavior change & skills training, psychosocial support, provision of scholarships to continue with education, counseling, mentorship, business startup skills & support in starting of small businesses among many others. Jane is also a gazetted member of the discharge board in the only girls correctional facility in Kenya, participates in many other discharge boards in the country. In 2018, Jane was recognized for the pivotal role in the criminal justice field through the correctional department and awarded a head of state commendation (HSC) by the president of the republic of Kenya. Besides her work at Faraja foundation, Ms. Jane is a third year PhD candidate at a local university in Kenya with an interest in researching on “Social Entrepreneurship and Reintegration of Ex-offenders in Kenya”.

**Meryleen Mena** is a Dominican American New Yorker, a scholar and activist, and a graduate of Barnard College. She completed her PhD in cultural anthropology and has a Graduate Certificate from the Women and Gender Studies department from the University of Colorado Boulder. With support from the Ruth Landes Memorial Research Fund, she conducted fieldwork for her dissertation research in São Paulo, Brazil from 2015-2017. In collaboration with various prisoner advocacy organizations, Meryleen documented institutional violence against pre-trial detainees and provided legal and humane support to incarcerated cisgender women and gender non-conforming people. She has taught courses on race, class, gender, and violence in the context of Latin America. She is an academic program coordinator for the Borough of Manhattan Community College-CUNY.

**Neta-Rie Mabo** is a proud Piadram/Munbarra woman and the Youth Programs Manager at Sisters Inside Inc. Sisters Inside is an independent community organisation that exists to advocate for the collective human rights of women and girls affected by the criminal legal system. Neta-Rie has over 8 years' experience working with girls affected by criminalisation and imprisonment. Neta-Rie is an accomplished visual artist and coordinates the Sisters Inside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Groups (in the community and at Brisbane Youth Detention Centre). Neta-Rie is a prison abolitionist and she is passionate about empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls to find their voice.

**RJ Maccani**, LMSW, has been active in social and environmental justice movements since the late '90s. His work over the past decade has been in the fields of transformative justice, somatic coaching, and creative arts production. RJ is the Assistant Director of Intervention for Common Justice in Brooklyn, supporting people who have caused harm to take accountability and transform their behavior. He is also a lead teacher and board member for Generative Somatics, providing trauma healing and embodied leadership coaching to social and environmental justice organizers throughout the country. As a co-founder of the Challenging Male Supremacy Project and leadership team member for generationFIVE, RJ's transformative justice work has focused on addressing violence against women, queer and trans people, and children.

**Sheena Meade**, Sheena serves as the Director of Strategic Partnerships and initiative for Florida Rights Restoration Coalition. Sheena has over 20 years of community and organizing experience, working from political campaign to issue campaigns on a local, state and national level. In 2016 she ran for a State house seat to amplify the issues of women and Returning Citizens that were not being address in Florida state laws and policies. Sheena recently served as a Executive board member of The Second Chance ballot initiative campaign that restored the voting rights to 1.4 million Returning Citizens in Florida . She married to fellow activist Desmond Meade and they have 5 beautiful children.

**Chastity Michel** is a community outreach organizer for Guns Down Inc and the Program Associate for Hope House NYC, which are non profit organizations that directly service communities impacted by incarceration. She is also the co-founder of Lexis Promise, an initiative that provides a full prom experience for the child of an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parent. As the child of a formerly incarcerated parent, her father, Chastity understands the unique set of issues this adversity creates for families, and the remedy needed to reverse the emotional, psychological, and psychical damage. Chastity has been a participant on panels addressing the impact of parental incarceration and impacted families as well as a speaker at universities such as Columbia and Fordham. She is an advocate for change within the community of incarcerated and impacted individuals and families. Through her relationship with her father and her own diligent research she has developed a unique skill set and insight that help guide her through her path to cultivate change and bring awareness surrounding these issues. Chastity understands it is time to change the narrative and is ready to take stand.

**Frantz Michel** is the co- founder and Executive Director of Guns Down Inc, a community development and non profit organization whose mission is to reduce the cycle of gun-related crimes through education and economic empowerment. He is a motivational speaker and social activist with a mission to reverse the systematic adversities faced in urban communities. After being sentenced to life twice, Frantz was granted clemency by President Obama on November 22, 2016, serving 15 years in federal prison. The time he spent incarcerated gave him a new perspective and he knew he had to be the change he wanted to see. President Obama's pardon gave Frantz the opportunity to help rebuild the communities he once help to destroy and since he returned to society he hit the ground running. Frantz has created innovative programming, community based events, and community outreach and networks through Guns Down Inc. He has spoken at Universities such as Columbia and Fordham as well as high schools throughout the

city, captivating young women and men with his unique insight on how to use their adversities as fuel for a vehicle to change. As someone who experienced both sides of the issues we face as a community, Frantz is gifted the ability to be relatable, perceptive, and charismatic. This unique set of characteristics give him the opportunity to cultivate change. Opportunity is the major thing lacking in urban communities, and it is the one thing Frantz strives to give back to the community. With opportunity we all prevail.

**Professor Kate Mogulescu** is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Law and directs the Criminal Defense & Advocacy Clinic. Her work and scholarship focus largely on gender and reentry issues in the criminal legal system, with special attention to human trafficking and sex work. The Criminal Defense & Advocacy Clinic represents individuals facing misdemeanor prostitution and other charges in both traditional and diversion courts in New York City. Clinic clients are also survivors of human trafficking and other criminalized victims of gender-based violence seeking post-conviction relief. Prior to joining the faculty at Brooklyn Law School, Professor Mogulescu worked as a public defender at The Legal Aid Society for 14 years. In 2011, she created the Exploitation Intervention Project to specifically represent both victims of exploitation and sex workers facing prosecution. She also founded and continues to lead the Survivor Reentry Project at the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence, a national training and technical assistance initiative on post-conviction advocacy for survivors of trafficking. Professor Mogulescu has served as a speaker and specialist on human trafficking for the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section in India, and has also testified before the New York City Council, the New York State Legislature, and the United Nations Human Rights Committee. She regularly trains public defenders, prosecutors, and other members of the criminal justice community in best practices, and advocates extensively against the criminalization of vulnerable and exploited people. She is a member of the Freedom Network and on the steering committee of the New York Anti-Trafficking Network. Her critical analysis of human trafficking policy and discourse has been published in the Florida Law Review, the CUNY Law Review, and the Anti-Trafficking Review. She has also been widely featured in popular media, including an op-ed in The New York Times in 2014 titled “The Super Bowl and Sex Trafficking,” and she has been profiled in The Guardian and The Village Voice.

**Justine Moore**, a native of Brooklyn, NY, served 16 years of a 20-year sentence with an anticipated 10 years supervised release, in the federal prison for women in Danbury, Connecticut. She was released in December 24, 2013. Upon reentry and as a result of her successful completion of the Star Program, her 10 year supervised release was reduced to one year and she has since fully ended custody and supervision by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Even prior to her release from prison Ms. Moore decided she needed to make a difference while incarcerated and she participated in the CHOICES program where incarcerated women shared their life experiences with students from the local high schools. Ms. Moore also was part of a group of women in the prison who began to have discussions about the criminal justice system and how they could use their expertise to help create change. Upon release Ms. Moore began sharing her story and organizing formerly incarcerated women as a co-founding member of The National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls. Currently she

serves as the Director of Participatory Defense for The National Council and she continues her work to assure that her voice is included in discussions on policy about what incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women need, and to be a part of meaningful change toward ending incarceration of women and girls.

**Julia Myron** is a human rights advocate from Lagos, Nigeria. In 2017, she founded "The Myron Center For Peace and Justice" a Non Governmental Organization that advocates for justice within the Nigerian justice system as well as peace and rule of law. She previously worked as a youth community organizer with Amnesty International Lagos, where she mobilized youths on causes such as torture and wrongful arrests in Nigeria. She was recognized by Amnesty International USA as "Your Moment is Our Movement activist" for her advocacy work in Lagos (2015). Julia Myron is also a Senior at the University of North Florida and she has participated in various projects on criminal justice reform and research at her institution.

**Teresa Njoroge** is a Social and Criminal justice Reforms influencer, System Change and Social Entrepreneur, with a background in Banking and Finance, a career she held for 10 years, prior to joining the social justice movement. After being arrested for a crime that she did not commit, Teresa was incarcerated in Langata Women's Maximum Prison, where she witnessed despondency, poverty and desperation. Teresa was then enthused to devote her life to Clean Start, a social enterprise which she co-founded with Joss Carruthers. Clean Start's role fundamentally is equipping and empowering women, girls and children; to prepare for the forbidding journey of reintegration back into society after prison, in Kenya. She is a TED Women 2017 Speaker and the African Female Leader 2018 by The Global Thinkers Forum, UK, 2018. Women and Girls Lead Global have recognized Clean Start's efforts as Outstanding advocates for marginalized groups. She is also a mother of two, lovely, world change-makers, Umaa Njoroge and Uhuru Njoroge.

**Jessica Nowlan** is the Executive Director of the Young Women's Freedom Center and co-founder of the Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition. She is deeply committed to the liberation and freedom of women and girls and has spent the majority of her career working to develop and implement innovative programming and strategies based on the principles that those most impacted must be at the forefront of decision making about their own lives. Her own experience as a young person navigating the juvenile justice system, as a single mother dealing with poverty, homelessness, and intimate partner violence, coupled with her experience in the field, propels her work to advance the field. Prior to her current role, Jessica worked for several years as a Social Entrepreneur and as a consultant to organizations working with women and girls and at the intersections of violence, poverty, racial justice, incarceration/ re-entry and workforce development. Jessica is a Bay Area native and currently lives in Oakland with her youngest sons.

**Alejandra Pablos** is an immigrant and reproductive rights community organizer. Alejandra is currently organizing her own deportation defense campaign called "KeepAleFree", made of sister friends, organizers and creators. On December 11th 2018 she was ordered deported by an immigration judge and is appealing that decision. Alongside of community members, and with

Mijente, Alejandra will be asking the governor of Arizona for a pardon, in order to help her fight this deportation order. Alejandra was recently detained by Immigration Customs Enforcement for 43 days and communities nationwide organized to bring her home after she was granted a bond. In both her professional and personal roles, Alejandra focuses on on "community defense" education and advocacy by sharing her own personal story of accessing full reproductive healthcare and about navigating the immigration system that is criminalizing immigrant folks and how to fight back. Growing up in Arizona has informed her activism around immigration and mass incarceration. She is story-teller with We Testify where she shares her abortion story as a form of resistance and liberation. She is also a member of Mijente, a national political home for organizers, and has worked with many immigrant rights and prison abolition organizers throughout the country.

**Kim Pate** was appointed to the Senate of Canada on November 10, 2016. First and foremost, the mother of Michael and Madison, she is also a nationally renowned advocate who has spent the last 35 years working in and around the legal and penal systems of Canada, with and on behalf of some of the most marginalized, victimized, criminalized and institutionalized — particularly imprisoned youth, men and women.

**Marlon Peterson** hosts the Decarcerated Podcast and is an inaugural Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity. Ebony Magazine has named Marlon one of America's 100 most influential and inspiring leaders in the Black community. He is also an Aspen Ideas Festival Scholar, and a Spring 2019 TED Resident. His TED Talk, [Am I Not Human? A Call for Criminal Justice Reform](#), has over 1 million views. He is also the founder and chief re-imaginer of The Precedential Group, a social justice consulting firm, and a 2015 recipient of the Soros Justice Fellowship. He is working on his book, a memoir-manifesto.

**A Scribe Called Quess?** is a poet, educator, actor, activist, and playwright. He is a founding member of Slam New Orleans, Louisiana's national championship winning slam poetry team in 2010, 2012 and 2013. His accomplishments earned him honors from the Mayor of New Orleans and City Council. He has written for and acted in plays with Junebug Productions, ArtSpot Productions, Urban Bush Women, Contemporary Arts Center's DISTILLERY residency and other esteemed outfits. He is also a founder and lead organizer of Take Em Down NOLA, a multicultural, multigenerational coalition of organizers committed to the removal of White Supremacist symbols in New Orleans. He is a 2018 Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award recipient along with non-profit Policy Link for their forthcoming production, We the 100 Million, lifting up the lives of the 100 Millions Americans living near or in poverty. His second book of poetry, *Sleeper Cell*, is on sale now.

**Queens of the Nation** are the women of the indigenous culture of New Orleans, the Black masking Indians known worldwide as the Mardi Gras Indians.

**Jessica Raven** is a queer mother, community organizer, and Executive Director of the Audre Lorde Project (ALP). Before joining ALP, she served as the Executive Director of DC-based grassroots organization Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS). In her role at CASS, Jessica spearheaded advocacy to develop comprehensive, non-criminal policy solutions to street

harassment, defined for the first time in U.S. law to include all forms of sexual, gendered, and identity-based harassment. She also worked with community to build educational programs like Rethink Masculinity, a peer-led program for masculine-identifying people to learn to practice healthy boundaries, emotional labor, and consent, as well as the Safe Bar Collective program to equip nightlife staff with strategies for intervening to stop harassment and prevent violence, including a peer-led employment program supporting LGBTQIA+ people in the sex trades with restaurant job skills and access to employment opportunities in nightlife. She has been a core organizer of the DecrimNow DC campaign to end the criminalization of the sex trades, and she currently serves on the DecrimNow NY steering committee.

**Louis Reed** is the National Organizer for #Cut50. He brings to #Cut50 years of experience in government, criminal justice expertise, policy advocacy, business, and public health. Louis holds degrees in criminal justice and psychology, and is a board-certified addictions counselor and licensed alcohol & addictions practitioner. Louis's experience in government includes conceptualizing and serving as director of the Mayor's Office for Reentry Affairs in the City of Bridgeport, CT. There, he developed systems and practices for the City to coordinate employment, housing, access to treatment, and other services for all persons impacted by the criminal justice system both in and returning to the City after incarceration. His policy reform experience includes working with the Connecticut legislature for successful enactment of legislation related to reforms to pretrial practices, expanding access to licenses for people living with criminal records, limiting asset forfeiture practices by law enforcement, and strengthening reentry practices and services for people returning from prison. Louis is a Huffington Post contributor on Prison Traumatic Stress Disorder, has appeared on C-SPAN and MSNBC, and in the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and other publications. He has also consulted for the White House, United States Department of Justice, Fortune® 100 Corporations, private, state and federal agencies, and is a 2017 JustLeadershipUSA fellow.

At age 7 **Remington Richardson** was orphaned by incarceration. His father sentenced to 61years and mother 7years. Appointments by his parents as man of the house Remington was responsible for assisting his grandmother in the care of his 3 younger brothers. As One Love, #FoxandRob who clear understands the collateral consequences for mass incarceration, Remington's life's motto became "success is the best revenge". Never losing site of the family's goal of reunification Mr. Richardson used his pain to full his dreams and advance his family's mission. As a second year dental school student at MeHarry Medical college, elected to serve as Mr. Meharry 2018-19, This young man is using his life to be an example. Not just for his 5 brothers, but for the greater community of children dealing with the impact of losing a parent to prison to remember that despite their circumstances they can make it if they try.

**Sharon Richardson**, a “returning citizen” is the Founder and Executive Director of Reentry Rocks a nonprofit organization assisting women returning citizens. She also runs an Entrepreneur Culinary Internship program that runs 12 weeks quarterly. She is also a former Reentry Specialist at Steps To End Family Violence that is specifically designed to meet the unique and complex needs of survivors of intimate partner violence and other forms of gender based violence. While serving 20 years to life for a domestic violence case Ms. Richardson completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Education in accordance with the standards of the

College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy. Ms. Richardson also obtained her Associate Degree in Social Sciences and her Bachelor Degree in Sociology. Ms. Richardson is also founder and C.E.O of Just Soul Catering, a justice-involved soul food catering company. Just Soul Catering gained momentum after winning two Business Pitch competitions with Defy Ventures, all while managing the exploding growth of the business. Just Soul Catering has received a Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Certification and was also awarded a grant from the New York City Department of Correction to conduct a 12-week entrepreneurship program for young incarcerated men interested in starting their own business. Most recently, Just Soul was a winner of a \$30,000 award through the 2018 Squarespace and New York Knicks sponsored "Make it Awards". She uses her personal history to inform her professional work. Her inspirational story and compelling style has also made her an effective speaker and educator. Ms. Richardson has presented on issues of domestic violence at Columbia Law School, Criminal Justice Action Network, CUNY Law School Workshops on Domestic Violence, and Public Trainings on Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act with the Correctional Association of NY. She also participated at a public screening of 'Crime after Crime', was a panelist at Sakhi conference on Domestic violence, was a guest on WBAI's Talkback with Hugh Hamilton 99.5FM. Most recently she was profiled in Cherry Bombe magazine and delivered a TED Talk for their 2018 Cherry Bombe Jubilee.

**Whitney Richards-Calathes** is a community researcher and transformative justice practitioner. For over ten years she has worked on issues that she believes deeply in and that inspire her: young women's leadership development, educational access, prison abolition, racial justice, and gender equity. She is also receiving her PhD from The Graduate Center at The City University of New York. She is writing her dissertation on how the criminal punishment system impacts the relationships Black women have with each other. Her work has taken her to all parts of New York City, Los Angeles, Toronto, San Diego, Detroit, Atlanta, Chicago, Durham, and the Bay Area. Whitney was born and raised in The Bronx.

**Beth E. Richie** is Head of the Department of Criminology, Law and Justice and Professor of African American Studies at The University of Illinois at Chicago. The emphasis of her scholarly and activist work has been on the ways that race/ethnicity and social position affect women's experience of violence and incarceration, focusing on the experiences of African American battered women and sexual assault survivors. Dr. Richie is the author of *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence and America's PrisonNation* (NYU Press, 2012) and numerous articles concerning Black feminism and gender violence, race and criminal justice policy, and the social dynamics around issues of sexuality, prison abolition, and grassroots organizations in African American Communities. Her earlier book *Compelled to Crime: the Gender Entrapment of Black Battered Women*, is taught in many college courses and is cited in the popular press for its original arguments concerning race, gender and crime. Dr. Richie's work has been supported by grants from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Ford Foundation, and The National Institute for Justice and The National Institute of Corrections. She has been awarded the Audre Lorde Legacy Award from the Union Institute, The Advocacy Award from the US Department of Health and Human Services, and The Visionary Award from the Violence Intervention Project and the UIC Woman of the Year Award. Dr. Richie is a board member of many organizations



and a founding member of INCITE!: Women of Color Against Violence. In 2013 she was awarded an Honorary Degree from the City University of New York Law School.

**Sheila Rule** is co-founder of the Think Outside the Cell Foundation, which has published books, produced a short documentary and sponsored conferences in its effort to end the stigma of incarceration. Sheila was a journalist at The New York Times for more than 30 years, including a seven-year stint as a foreign correspondent in Africa and Europe. She was a senior editor when she retired in order to fully embrace her passion for criminal justice reform.

**Jose Hamza Saldana** is the Director of RAPP, The Release Aging People in Prison Campaign. He is formerly incarcerated. Roughly 14-months ago he was released from Green Haven Correctional Facility after a total of 38-years of incarceration. He accredits his release to the organizing efforts and advocacy of RAPP. As his brother was driving him past the prison grounds, Jose thought about the comrades who had passed away during the decades and the comrades he was leaving behind. He vowed that he would not go on with his life as if they never existed as if they didn't exist. Shortly after his release, he reported to RAPP's co-founder and Lead Organizer, Mujahid Farid, for duty - to be a part of this grassroots campaign advocating for genuine parole justice for all incarcerated men and women in New York State prisons.

**Ashley C. Sawyer** is the Director of Policy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). Ashley's life work is situated where education justice and the criminal legal system collide, she is committed to dismantling prisons and other forms of state violence. At GGE, Ashley ensures that the priorities of girls and non-binary youth are reflected in city and state policy. Ashley was previously a staff attorney at Youth Represent, she worked alongside young people on civil legal issues. She led the reentry legal representation for girls and female-identified youth incarcerated on Rikers Island. Ashley was previously a Stoneleigh Emerging Leader Fellow at the Education Law Center-PA, where she did education policy projects and special education litigation on behalf of Philadelphia's incarcerated youth, with an emphasis on supporting Black girls. She is a Howard University School of Law and a Douglass College-Rutgers University alumna. Ashley is an alumna of the NJJN-Youth Justice Leadership Institute.

Parentless at 16 and pushed out of the school system, **Phal Sok** wound up in the juvenile justice system to be tried as an adult. After 16 years inside, he became one of the first and few to benefit from enacted reforms and won early release. But as an immigrant, he was taken into immigration custody and forced to navigate the system without an attorney. Nearly a year later, he was released but taken back in for final deportation just months later. He managed his release once again, but uncertain of his future, he became a community leader, fighting for the marginalized, pushing his experience as a tool for the community, building a better tomorrow for all. Through his work, the community, and many elected officials' support, he was pardoned by Governor Brown, closing his deportation case. He continues to organize with the Youth Justice Coalition and JusticeLA.

**Nkechi Taifa** is President and CEO of The Taifa Group, LLC. She convenes and directs the Justice Roundtable, an advocacy coalition advancing progressive justice system transformation, and serves as Senior Fellow for the Center of Justice at Columbia University. She serves on the board of the Corrections Information Council, which provides oversight over District of Columbia residents imprisoned throughout the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Taifa served as Advocacy Director for Criminal Justice at the Open Society Foundations for 16 years, focusing on federal sentencing reform, law enforcement accountability, prison reform, reentry, executive clemency, and racial justice. Over the course of her career she has also served as legislative and policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union and the Women's Legal Defense Fund; founding director of Howard University School of Law's award-winning Equal Justice Program; staff attorney for the National Prison Project; Office Manager and Network Organizer for the Washington Office on Africa; as a private practitioner representing adult and youth clients; and as a first grade teacher. Taifa has spoken extensively across the country on justice reform and human rights issues, and has testified before the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, the Council of the District of Columbia and the American Bar Association Justice Kennedy Commission. She has served on the boards of numerous organizations; as consultant to various groups and projects; and as an appointed commissioner and chair of the District of Columbia Commission on Human Rights. A native Washingtonian, Nkechi Taifa received her Juris Doctorate from George Washington University Law School, and B.A. from Howard University.

**Farah Tanis** is a transnational feminist and co-founder, Executive Director of Black Women's Blueprint working at the grassroots to address the spectrum of sexual violence against women and girls in Black/African American communities, and working with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the nation on issues of gender, race, sexuality, anti-violence policy and practice. Tanis launched and Chairs the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the U.S. ever to focus on Black women and their historical and contemporary experiences with sexual assault. She is founder and is lead curator at the Museum of Women's Resistance (MoWRe), which in 2013 became internationally recognized as a Site of Conscience. Tanis created Mother Tongue Monologues, a theatrical and multimedia art vehicle for addressing Black sexual politics in African American, African, Afro-Caribbean communities. Tanis is a 2012 U.S. Human Rights Institute Fellow (USHRN) and a member of the Task Force on the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Tanis is the recipient of several awards for her human rights work, including a 2014 Feminist Majority Foundation and Ms. Magazine Wonder Award.

**María Elena Torre**, PhD, is the founding Director of The Public Science Project and a faculty member in Critical Psychology and Urban Education at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Over 20 years ago, she had the incredible fortune to join Kathy Boudin, Cheryl Wilkins, Judy Clark, Iris Bowen, Migdalia Martinez, Pam Smart, Donna Hylton, and Michelle Fine as a co-researcher on *Changing Minds: The Impact of College on a Maximum Security Prison*. María has been engaged in critical participatory action research ever since, nationally and internationally, with communities in neighborhoods, schools, prisons, and community-based organizations seeking structural justice. Her work introduced the concept of 'participatory contact zones' to collaborative research, and she continues to be interested in how democratic methodologies, radical inclusion, and a praxis of solidarity can inform a public science for the public good.

**Truthworker Theatre Company** is a social justice based, hip-hop theatre company founded and directed by Samara Gaev, for high school and college-aged youth in Brooklyn, NY. Providing youth leadership programming, professional stipends, and rigorous artistic training; Truthworker raises awareness and catalyzes action for racial, gender, and economic justice. Young visionaries directly impacted by mass incarceration write and perform original productions that interrogate the prison industrial complex, challenge systems of oppression, invite healing dialogue, and foster artistic interventions, inspiring solutions for collective liberation.

**Taina Vargas-Edmond** co-founded Initiate Justice with her husband Richard Vargas-Edmond in September 2016. Prior to creating Initiate Justice, she had a demonstrated track record of successful organizing and policy advocacy as the Statewide Advocacy Coordinator with Essie Justice Group, State Campaigner with the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and as a Field Representative for the California State Assembly. She has a Master of Arts Degree in Diplomacy and International Relations from Seton Hall University, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from California State University, Northridge.

**Sharon White-Harrigan** is the Clinical Director of WPA's transitional shelter for women, Hopper Home. Sharon has worked in the criminal justice, domestic violence, mental health, and substance abuse fields and is an advocate and activist worldwide. She is an alumnae of Reconnect; an advocacy group for women as well as WPA's Women's Advocacy Project. Sharon sits on the advisory board for The Women's Building under the NoVo Foundation. She is involved with various other organizations such as the Women and Justice Project (WJP), College and Community Fellowship, College Initiative, Fortune Society, Correctional Association, and more. Sharon is a motivational speaker who has presented nationwide on prison reform and domestic violence. Sharon has been featured in the New York Times and the Daily News. Sharon holds an Associate's in Arts; a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Criminal Justice from The Graduate Center of the City University of New York where she was a Thomas W. Smith Fellow; and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Lehman College. She was licensed in 2015.

**Laura Whitehorn** served more than 14 years in federal prison and was released in 1999. With the late Mujahid Farid, she is a co-founder of Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP.

**Marilynn Winn**, Executive Director of Women on the Rise, a grassroots organization led by formerly incarcerated women to reduce the number of women under correctional control in the state of Georgia. JLUSA 2016 Fellow, serves on the Board of Directors of First Step Staffing of Atlanta, Served as Co-Chair of Board of Directors of 9to5 Atlanta Working Women, received 1<sup>st</sup> Lilly Ledbetter Award, Initiated history making Ban the Box Campaign in Georgia. Instrumental in President Obama issuing an Executive Order to Ban the Box on federal employment applications. In collaboration with Solutions Not Punishment instrumental in passing legislation with City of Atlanta and Fulton County to implement a two year pilot Atlanta Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative and instrumental in winning history making legislation to reclassify marijuana legislation to a non-arrest offense for less than an ounce of

marijuana with a minimum fine of \$75.00 and in the City of Atlanta just recently in collaboration with key players won Bail Reform legislation. Current campaign “Community Over Cages” #Close the Jail ATL.

**Kimberly Woodson** juvenile lifer who went to prison at the age of 17 and served 29 years in Michigan. Bachelor in Behavioral science, motivational speaker and facilitator. Founder of Redeeming Kimberly a nonprofit who helps returning citizens find the resources need to reintegrate back into society. (RedeemingKimberly5317@gmail.com.) Michigan's regional connector for CFSY/ICAN. Administrator of three Facebook pages; Redeeming Kimberly, Free all juvenile lifers resources page, juvenile lifer support group. Wife and proud mother of two beautiful daughters 30 yrs old and 7months. #abolishmandatorylifetimesentences. The slow death sentence. Redeemingkimberly5317@gmail.com

**Blanche Wright** was incarcerated for 30 years during which time she worked with youth and was a family violence counselor to help others to find their worth and building self-esteem. When she came home, she continued this passion and worked with women who had suffered from domestic violence. She works with a variety of agencies to aid people on their parole efforts whose crimes were related to gender-based violence. She works with women transitioning out of incarceration- jails and prisons -and is also committed to supporting men who are transitioning out of incarceration.

Coletta Youngers is a Senior Fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), where she has worked since 1987 as an expert on human rights, international drug control policy and drug policy related developments in Latin America. She coordinates a working group on women, drug policies and incarceration in Latin America, is a consultant with WOLA's drug policy reform project, and is WOLA's lead researcher with the Collective for the Study of Drugs and the Law (CEDD). Ms. Youngers is also a Senior Associate with the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC). Before working at WOLA, Ms. Youngers was a Project Manager at the Peru-Chile Office of the Catholic Relief Services from 1985 to 1987. She earned a Masters' Degree in public affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

**LaLa Zannell** is a dedicated and passionate advocate, Michigan native now residing in New York. A Gifted public speaker, thought leader, and speechwriter who speaks out on issues related to anti-LGBTQ violence, and especially the disproportionate violence that Trans and gender non-conforming people of color face as a tool for her personal healing. LaLa was a member of the National Coalition of Anti violence Program (NCAVP) Movement Building Committee. Professionally LaLa is the formal Lead Organizer at the New York City Anti-Violence project (AVP). In addition LaLa spoke at the White House for the first Women's history month briefing to include transwoman and the last Transgender briefing under the Obama administration, testified at the first historic Congressional Forum on violence against transgender people. LaLa continues her part to culture shift as a chair of the policy and working group committee for Communities United for Police Reform (CPR) were they recently had a small victory with the passing of Intro 541 which would but an end to unconstitutional searched by the NYPD. Made

2015 Trans 100 list for LaLa's dedicated work with making the lives of Tran Woman of Color better.

**Rita Zimmer** is someone who believes in action. She is in recovery for over forty years. She is Executive Director of the Women's Community Justice Project, a diversion alternative that opened in September 2017 to reduce the number of women unnecessarily detained at the Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island. Funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice the project has already successfully moved 135 women back into the community with the housing and services they need to succeed. She is proud to be part of a BEYONDRosie's Campaign whose vision is to Re-imagine Justice, Dignity and Safety for Women; Re-invent a smaller justice system for Women and Re-invest savings to strengthen Women and their communities. The goal is to close Rosie's by 2020. Join Us!