

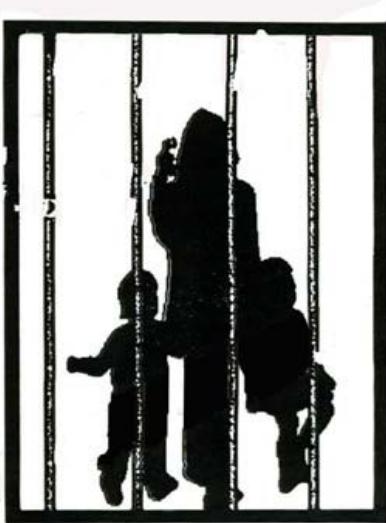
**FREE!**

*Families Rally for Emancipation and Empowerment*

## ***Family Survival Guide***

Information, Resources and Personal Stories

for Families with Incarcerated Loved Ones



*Written by families for families*

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Please take a moment to write us and let us know if you found the guide to be useful:

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This publication was made by and for family members of people who are incarcerated. Your generous donations help to keep our work and our organization thriving. Thank you for your continued support.

### **About the Art**

The art in this guide was created by incarcerated artists and provided to us for use by The Prisons Foundation. To learn more about this organization and the artists who created these pieces, visit: [www.prisonsfoundation.org](http://www.prisonsfoundation.org).

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## **About FREE! and This Guide**

FREE! is a grassroots collective connecting with people impacted by the social stigma, isolation, and economic hardships resulting from a loved one's imprisonment. Our mission is to support, strengthen and empower impacted families by creating safe spaces for peer-to-peer support, self-advocacy and self-development trainings, public education and community dialogue, waging and supporting grassroots and policy campaigns, and creating and promoting media products that reflect the voices and experiences of those most impacted by a culture of mass incarceration.

### **About This Guide**

If you are reading this resource guide, you are probably one of the many millions of U.S. residents with a loved one who is incarcerated. In New York State 66,000 women and men are locked in cages, which costs us over \$500,000,000 per year.

We created this guide as a companion for understanding, navigating and healing. This guide is a product of a society that chooses to punish, condemn and criminalize rather than nourish, support and grow our communities. As you use these materials to guide you through this journey, remember that your generous donations allow us to continue our work.

### **How This Guide Works**

Each chapter of this guide contains answers to common questions you may have and personal stories from our members who have experienced what you are going through now or may come to face in the future. These personal stories and resources can guide you in your decision-making and action process. The accompanying Appendix offers information on organizations, agencies and other useful resources that you may wish to pursue.

## **Letter from the Founder**

When we started in May 2002, we were a small, Brooklyn-based initiative of the Developing Justice Project. Called the “Prison Families Community Forum,” we quickly outgrew our mandate as we confronted myriad issues never before addressed in any comprehensive way. Sure, there were prisoner’s rights advocates, and social services programs, court systems, elected officials and re-entry specialists. But nowhere, especially not in New York City, could one find a “one-stop-shop” just for the people whose lives were shattered by a loved one ending up in prison.

In July 2003, we launched the “**Stop the Contract**” campaign after discovering that decades of abusive collect call charges from New York State prisons were the result of a monopoly contract and illegal taxes on our families. As community support soared, we partnered with the Center for Constitutional Rights and other groups to take down this discriminatory machine. The NY Campaign for Telephone Justice was born, a state-wide campaign ultimately impacting hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, removing the \$26 million a year kickback the State was pocketing. Resulting, under then Governor Eliot Spitzer, in a cost reduction of 50% per call, and the passage of the Family Connections Bill, FREE! (the Prison Families Community Forum) along with our partners, demonstrated to the world the power and necessity of **UNITY AND ACTION**. Our very formation has been testament to nay-saying social workers and legislators that families of the incarcerated can and will organize, that we are strong, and we will be heard!

### **FREE! from Mandatory Minimums**

For over 35 years, the racist, wasteful, and ineffective mandatory minimum Rockefeller Drug Laws have targeted low income, urban people of color to fill thousands of prison beds across New York State. Conceived by Governor Nelson Rockefeller in a public relations display of being “tough on crime” and declaring a “war on drugs,” these laws have devastated the inner city.

Since our inception in 2002, FREE! has been working with Drop the Rock, Real Reform and other allies to finally FREE! ourselves from these mandatory minimums. Steering Committee members Cheri and Ricky O’Donoghue have become nationwide spokespersons against the racist application of these laws.

Through statewide advocacy, minor changes to 2004/2005 and 2009/2010 legislation have been won, affecting a few thousand people at a time. Although mainstream media headlines billed this organizing victory as “the End of Rockefeller Drug Laws,” there is still much work to be done to repeal these laws forever.

## **Our Programs and Activities**

In addition to engaging in these and many other political action campaigns, some activities we wish to highlight include:

### *Self-Empowerment Trainings*

Our Self-Empowerment trainings include: Pro Se, Parole Preparation and Appeals Navigation, Community Organizing, Public Speaking, and Welcoming a Loved One Back Home Upon Release. Guest facilitators have included Liz Fink, Robin Busch, Rick Greenberg, Safiya Bandele, Bronx Defenders, Prison Moratorium Project, and many, many more! Thanks to all who continue to support the leadership development of people with loved ones in prison!

### *FREE! Families Film Forum*

In 2009, in partnership with Maysles Cinema, FREE! launched the FREE! Families Film Forum, a monthly social and criminal justice screening event and fundraiser. The forum has engaged hundreds of community members in thought provoking and problem-solving dialogue related to major issues impacting families of incarcerated men and women. Topics have included mandatory minimum drug laws, gangs/street organizations, police brutality, and visiting prison. Co-sponsored by Third World Newsreel, the monthly gathering continues to build and strengthen relationships among some of the New Yorkers most targeted by the NYPD: people of color in Harlem.

### *Holiday Gift Drives*

In 2003 and 2004, FREE! collected donations of clothing, holiday gifts and hot beverages to spread holiday cheer among the thousands of women, children and families waiting in harsh winter weather for buses to visit correctional facilities to do some of the most important community work—keeping our families together!

### *Prison Famz Productions*

Prison Famz Productions, part of our Media Justice initiative, uses the creation and promotion of original video and media products to empower prison families by telling our own stories and creating advocacy tools. In partnership with Manhattan Neighbor-

hood Network, FREE! trains members in professional television and video production. We air programs on public access television, host community screenings, and sent an advocacy video to the New York State Senate and governor to reinvest monies used for drug law enforcement back into developing the most impacted communities.

#### *Resources and Referrals Program*

FREE! offers resources and referrals to anyone at any stage of interaction with the criminal justice system. If we don't currently have a program or activity to fit your needs and interests, our broad network of allies and partners can surely lend a hand. If none of our organizations offer exactly what you're looking for, we encourage you to **JOIN FREE! AND BECOME ACTIVE!** Together, we'll work to create resources to fill the void you and your peers identify! (See Section 9: Get Involved! for more information.)

Yet, what's most important about all of this is that FREE! belongs to you! It is you and your family's involvement in creating and shaping us that makes us the organization we are today! As you embark upon this challenging journey, may this guide—and the knowledge that in unity, even families of the incarcerated are powerful—help to fortify your family to overcome each and every obstacle in your paths!

On behalf of the incredible volunteer leaders of FREE! we send you solidarity and a huge bear hug!

Kym Clark  
*Founder of FREE!*

Section 1:

## ***Getting the Phone Call that a Loved One Has Been Arrested***

With all the problems our communities face these days with policing, racial profiling, drug addiction, gang violence, etc., no one wants to get that call saying that their loved one has been arrested—but it does happen. It could even happen to you. This guide was written to help you know what to do when you or a loved one has been arrested. Here are some easy-to-remember steps to follow if you or your loved one has a run-in with the police:

- Think carefully about your words, movements, body language, and emotions;
- Keep your hands where the police can see them;
- Remember that anything you say or do can be used against you, so do not get into an argument with the police, complain on the scene, say they are wrong or that you plan to file a complaint;
- Do not make any statements regarding the incident;
- Do not run;
- Do not touch any police officer;
- Do not resist even if you believe you are innocent;
- Ask for a lawyer immediately upon your arrest;
- Try to remember officers' badge and patrol car numbers;
- If you are injured, take photographs of the injuries as soon as possible, but make sure you seek medical attention first.
- Write down everything you remember about the interaction as soon as possible; and
- Find witnesses and get their full names and phone numbers.

### **My loved one has been arrested. How can I figure out where s/he is?**

To find out where your loved one is being held, ask the arresting officer or call your local precinct or jail. Only the people in charge of the jail can decide if your friends and relatives can visit. Questions about food, clothing and medicine should also be directed to the people in charge of the jail.

**"J**ust because your child has made a mistake doesn't mean you stop loving them."

-Ivey Walton,  
FREE! Steering Committee member

treatment program. Involvement in a treatment program may help get a better outcome with the judge and prosecutor. Some judicial circuits also have special courts called "drug courts" designed to handle such cases.

### **How long can the police hold my loved one in custody before filing charges?**

If the police have probable cause to believe your loved one has committed a crime but have not yet brought formal charges, they may detain them in custody for 24 to 48 hours. After this period, the police must release the person or bring formal charges, which means your loved one will have to appear before a judge. If s/he is released, your loved one could be rearrested at a later date if the police obtain sufficient evidence.



### **What procedures must the police follow when making an arrest?**

The police *do not* have to tell your loved one what crime s/he is being arrested for, though they probably will. The police are not permitted to use excessive force but "reasonable" force may be used to make the arrest or keep the person from injuring themselves during the arrest. The police may read your loved one his/her *Miranda* rights but do not have to do so if they do not intend to interrogate.

### **What are *Miranda* rights?**

The police generally read *Miranda* rights to people who are in custody and are about

to be questioned: "You have the right to remain silent. If you give up the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you desire an attorney and cannot afford one, an attorney will be obtained for you before police questioning." *Miranda* rights state that people in custody do not have to talk to the police and that they have the right to the presence of an attorney. This exists to protect people from saying something that will later be used against them. If *Miranda* rights are not read before questioning, or if police continue to question someone after they indicate a desire to consult with an attorney, any such statements are generally considered to be "inadmissible" at trial, meaning they cannot be used against the person to prove their guilt.

"After arrest the next step is on a personal level—being honest with yourself and with your family. Could I have avoided this problem? Do I need a lifestyle change? Surely some people are innocent, but some just aren't. Without a doubt there are problems with the way law enforcement polices the city, but what I am plainly saying is, what can *I* do differently to ensure my separation from any legal problems in the future? I have to keep it real with myself. Do I create my own problems?

I am formerly incarcerated and until I began to see what part I played in my life, getting arrested was a vicious cycle. I continued to break the law, get arrested and be sent to prison. Yes, I grew up poor, and was a product of my environment, but after a while all that played out. I simply kept going to prison due to the bad choices I continued to make."

—Brian Greene, Sr.,  
FREE! member

### **Can police question a person without reading them their *Miranda* rights?**

Yes. *Miranda* rights must be read before questioning a person who has been taken into custody. A person is considered to be "in custody" anytime s/he is placed in an environment in which they do not believe s/he is free to leave. For example, the police can question witnesses at a crime scene without reading them their *Miranda* rights, and should a witness implicate themselves in the crime during that ques-

tioning, their statements could be used against them later in court.

## **Can police arrest or detain a person without reading them their Miranda rights?**

Yes, but until the person has been informed of his/her Miranda rights, any statements made during interrogation may be ruled inadmissible in court.

### **What is an interrogation?**

An interrogation can come in the form of direct questioning, such as the police asking, "Did you kill John Doe?" Interrogation can also be less obvious. For ex-

ample, a police officer might say things that they know are likely to result in the person giving information that can later be used against them.

**"Have a talk** with your loved about how much  
you will be involved, and if so, you have to let the attorney know that they have your loved one's permission to speak to you about the case. If so, ask questions and be sure that you understand the answers. You should ask for copies of all court documents. Preparing the case is *so important*. Get letters that talk about your loved one's character: who they are as a person, in the community, in the home, as a parent, etc. Your input can make such a difference. Also, remember that although you are not paying for the lawyer, he is getting paid. In the court room, he is your voice, speaking for your loved one to the judge. Make sure you ask him to explain things to you completely and simply. Know all your options given your specific circumstances—the best case and worst case end results—so you can make an informed decision. If you speak another language primarily, make sure that your attorney is aware of that as well."

-FREE! member

Many people believe that what they say to the police is not "admissible"—or, allowed to be used against them in court—unless written down, recorded on tape, or said directly to a prosecutor or judge. That is not true. To be on the safe side, your loved one should assume that anything they say to anybody besides their lawyer could be used against them at

trial.

### **Should a lawyer be present during interrogations?**

Yes, even if your loved one is not in custody, it is a good idea to call the local public defender or a lawyer in private practice before talking to the police. This legal representative will be permitted to accompany your loved one to the police station and be present to protect their interests during police questioning.

### **My loved one needs a lawyer. What is the difference between a public defender and an 18-b lawyer?**

People who are charged with a crime and who cannot afford a lawyer are entitled to appointed counsel by the State. There is no public defender office in New York City, but many upstate counties have one. In New York City, several organizations—Legal Aid, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Office of the Appellate Defender, etc.—offer legal services for people who cannot afford to purchase legal services.

**"I did** a bullet [city year] on Rikers Island in 2003 for attempted robbery. I was addicted to drugs and committed a crime to get the next fix. I did not use my addiction to 'benefit' my case because I did not want to be mandated to a drug treatment program. I learned from people who messed up that 'opportunity' and were returned to jail to complete their sentence because they didn't fulfill the court mandate. I just wanted to do my time. Originally I was facing an upstate prison bid, but because this was my first offense, I guess I was fortunate. If I knew then what I know now, if I had not been kicking methadone at the time, and if I was better advised by my attorney, I probably would have attempted to plead down my charge.

I have a problem with the lack of time for proper representation (the only time I ever saw my lawyer was 5 minutes before I was scheduled for court while I was waiting anxiously in the bull pen), the language barriers for those who do not speak English, and I am concerned about the lesser educated folks who are not capable of understanding the 'legal lingo' that is thrown at us as we are encouraged to 'plea it out' right before we go before the

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judge. I'm also concerned about many of the overworked legal aid attorneys—and their mountainous caseloads—who do not fully explain all of our options to us. They simply offer us what works best for them. We are not making an educated decision most times.

There are consequences to the felony plea that I took that I face daily and many barriers that I will face for the rest of my life. I faced my peers in court and paid my debt to society. I do not call myself an ex-con, ex-offender or anything like that. Going to jail was just ONE of many, many, things that I did in my life. *It does not define me.* Life sometimes throws curves that are necessary to take a close look inside and find out who we are and where we belong. I have no regrets. Life is good today."

-FREE! member and  
graduate of the  
Correctional Association's  
Reconnect Project

The court can also appoint individual attorneys from a panel of approved attorneys to handle individual cases. These are known as 18-b lawyers. They typically pick up cases in arraignment but are sometimes assigned later. They handle the case and submit vouchers to get paid for their time on the case.

An attorney that FREE! has worked with for years feels that, more often than not, an individual will have better representation through an institutional office like Legal Aid or the Office of the Appellate Defender (OAD) than by a private 18-b attorney, as these offices usually offer greater resources (investigations, social work, etc.).

### **What happens if there was police brutality or misconduct?**

Examples of misconduct include racial profiling and discrimination, illegal searches, false arrests, unreasonable crowd control issues, use of unreasonable force in making an arrest, and death that occurs while a person is in custody. If your loved ones feel that s/he was violated by the police, contact a lawyer as soon as possible to make sure his/her rights are protected. You can also file a written

complaint with the police department's internal affairs division, its civilian complaint board, or call the ACLU hotline (1-877-6-PROFILE). Protect yourself and those you

care about. For more information, read their pamphlet entitled “What to Do if I’m Stopped by the Police” at [www.aclu.org/profiling](http://www.aclu.org/profiling).

New York City has overlapping law enforcement agencies within the police department (for example, housing and transit police) as well as prison and jail guards. When officers in these different departments do not do their jobs properly it is important for us to send a message that we will not tolerate civil rights violations. Both the police and the jurisdictions for which they work can be held liable in such instances.

#### **Help! My Son Has Been Arrested!**

October 1, 2003 couldn't have been a more beautiful day. I had just finished work and was on the Metro North heading upstate to the new home we had recently bought. About fifteen minutes into my commute, my cell phone rang. It was a frantic call from Carmen, my son's girlfriend's mother, telling me something I couldn't accept: my son Ashley had been arrested for selling cocaine in some far away place upstate. I wanted to get off the train right then and there, but it was an express train and I wouldn't reach my destination for another hour and fifteen minutes. As soon as I got to the parking lot, I went to my car and called Carmen back to ask her to repeat what she was trying to tell me. She asked if I'd like the name of a lawyer friend of hers for an immediate consultation. I said yes, thanked her and called the lawyer as soon as we hung up. When I told him what Carmen told me, he said that this was really bad news; a drug sale would fall under the Rockefeller Drug Laws. He explained that these were Draconian laws that carried sentences like 15 years to life, even for a small amount of drugs. He also said that it would cost me upwards of \$15,000 to retain a lawyer, and suggested that I get a lawyer up in Utica, because "...no Manhattan lawyer would want to take the case because it is too far

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to travel." Then he wished me luck.

I'd never heard of the Rockefeller Drug Laws. When I got home, I immediately called my husband who was still in the city working and then I jumped on the computer to see what I could learn on Google. What I saw made me cry. It confirmed what the lawyer was telling me. Ashley, who was only 20 at them time, could be facing a 15-to-life sentence. I could not accept that. In my Google search, I found names of people who were fighting to get rid of these laws—prominent people like then Lieutenant Governor of New York, David Paterson, and Assemblyman Jefffrion Aubry. I immediately starting writing letters to everyone I could think of that could help me. I was in a lot of pain, but I could think of nothing but keeping Ashley from going to prison, or getting him out as soon as possible if he did have to go. Assemblyman Aubry graciously answered my letter and gave me the names of people and organizations that could possibly help me help my son and repeal the Rockefeller Drug Laws.

I contacted Randy Credico of the New York Mothers of the Disappeared, and the Drug Policy Alliance, both of whom helped me tremendously. Randy Credico responded to my emailed letter minutes after I sent it. Three days later, at his urging, I was in Albany standing before legislators and TV cameras, telling my son's story and asking for help. On the bus I took to Albany, Randy had invited a newspaper reporter for *The Village Voice*, Jennifer Gonnerman. Jennifer interviewed me and eventually went to the first prison Ashley was sent to, and interviewed him as well. That interview resulted in a cover story for *The Village Voice* entitled "A Question of Justice" (June 22, 2002). It is through Jennifer's reporting that I learned what really happened to Ashley that day.

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In the summer of 2003, Ashley was friendly with two young men, who came from well-to-do families in Manhattan. A couple of times Ashley had sold a few grams of cocaine to these boys. In the fall, the boys moved up to Utica to attend Hamilton College. They kept in contact with Ashley, but soon their buying habits changed. They started calling Ashley asking for more than they usually wanted. That's because the two boys were drug dealers, selling the cocaine they bought from Ashley on their school campus. Eventually, word got around to the school officials, who called in the police. The police told the boys that if they wanted to do "the right thing" they needed to help them set up the person they got the cocaine from. The police told them that they had the DA's ear and this would go a long way to help them get out of their mess. So in true sting operation style, the police told one of the boys to call Ashley and order 2.6 ounces of cocaine. They asked for this amount specifically, so that they would be able to convict Ashley on an A-1 felony, which carried a 15-to-life sentence. The two boys agreed to do it, placed the call, and the next day Ashley took the Amtrak train up to Utica. When he got to the station, one of the boys called Ashley from his cell phone and told him to come outside because he was in a rush. Little did Ashley know that the boy was hiding in the backseat of the police car so he could identify Ashley when he emerged. As soon as Ashley stepped outside the station, he knew he had been had. The police yelled, "This is the police!" and threw him to the ground, handcuffed him and took him down to the police station.

Ashley was originally charged with an A-1 felony. The first lawyer we hired was a lawyer in Utica—one of the worst human beings I've ever come across. It was apparent after two months of trying to work with him that he had to go. The second lawyer we hired was from Manhattan. He was very helpful to us, but also very expensive. He fought the D.A. [district attorney] on the sentence, which was incredibly harsh. Ashley had no prior record,

*(Continued on page 17)*

*(Continued from page 16)*

was only 20-years-old, and had been arrested for a non-violent crime. But all of this mattered very little to the D.A.. Eventually the DA offered Ashley a plea bargain down to a B felony with a 7-to-life sentence. Larry kept fighting and eventually the DA lowered it to 7-to-21 years, but that's as low as he'd go. Ashley's only alternative was to go to trial and try to fight the case. We were assured by our lawyer and everyone else we consulted with that Ashley would lose the case and end up getting the A-1 conviction after all. We could not take that chance. Ashley was too young to take a gamble like that.

I accepted that Ashley would have to go to prison, but I never accepted the 7-to-21 year sentence. My husband and I immediately became advocates for Ashley and the repeal of the Rockefeller Drug Laws. We worked tirelessly every day and until we finally got him out. Ashley ended up serving  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years in prison. In April 2008, he was granted early release through a work release program. He's been home with us since August 2008. Even though Ashley earned the right to get into the work release program, we did not count on it, because by then, we knew how the prison system operated: easy to get into, but almost impossible to get out. So we called on then Lieutenant Governor David Paterson and asked him to make a call on Ashley's behalf, which he did. We were able to get an appointment with Lieutenant Governor Paterson through our activism and political work and with the help of prominent people at the Drug Policy Alliance.

The two boys were able to qualify for youthful offender status and get their records sealed. Because their families are well-to-do, politically-connected people, they didn't spend one day in prison.

—Cheri O'Donoghue, FREE! Steering Committee member



***The following information about the consequences of incarceration for non-U.S. citizens was taken from “Understanding the Consequences of Criminal Charges,” prepared by The New York State Defenders Association’s Immigrant Defense Project (February 2007) and may be out of date. You should always talk to a qualified immigration expert before agreeing to enter any plea or program.***

**My loved one is not a U.S. citizen. What will happen to him/her now?**

As an immigrant living in the U.S., your loved one may want to become a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or an American citizen. However, being charged with a crime will hurt their chances of this happening and can also create a risk of deportation regardless of how long s/he has lived in the U.S. or if s/he has legal status.

**What kinds of criminal charges lead to immigration problems?**

If your loved one pleads guilty or is convicted of a crime—a felony, misdemeanor, or even a violation or other non-criminal offense—s/he may encounter immigration problems even if s/he does not spend any time in jail and/or only pays a fine. It is important to remember that not every plea and conviction leads to bad consequences for non-U.S. citizens. Talk to an immigration lawyer to find out whether your loved one’s specific case may lead to immigration problems. Don’t just go by what someone else you know says happened to them. Every case is different.

**What if my loved one’s criminal charges were dismissed?**

If your loved one has not pled guilty or admitted guilt to an offense and the charges are subsequently dismissed, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) generally cannot use those criminal charges to deport or bar him/her from applying to become a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or American citizen. Until your loved one’s case is actually dismissed, any contact with DHS officials—for example, travel outside the country, Green Card renewal, or LPR/citizenship application—may cause problems because the government might treat the case as still “open” until the actual date of dismissal. For this reason, it is important to ask for an “adjournment in contemplation of dismissal.”

If your loved one has pled guilty to an offense but is able to get their charge dismissed by completing a court-ordered program (i.e. drug treatment), the charges will probably still be considered a “conviction” and could lead to deportation. Generally, if someone pleads guilty or admits guilt in court and is given some kind of sentence or court-ordered requirement, there can be negative immigration consequences.

**My loved one is a lawful permanent resident. Can s/he still be deported?**

Yes, generally anyone who is not a citizen of the United States can be deported as a result of certain types of criminal pleas and convictions. There is the option of applying for “relief” from deportation depending on how long the person has been in the country, how long s/he has been a lawful permanent resident (LPR), and what types of offenses have been charged in the criminal case. To learn more information about the risks, you should talk to an immigration lawyer.

**My loved one is undocumented. How can a criminal plea or conviction affect his/her status?**

Undocumented individuals living in the U.S. can be deported just because of their lack of valid legal documents. The DHS often questions people in jails and prison about immigration issues, so any time that your loved one spends in jail—even if they are not eventually convicted—puts him/her in danger of being placed in deportation proceedings if s/he is undocumented. However, even if your loved one is undocumented, there may be a way to “adjust” his/her status to become an LPR. The U.S. Congress is thinking about creating a new legalization program for undocumented immigrants. It is still unclear whether people with certain criminal convictions will be allowed to apply.

**What should my loved one do to protect his/her immigration status?**

Your loved one should be very careful to obey all criminal and immigration laws since any further arrests or interactions with the government may put him/her at risk of being put in deportation proceedings. If your loved one’s criminal case is still going on, ask to talk to an immigration lawyer right away—ideally before there is any acceptance of a plea and before trial or sentencing. Be sure to tell your loved one’s criminal defense

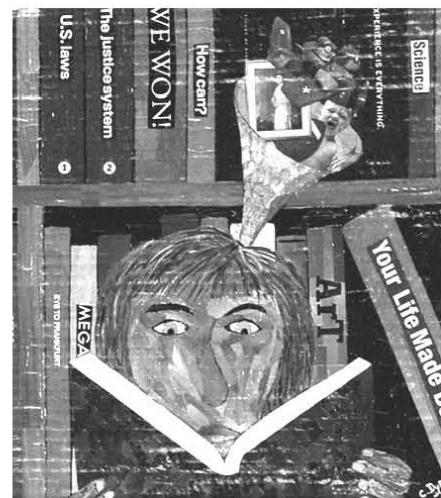
lawyer about the need to talk to an immigration lawyer. An immigration lawyer may be able to help your loved one and his/her lawyer figure out a good plea, sentence, or other outcome that will prevent negative immigration consequences.

## Section 2:

### ***My Loved One Has Been Sentenced. Now What?***

Fear, sadness, frustration, confusion, anger: these may be just *some* of the complicated emotions swirling around your head after finding out that your loved one has been sentenced to time in jail or prison. In order for you and your loved one to survive this difficult time, the first and most important step you must take is to get educated about the struggle that lies ahead. Gather as much information as you can in order to get in control. Learn how correctional facilities work, what rules dictate how you can connect with your loved one, and what your rights are.

Most importantly, remain hopeful and determined. Do all that you can to keep yourself balanced so you can really be there for your loved one. Get involved with groups like FREE!. By connecting with family members who have gone through what you are experiencing now, you can gain the support, strength, and understanding necessary to make it through the difficulties that lie ahead.



Anthony Dye

#### **✓ Be Your Loved One's Best Advocate on the Outside**

Being involved with the system isn't easy but it is what you have to do now. Write and get letters of support from family members and community connections that speak about your loved one's true character. These will be helpful for your loved one's attorney or for submission to the parole board.

#### **✓ Get Your Loved One's Identification**

While your loved one is incarcerated, s/he is indigent (broke). It is important for you to help him/her get all their identification documents in order. The counselor at

the correctional facility can assist with this. Otherwise, get ID as quickly as you can upon release.

### *Birth Certificate*

The cost is \$15 for each certified copy. You will need to provide the following information to obtain the certificate: full name as listed on the birth certificate; sex (male or female); date of birth; mother's maiden name (her last name prior to first marriage); father's full name; hospital or street where birth occurred and the borough; your relationship to the birth certificate's owner; your mailing address; and reason why you are requesting the certificate. Submit the application to 125 Worth Street, Room 133, NY, NY, 10013.

### *Social Security Card*

You can get a replacement card for free but will need to provide proof of your loved one's identity and citizenship (birth certificate or passport). Or, when s/he is released, your loved one can bring his/her facility release ID. To find out the location of your nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office, call 1-800-772-1213, Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00am and 7:00pm.

"**You** and your loved one should get and read a copy of the "Jailhouse Laywer's Handbook" [see page 91 of the Appendix] to be able to talk to each other with your own understanding and knowledge and not going by what you may hear. Everyone's case is different, no matter what the charges."

—FREE! member

### *State-Issued ID*

Since a picture ID and a social security card are required to obtain state ID, it is best for your loved one to ask his/her counselor about obtaining this document immediately. If your loved one is on parole, his/her parole officer can call the DMV and setup an appointment under special circumstances.

## ✓ **Know the Difference Between a Jail, a Prison, and a Prison Ward**

Knowing the difference between a jail, a prison, and a prison ward will better enable you to deal with the procedures of the facility where your loved one is housed.

New York City jails, which are operated by the New York City Department of Correction (DOC), house people 16 and older who, after arraignment in court, have not been given bail or are unable to post bail. Jails hold people who have been sentenced by the city to terms of up to one year; parole violators awaiting parole revocation hearings; and people charged with civil crimes.

New York State prisons, which are operated by the New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), are facilities that hold people sentenced for more than one year for criminal convictions. People sentenced to terms of more than a year are held on Rikers pending transfer to upstate prisons. There are also court holding pens located in the Criminal, Supreme and Family Court buildings in each borough. In Manhattan, an additional court pen is operated in the special Narcotics Court. These courthouse facilities hold people scheduled for the day's proceedings.

Prison wards hold seriously ill people and those requiring intensive psychiatric observation (for example, Elmhurst General Hospital, Kings County Hospital and Bellevue Hospital, all operated by DOC). The North Infirmary Command on Rikers Island houses detainees with less serious medical problems, incarcerated people with AIDS not requiring hospitalization, and "high security prisoners."

## **How can I locate a loved one being held in an upstate NY correctional facility?**

To find a loved one that is being held in a facility upstate, visit the following website to look them up by their full name, social security number, or DIN: <http://nysdocslookup.docs.state.ny.us>. You can also call 1-888-846-3469.

### **How do I ask for help with my loved one's case after sentencing?**

FREE! works with the Office of the Appellate Defender, a not-for-profit indigent criminal defense organization that provides high quality, client-centered appellate and post-conviction representation to individuals convicted of felonies in Manhattan and the Bronx. For help in answering any questions about the appellate process, get a copy of their "Informational Guide for New Clients," which is available in English and Spanish. (11 Park Place, Suite 1601, New York, NY 10007, 212-402-4100 [www.appellatedefender.org](http://www.appellatedefender.org).)

### **I've heard about fines and fees. What are they?**

Prison is big business. DOCS collects more than \$2.5 million annually in the form of fees, fines and surcharges imposed by the courts from incarcerated people—folks who earn an average of \$1 a day. DOCS also collects nearly \$15 million in their own fees. These numbers do not include the \$20 million in “collect call only” telephone commissions paid annually to DOCS. Monies paid into commissary from family and from the State for labor, gets paid right back to the State. Most of the attorneys can't even keep track of the most common fees and surcharges.

Make sure that you ask your loved one's defense attorney to tell you what the financial costs of the conviction will be. Families should be aware that these fees exist and ask for reductions.

### **How is money collected from my loved one while s/he is incarcerated?**

NYS DOCS Directive #2788 establishes the procedure for the collection of money by prison officials to pay the obligations of the incarcerated person, including all of the financial penalties referred to above and judgments for child support payments, “gate money,” and work release room and board fees. When a new debt is established, all money in the “inmate’s fund” is applied to collection. If there are insufficient funds available in the “inmate’s fund” to pay off the debt, then all of the money that is in the account is taken as payment.

The balance due on the unsatisfied debt (not paid during incarceration) is collected at a rate of 20% of any money earned while working inside the prison and 50% of any money sent into the “inmate’s fund,” including any money sent by family or friends for commissary. When two debts are owed at the same time, up to 40% of weekly earning and 100% of the money sent to the “inmate’s funds” from outside the prison is collected. For people on work release, after room and board costs are deducted, 100% of their wages are garnished if they have two or more outstanding judgments, and 20% if they have one.

**"I feel** it is important to stay in contact with your children while they are locked up so they have a stream of positivity constantly flowing and to give them a choice of hope happiness and comfort in a place where these things have been forbidden to exist. So WE must keep it coming by phone, mail, visits, packages, pictures. I wish I could visit my son, but the distance and finances are a limitation. My sons are 12 years apart, and the challenges are the youngest idolizes his brother, and I have to keep him grounded so he seeks the person not the behavior. I pray and try to reach and teach them both on a regular basis."

—Rena

### **How do juvenile proceedings differ from adult criminal proceedings?**

Judges hear most juvenile cases because juveniles do not have a constitutional right to a jury trial unless tried as an adult. Juveniles also do not have a right to a public trial or to bail. Under most state laws, juveniles do not commit "crimes" but "delinquent acts," some of which would be considered crimes if committed by an adult.

### **How are juvenile proceedings similar to adult proceedings?**

Due process applies in a juvenile proceeding just like in the criminal trial of an adult. A child charged in a juvenile proceeding is entitled to: a notice of charges given in advance of any adjudication (judicial decision) of delinquency; an attorney, including one paid for by the state if the family cannot afford one; the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses; and the right to assert his/her Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination. The state is required to prove its charges beyond a reasonable

doubt.

### **What is an adjudication hearing?**

An adjudication hearing is the trial phase of a juvenile case. This means that the judge hears the evidence and determines whether the child is “delinquent.” The court may then take whatever action it deems to be in the child's best interest. The purpose of these proceedings is supposed to be to rehabilitate, not punish.

### **When are juveniles tried as adults?**

Juvenile courts usually hear cases involving people between the ages of 10-18. If it is a particularly serious or violent offense, the attorney may request an adult court trial.

### **What is a parent's responsibility in juvenile cases?**

Depending on which state you live in, you might be “liable,” or legally responsible, for the acts of your child if you failed to supervise or control the child. In other words, if your teenager has an accident or commits a crime while driving the family car, the court may hold you responsible.

Did you know incarceration costs you and your loved one money. Check out how the fines can add up:

*John Doe was convicted of Driving While Intoxicated (an E felony), and operating a motor vehicle with no insurance (a misdemeanor) after refusing a chemical test. He was sentenced to 5 years probation. The financial consequences of his conviction included:*

• Mandatory fine (of no less than)	\$1,000.00
• Mandatory surcharge (felony)	\$250.00
• Crime victim assistance Fee	\$20.00
• Probation supervision fee (\$30.00/month)	\$1,800.00
• Fee for termination of license revocation	\$100.00
• Surcharge for traffic conviction	\$25.00
• Civil penalty for no insurance	\$750.00
• Civil penalty for chemical test refusal with prior traffic conviction within 5 years	\$750.00
• Driver responsibility assessment	\$750.00
• Court-ordered ignition lock on vehicle	\$2,175.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>\$7,620.00</b>

### Section 3:

## ***Staying Connected while a Loved One Is Behind Bars***

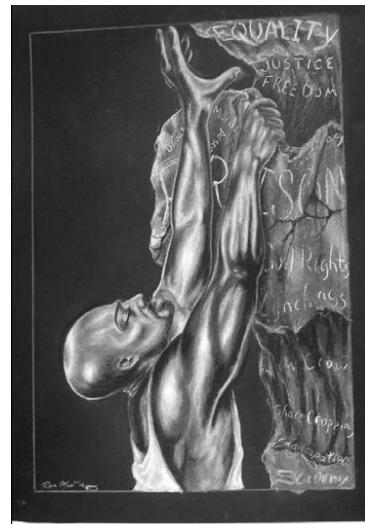
Perhaps the single most important thing you will need to remember while your loved one is behind bars are seven digits: the **Department Identification Number (D.I.N.)**, which is the prison equivalent of a Social Security Number. When our loved ones are sent upstate,<sup>1</sup> they are immediately transformed from a person to an identification number in the eyes of the State. This number will serve as a constant reminder of the time gone by and the time that remains. Make sure to commit your loved one's D.I.N. number to memory! It will follow him/her throughout his/her bid. You will need to know it in order to visit, to send packages and mail, and to find out where your loved one is located if s/he has been transferred.

The transition to a state facility is never easy or complete: at any given minute your loved one can be transferred farther upstate or to a facility that has strict visiting rules or limited transportation. The battle outside is similar to the one inside. Families have to stay strong and focused to survive this experience.

### **How can I cope with this crisis?**

Organizations like FREE! were formed to address this very struggle, but there is no one true solution for getting through this unreal separation. Family members bear the burden of supporting themselves and their loved ones emotionally and financially throughout this crisis. You may not be able to change the reality of living with a loved one behind bars but you can prepare yourself for the struggle ahead. Don't be afraid to ask questions and even when you think you know the answer, ask again!

<sup>1</sup>Upstate is a common term referred to any of the New York State correctional facilities located in the northern and western parts of the state. It is also the name of a "box" facility which houses incarcerated people with discipline problems in 23-hour continuous lock-down cells.



Ras Mosi

Here are some useful tips to help you prepare for the struggles ahead:

### ✓ Expect the Unexpected

Nothing is guaranteed in prison except time. There is no guarantee that you will get to visit or that you will get a full 30 minutes on the phone. No one will promise you that your loved ones will remain at a certain facility or that s/he will be released on his/her conditional release date. You can't even say for sure that your loved one will be pleasant when you receive a phone call or letter. Little is within your control, so control what you can: *you and your reactions*. There are grassroots organizing efforts you can seek out to hold the State and prisons accountable.

### ✓ Seek and Maintain Support

Family members should be encouraged to talk about their loved ones despite the discomfort they may feel about fact that they are incarcerated. It's a teachable moment and extremely empowering for families to do this. For example, if someone asks how you are, you might respond, "I'm having a great day. I just talked to my sister at Bedford and it makes me feel good to hear her voice and update her on how the family is doing." You don't have to feel alone or ashamed. This guide was created to provide outlets for loved

"When a person goes to prison, the

whole family goes. It was hard on all of us, but it was especially hard on Antonia, Ashley's sister, who is 4 years younger than Ashley. When this all happened, she had two more years of high school to go through and was just starting to look at colleges as well. Although Antonia missed Ashley a lot, she hated that we had to drive so many hours to see him; that on a perfect summer weekend, we had to go to a horrible place to see Ashley. It seemed it took forever to get there, and yet we had such little time to spend with him.

It was difficult for me to see Antonia struggle with her emotions: glad to see Ashley but angry at the people who were holding him captive, and at Ashley for being responsible in the first place, for putting us through this nightmare. To her credit, she didn't try to hide her feelings, but sometimes I was scared that she would say something to one of those Corrections Officers that would cause an uproar, or perhaps shoot them one of those looks she has, that says it all. Those Corrections

(Continued on page 29)

ones to find the support to maintain a positive lifestyle while dealing with the incarceration of a family member.

### ✓ Choose to Diffuse

Nine times out of ten, something will happen that will anger your loved one during the course of the day while s/he is incarcerated. Likewise, when you start to deal with the “keepers of the gate,” you will probably get angry too! Here’s where you have a choice: you can act irrationally or you can diffuse the situation by staying pleasant, positive and perky. If you freak out, you give “the gatekeepers” a reason to deny you something—a visit, a phone call, a package, etc. If you remain cool and calm, you have a far better chance of getting what you want. Do the same with your loved one when s/he gets angry!

### ✓ Get to Know the Counselors

Yes, just like in high school, our incarcerated loved ones are assigned a counselor who is responsible for checking in with them periodically. These check-ins are few and far between but you, the outside connection, can work some magic to get the counselor to check in

(Continued from page 28)

Officers seem to look for things like that to happen, the slightest thing, just so they can assert their “power” and cancel your visit.

We all struggled with our emotions. Often times we’d take Ashley’s son, Anthony, with us to visit Ashley. He was about four at the time. At first I was worried a lot about it. I didn’t want Anthony to be tainted by that negative, depressing environment, but my heart overruled my head and we decided to take him. In the end, we decided that it was more important to keep Ashley and Anthony connected so that their relationship could grow. We wanted Anthony to know that Ashley had not abandoned him, he just couldn’t be with him until he finished serving his time. This turned out to be a good decision for several reasons. Right now, our grandson is temporarily living with us and they see each other on a daily basis. It’s important for a father and son to bond and that’s just what they’re doing now, but in a much healthier environment.

My husband and I had to keep in mind that we had to be present for both our children, as they are equally important to us. We love them both so much. We wanted to reward Antonia for doing the right things, excelling in high school and eventually pursuing a college education and we wanted to help Ashley

(Continued on page 30)

*(Continued from page 29)*

stay focused so he could get out of the hell hole he was in so he could hurry up and join the family again and start a new life.

It's not easy when a loved one is in prison because there's only so much you can say to them over the phone or in the limited visiting hours, but if you hang tough, stay committed and keep that connection strong, it's less likely that they will get lost in the system and more likely that they'll see what you see, the light at the end of the tunnel. When a person knows they have family support, it gives them a tremendous amount of strength. It is this strength that can carry them through until it's time to go home. We never gave up on Ashley and never will. Let your loved ones know you love them and that they can count on you to do everything in your power to bring them home. This is essential."

-Cheri O'Donoghue

FREE! Steering Committee member

more often and give you information. It is their job to help ensure the well-being of your loved one. The key is to be very humble, very kind and very cooperative. Swallow your pride for a few minutes and cooperate with this person, be appreciative of their time and thank them over and over again for sharing information with you.

**Since my loved one has been incarcerated, I have heard so many terms that I don't understand. What are some of the most common terms I should know?**

This new environment that you are now a part of is filled with words and phrases that make no sense to the outside world but will become part of everyday life for those of us with loved ones who are incarcerated. Here are a few of the most important terms you need to know:

**A.S.A.T.:** Alcohol Substance Abuse Treatment. An on-site drug program that incarcerated people are required to participate in if they are charged with drug-related crimes or if they incur a drug-related infraction while incarcerated. It is a pre-requisite to be deemed eligible for the Family Reunion Program or FRP (see below).

**Bing/Box/Hole/SHU:** Solitary confinement (as in "Boot the SHU").

**Bullet:** One year sentence in city jail.

**Draft:** A transfer to another facility that happens without warning. The person may be

told the night before and required to pack immediately to leave one facility and transfer to another without notice.

**Festival:** A festival is a relaxed day, usually held in a maximum security facility's gym or outdoor area, with food, music, and activities for the incarcerated person and their visitor(s).

**F.R.P.:** Family Reunion Program. After approval by the State, some family members can spend up to 48 hours in a private setting with an incarcerated loved one (see Section 4 to learn more).

**Keep-locked:** When an incarcerated person is ordered to remain in his/her cell for a set period of time due to an infraction.

**Max or Medium:** Maximum or medium security facility. Typically an incarcerated person's "status" is dropped after serving approximately half of their sentence, allowing them to move to a facility with a lower security level.

**P.C.:** Protective custody, separate from the general population (or "gen pop"), for security reasons. Loved ones can voluntarily request P.C. or it can be automatically assigned due to the nature of their crime or high-profile status.

**Tier 1 ticket:** A ticket can be issued to your loved one if s/he commits an infraction. These tickets vary in severity called "tiers" according to the nature of the infraction.

"Be on time, be clean and presentable, wear minimal jewelry and be polite. Remember that visits are a privilege and not a right. Don't forget where you are, and the fact that you will walk away from your loved one after the visit, and he/she will have to stay. During the visit period, you are at the mercy of the correctional officer handling the visit room for that day. Watch what you wear, leave the jewelry, electronic devices, etc., at home. Represent for yourself and make each visit the best it can be. We can't emphasize enough how important it is to stay in contact with your children on a regular basis. It is a good idea to keep a log or journal of your phone calls and letters, especially if your child(ren) do not or cannot visit."

—FREE! member

**T.V. Facility:** Certain maximum-security facilities allow incarcerated people to have televisions in their cells. When this is the case, the incarcerated person is usually only allowed to get two packages sent to them from outside twice a year. Non-T.V. facilities allow incarcerated persons to receive one 35-pound package each month.

### **How can I send my loved one something in the mail?**

If you are sending a letter, card, or package to an incarcerated loved one, make sure that you have the “inmate mailing address,” which is sometimes different from the actual address of the facility. Also, be sure that your loved one’s D.I.N. number is written clearly on the envelope next to his/her full name.

There is no limit to the amount of written mail an incarcerated person can receive. However, there are limits on quantity and types of pictures you can send. Mail is generally considered private but will be examined for possible contraband. Sometimes mail is unfairly tampered with or withheld, so keep a record of what you’re sending and when so you can ensure your loved one receives it.

### **Can I send packages?**

Incarcerated people housed in “T.V. facilities” (i.e. Attica, Great Meadow) can only receive two packages of no more than 35 pounds from the outside per year. People in “non-T.V. facilities” (i.e., Green Haven, Coxsackie, Clinton) are allowed one 35-pound package per month.

Although there is a general outline of “acceptable goods” defined by the Department of Correction, it is always best to ask your loved one what is allowed at the specific facility and what s/he would like to have. To be safe, you should call the facility and ask the counselor what is acceptable. Facilities have different rules about what they will allow in packages. Packages are often returned on account of the smallest detail. For example, in one max facility, lollipops are allowed, in another they are *not* allowed because of the type of stick inserted in the lollipop. Perdue chicken strips that say they “must be

frozen” might be returned while Tyson chicken strips that say they “must be refrigerated or frozen” will not.

### **Can my loved one use the phone to call me?**

People incarcerated in New York State can place only collect calls, which are more expensive and billed separately from collect calls placed outside, no matter what plan or provider you have. Many service providers, foster care agencies, foster parents and family members will not or cannot accept the charges.<sup>2</sup> A 30 minute phone call costs approximately \$3.60, plus tax.

### **Visiting Rikers Island**

#### **How many people can visit my loved one at Rikers?**

Up to three visitors are allowed at the same time. Each person is entitled to three one-hour visits during the week, each on separate days, according to the visitation schedule.

#### **What kind of ID do I need to bring with me?**

**“Back** in 2007 while I was pregnant with our first child, my boyfriend and I were making very bad decisions in our lives. We were young and weren’t thinking clearly about our futures at the time because we were trying to survive. In March 2007 I gave birth to our daughter and he was awaiting a prison sentence for a mistake he made and was facing up to three years in prison. He wound up getting a sentence of about 6 months and was locked up from May until about October of 2007. During that time it was a constant struggle for me to balance my life as a new first-time mother, being supportive of him, and taking care of the home emotionally and financially without him. I remember the first time I visited him it was so new to me and I was treated like an inmate myself by the correction officers. They would talk to you any kind of way and wait for you to spazz out so they can end your visit. Then you have to be searched and that was humiliating in itself. I didn’t like the fact that

*(Continued on page 34)*

<sup>2</sup>Reprinted courtesy of The Correctional Association of New York’s Women in Prison Project.

*(Continued from page 33)*

I had to wait in the lobby for three to four hours just for an hour visit. I didn't like to but would bring my daughter with me to visit him at least twice a week and the rest of the week I would have a sitter so I could go see him alone. I hated being limited to three visits a week with him and I wrote him letters everyday just so he could have his name called at every mail call. I can remember being so drained but having to keep on for my child and making sure she was good. I would hate being in the visiting room with him and people sitting right next to us so there was no privacy whatsoever. But the worst part of it all was not being able to kiss him or touch him. They set new rules that you were able to kiss before and after the visit. During the visit you had to sit with your hands on the table for the COs to see, but I could only talk to him. I am grateful, though, that my baby was so

*(Continued on page 35)*

Every adult visitor must present one form of valid identification containing a clear photograph and signature. Valid ID for a visit includes: employment ID, welfare card, drug program card, armed services ID, driver's license) or any other similar document with the visitor's signature on it.

### **Can children visit?**

Children under 16 years must be accompanied by an adult (18 years or older) with proper identification. A visitor that is 16-17 years-old may visit but may not act as an adult escort of a child under 16 unless both the visitor and the person to be visited are the parents of that child.

### **What kind of ID is needed for children?**

A birth certificate may be used as identification for a minor child but is not accepted for an adult visitor.

### **What is the visiting schedule?**

Visiting schedules are organized alphabetically, according to last names of the incarcerated individual. There are no visits on Mondays and Tuesdays. Fridays are open for everybody to get visits (last names A-Z). The visit calendar changes per month for Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and

*(Continued from page 34)*

young and that she won't remember the trips. It was not easy for me at all because she was so young and I was alone. Sometimes our visits would be cut short 'cause she would be crying so loudly that we would get kicked out. But now I am very grateful for my life because we are all doing better. My mom has moved up here to be closer to the baby and me. Her being here helps an awful lot, and because of these things I couldn't be happier. So as they say, everything happens for a reason. I thank God everyday for him not having to do 3 years, and being able to learn from the mistakes, for the health of my family, and that we all live a long, prosperous life."

-FREE! member

Sundays.

## **Visiting Upstate Correctional Facilities**

Make sure to remember our four tips for coping with crisis discussed earlier before you decide to take a visit to an upstate correctional facility because this ordeal may be the closest thing to a crisis situation that you ever experience! Depending on the particular facility, the day of the year, and the mood of the gatekeepers, the rules are always subject to change.

Visiting most upstate facilities is a 24-hour ordeal which begins when you arrive at the bus pick-up location—usually between 9:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. depending on your final destination. Unless your loved one is lucky enough to be in Sing Sing, the Sullivan hub or the Green Haven hub, be prepared for an unpleasant ride to a facility that may be at least 3-4 hours away from your home. Most busses make stops at several facilities, where you are dropped off at the hospitality house

in the middle of the night or morning. You will usually arrive at your destination 5-6 hours later. The admission process for visitors usually begins around 9:00am with visits ending by 3 p.m. The return trip is another 5-6 hours. Hopefully by then you can get some rest!

Typically, your loved will be given a handbook with information about how visitors can travel to the facility, including the names of bus companies, free bus dates, and

driving directions. There are also several bus and van companies listed in the Appendix of this guide.

### **I've never visited a prison or jail before. What should I do?**

Before you even make the trip, check the computer or call the facility to be sure that your loved one is still at the facility *and* that it is an approved visit day. Make sure to have a valid, state-issued picture I.D. with you. If you are bringing children, be sure to *always* bring their birth certificates. You must have parental permission to take a child (other than your own) into a correctional facility. This comes in the form of a notarized letter from the child's parent or legal guardian. You will not be allowed into the facility without it.

Make sure your loved one knows you are coming. If anyone is traveling with you, do not exceed the number of visitors allowed (check with the facility to be sure).

You don't need anything on the visit but money, preferably change or singles for vending machines. Do not bring candy, gum, cell phones, keys, or pens.

Dress appropriately and cover up. (Air conditioning in the visiting rooms is usually very cold!) It doesn't really matter what your loved one would like to see you in, it matters that you actually *get in!* So the best advice in any weather is to wear something simple: jeans, a shirt or blouse with ¾ sleeves that isn't low-cut or see-through, a watch, another piece of real gold jewelry and a simple hair-do.

*Ladies:* No lipstick, lip gloss, or fancy hair-dos with a bunch of bobby pins: you will have to take them out. No underwire bras: you will have to take yours off. Take your excessive jewelry off! All of those bangles and earrings will set the sensors off, delaying your visit and everyone else's.

*Gents:* No hoodies, hats, extra "bling" belts, or jewelry.

## Section 4:

### ***Maintaining and Building Intimate Relationships***

Relationships in general are a rollercoaster of emotions that require the participants to be fully invested in the process to keep the love alive. It is very hard to experience the ups and downs that couples do when your loved one is incarcerated. Sometimes you need to be able to work something out with your loved one. Time and time again, it will hurt to realize that you can't do most of the things you want to because your partner is incarcerated.

Let's get this example out the way first because it hurts. Be prepared that your loved one might choose *not* to come home to you. Yes, it happens. He or she may very well choose to be somewhere else after all those years of faithful dedication, long trips to visit and commissary replenishment from you. Oftentimes when the gates open, the person you have loved all those years may decide to start a whole new life.

Keep it real. You must understand that *prison changes people*. Every aspect of a person's life that was "normal" turns upside-down when they are confined to a cell, forced to live at the sound of someone's orders. Therefore, the relationship you may have had before is surely going to change now that your loved one is incarcerated.

To keep the love alive, especially during long sentences, you need to have very tough skin so that you do not internalize everything that the "gatekeepers"—your friends and family and even your incarcerated loved one—will throw at you. You must be very strong to make this last for any period of time.



Larry Walker

## **Won't I get special privileges because I am in an intimate relationship with someone who is incarcerated?**

So you're the partner? Well, writing that down on the visitation log won't make a difference to the jail or prison staff! In some cases, it may actually work against you and restrict your visitation seating. One of the many restrictions placed upon you when you visit a prison or jail is "no extended public displays of affection." You will not be allowed to spend your time kissing your lover for the next four hours! Sometimes it's best to just list yourself as "friend." You may actually get to sit closer to your loved one than if you reveal that you have some other sort of intimate relationship.

## **Can I marry my loved one while they are incarcerated?**

Believe it or not, you have to request permission to be married. Yes, you have to ask the "good" corrections people if you could please marry the person you love in their facility. Once you are granted permission, you will need to have a "counseling session"



with them to make sure you know *exactly* who it is you are marrying. Here is the time the truth is revealed; they will inform you of the true nature of the crimes your loved one has committed (if you don't already know) and any other relevant information they feel will inform your decision. When you get past the counseling session, you have to pay them \$25 for the marriage services and then they will assign someone to perform your ceremony. This is the person you will need to contact to arrange your wedding. Once you have planned things out, contact your loved one's counselor to inform them of your wedding date.

Show up for your wedding on the scheduled visitation day. You can bring a witness or use someone who's in the visiting room. You can bring gold wedding bands for the two of you but there is a fee associated with this procedure, so check with the facility to find out their rules. After you say "I do," you return to the visiting room as usual.

## **How can I have "alone time" with my loved one?**

In maximum security facilities, the *Family Reunion Program* (FRP) allows spouses

and other immediate family members to spend 48 hours alone with their incarcerated loved ones in special correctional facility housing. Not all persons are automatically eligible for FRPs. These “privileged visits” may occur every 45-65 days, depending on behavior, eligibility, and other conditions. Permission is subject to change at the discretion of the correctional facility.

There is a long application process which requires that your loved one remain on excellent behavior through the duration of his or her sentence. Newly-married couples have a waiting period (often 90 days) before the incarcerated person can ask to be a part of the FRP program. The folks in Albany will correspond with your loved one about their eligibility and then recommend programming that must be completed prior to the FRP visit (i.e. ASAT).

You will be contacted by the prison staff to set up a “home visit” to be sure that your home life is “suitable” and that you are a “suitable” candidate for an FRP visit. Basically, they come to try to get a feel for the person who’s coming to visit, make sure you live in a decent neighborhood and don’t have drugs and alcohol lying around your house. After another waiting process, your loved one will be contacted about the FRP visit, if you have been approved. You will then be notified of the visit days, which occur at any time during the week. Weekends are sacred visits that are very rare.

### **My loved one was granted an FRP visit. How will it work?**

You will be told what items you are allowed to bring on the FRP. Any unused items cannot be taken home, so pack wisely. You will also be advised as to who and how many family members can attend the visit with you. Partners have to be tested for sexually transmitted diseases before the FRP. You cannot bring your own condoms to the visit (imagine that!)-the facility will provide them.

On the day of the visit, you will typically have to arrive at 8 a.m. to be “processed.” Afterwards, you will then be escorted to a trailer where you will wait for your loved one to arrive. Once you are finally together you will have 48 hours in a quaint little trailer on

the prison site. These trailers have most of the amenities of home: TV, radio, beds, kitchen, etc., so you can enjoy some uninterrupted “normalcy” for a change. Provided

that all goes well, no contraband is found, and your loved one continues to remain on good behavior for the next few months, you can count on getting another FRP visit!



Sounds pretty good, right? It seems that way, at least until you’re back at home all alone and frustrated that you cannot just reach over and hug your loved one or get a phone call when you need one. Be sure to have the number of a friend in your support network to call at times like these.

### **My relationship is becoming stressful and I feel responsible for my loved one’s situation. What**

#### **can I do?**

It is crucial that you remember to preserve yourself before you bow down to your loved one’s demands. Remember, this is “love” we are talking about, not co-dependency and manipulation, both of which can be very common in relationships, particularly one strained by incarceration. Be sure that you learn the signs of co-dependency. It is easier than you think to become a victim of co-dependency and/or manipulation. Make sure you avoid signs of co-dependency so you can have a healthier relationship with your incarcerated loved one. Here are some common warning signs:

An overwhelming sense of responsibility for the actions of others. (“If I didn’t do this, maybe he/she wouldn’t be locked up.”)

Confusing love with pity. Make sure you aren’t trying to “love” someone by trying to “fix” or “rescue” them. (“I know he/she will change—I just need to keep at it.”)

Doing more than your share at all times (“I fill up the commissary, buy them new shoes, go visit every weekend and they don’t even call!”)

Confusing love with unhealthy dependence means you might do anything to hold on to a relationship to avoid the feeling of abandonment. If your loved one is verbally abusive, has other “intimate friends” who also visit regularly, or asks you to engage in

## **My Story: Marrying My Incarcerated Loved One**

I am writing on behalf of women who want to get married to their loved ones while they are incarcerated. Please don't let anyone tell you that you should not get married to someone incarcerated because that's between God, your spouse and you. Some may say, 'Why get married to a man in prison?' Well there are many reasons why women get married to their loved ones in prison and they should be for the right reasons. My husband has been incarcerated since January 2004 and we were married on December 30, 2005. We were planning to marry regardless, but when this happened, we knew it would have to wait. With further discussions, reading scriptures, prayer and being real with one another, we came to the conclusion that what mattered most was that we loved each other and it did not matter where we got married, whether it be a church

illegal activities out of "love," watch out! Here are things an incarcerated loved one might say to you that are red flags of manipulation:

- "You just don't understand how this place is stressing me out!"
- "You don't know what I go through in here everyday!"
- "You can't send me some money? I need some things from commissary!"
- "What? You can't sacrifice one weekend to come see me?"

When all of those things are said, it is very easy to feel guilty about what you haven't done for your loved one since s/he has been incarcerated. It is necessary to remember that it wasn't your actions that led to the incarceration. However, your actions could provide a framework for your loved one to make positive changes in his/her life.

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wedding, backyard wedding, Donald Trump wedding, Preston Bailey wedding, or a prison wedding. We are still legally married and it takes two to work at a marriage regardless. We are each other's soul mates. We always communicate, trust one another, talk about disagreements, and I can go on. Remember, life does not have to stop. You can still do the same things. It's possible but it just may be different than what you wanted. It is harder being married to someone incarcerated. It is not easy at all, but with God in your life, daily prayer and staying busy and visiting your loved ones when you can—all of that will help ease the pain. If I was still living the life and going out every night, I would not be able to do it. Don't get me wrong, I hurt, I get stressed out, I cry, but I also talk about it with him and pray to God always. Yes, I go out with my friends and have fun, but there is a limit to my fun, due to the love that I have for myself and him and the commitment that I made. You see, I am 40-years-old and I have changed for the better. Please remember: don't get married if you are not strong enough to handle it, because it is not a game. You may think at first that you are strong, but it turns out that you are not. If that happens, okay, fine, admit that, because we all make mistakes or decisions and can't deal...God won't punish you for that.

—Mrs. Clark

Section 5:

## **What about the Children?**

Incarceration is extremely disruptive for a family. There are many barriers that make it hard to maintain strong family ties while a loved one is incarcerated. As a parent or caregiver of children with an incarcerated parent, it is important that you are always on the lookout for signs of emotional struggle or unusual behavior. Children of incarcerated mothers will often move at least once and live with at least two different caretakers while their mother is in prison. A majority of children with incarcerated parents live apart from siblings. All of this change and instability makes it very important to communicate with your children while their loved one is incarcerated. Just like you, children dealing with the stress and strain of having someone they love behind bars need a lot of love, care, and support to help them survive this difficult

period.



Ringo Harris

### **My child's parent just got incarcerated. What should I say happened?**

Each family has to struggle with this question of how to tell a child such terrible news. We do not want to tell you how to raise your children, or pretend that we have all the answers. What we can say *from experience* is that it's best to avoid lying to a child about where the parent is. As an adult, you have the right and the responsibility to make decisions about the best ways to help a child understand what's going on.

Though it might *seem* easier to tell lies than the difficult and painful truth, the reality is that it only gets harder to keep misleading a child as time goes on. Your child will have questions, and the more that lies are told, the harder it will be to ever get out of the cycle. Postponing the truth will not make it easier for a child to cope with what's going on. In fact, keeping them away from the truth can make it much harder for them to deal with the reality of the situation when that time comes....and it does, eventually.

**"Think** about the importance of honesty and care when communicating with your children about prison. Both of you should be on the same page, telling the child the same thing. Agree first what that will be and stay on the same page. Check in often to see how your child is feeling and what your child is thinking. There is no one way to handle any situation, and without judgment or telling anybody how to raise children some good advice is: Don't lie to your children and don't talk negatively about the person in prison - it can come back to haunt you and it can seriously harm your child. Seek help from a program for children with incarcerated parents. There are so many issues to be addressed, the emotional issues that can scar children inside: anger, frustration, loneliness, disappointment, embarrassment, secretiveness, lack of coping skills, withdrawal from the family, depression, stigma, and cruelty from other children or society, just to name a few. Encourage children to write letters. Work hard to maintain a family balance: when one child is incarcerated and the other isn't or devoting attention to loved one behind bars and neglecting children in the home."

-FREE! member

### **How does a child change when a parent is incarcerated?**

Children with incarcerated parents can feel increased anxiety, fear, loneliness, anger, and depression. They may be stigmatized and ostracized by classmates, lose self-esteem, withdraw from relationships with adults and peers, act out in school, cut class, or get bad grades. Children with incarcerated parents also face an increased risk of getting caught up in the criminal justice system and substance abuse.

### **Why is it so important for incarcerated parents to stay in touch with their children?**

Children suffer a great sense of abandonment when a parent is taken away from them, especially if that child has a good relationship with the incarcerated parent. The child may feel lost, alone or betrayed. It is important that the

child has the opportunity to communicate with the parent to get the reassurance that although the parent may have done something wrong and has to pay for their mistake, that the parent loves them very much and will, with the grace of God, return to them.

### **What are meaningful ways to stay in touch and how can organizations help?**

Phone calls and visits are expensive but letters and pictures are very affordable, intimate, and independent ways to keep in touch. Phone calls and visits are very expensive

and can be a financial burden to caregivers. Organizations like as CHIPS and Hour Children help tremendously with this service by transporting children and family members to facilities. Other organizations could get involved as well.



### **How do you help siblings cope when the other sibling is incarcerated?**

Dwayne Murray  
It is important to let the child left behind know that although the incarcerated sibling is in prison, he or she still loves the sibling(s) on the outside very much. Communication is extremely important: encourage them to share their feelings as much as possible.

### **What can I do to help a child whose parent is incarcerated?**

Take it one day at a time. Regardless of whether you're talking about small children, teens, or adults, it's never going to be "easy" for anyone in your family to cope with the stress, strain, and pain of having a loved one behind bars. Good communication and lots of attention can help you understand what a child is going through a little better. Just like adults, children of any age may not always have the vocabulary or the self-awareness to tell you point blank what they need to help them survive this struggle. But if you do your best to always be there for the child, take the time to answer their questions, ask them often how they are feeling, and spend as much quality time with them as possible, you can help them develop a healthy routine in

their lives to make it through this experience.

We know that it can be hard to find the hours in the day to deal with the issues your loved one is facing inside, while doing what you have to do to make a living, keep yourself sane, and keep your family strong. As much as you can, try to make sure that you do not devote all your attention to the loved one who is incarcerated: if you do, you will neglect the needs of the family members who are on the outside. Balance is key for everyone to make it through this.

### **My emotions are all over the place. Is it OK to vent to my children?**

It is very important to take care of yourself throughout this experience; you cannot be helpful to anyone else if you are not paying attention to your own needs. Seek out support from family, neighbors, or join groups like FREE! to connect with others who have or are going through similar experiences. We do not recommend that you “vent” to the children about their parent, even if the child is older. As much as you may feel hurt or angry by the situation a loved one is in, venting your emotions of anger, resentment, disappointment, and blame can only hurt and confuse a child struggling to cope with this difficult experience. Remember: children learn how to think, feel, and behave by watching the adults in their lives. What you say will play a major role in shaping a child’s understanding of what is going on.

### **My child does not want to talk about his/her feelings. What can I do?**

It is very common for anyone going through stress to withdraw from the people around them. Encourage a child behaving this way to try writing letters to their incarcerated parent or draw them pictures. This sort of activity can help a child feel more comfortable expressing feelings they may be too shy or scared to say out loud. But instead of “ordering” a child to do an activity like this, lead by example. Try doing the activity along with them and explain why it helps you feel better. Invite them to do it with you. Not only will you be encouraging the child to have more communication with their incarcerated parent, you will also be establishing a loving activity that the two of you can do together. Remember to be patient. No one in the family is going

to figure out how to cope overnight.

### **Can my child visit an incarcerated parent whenever they want to?**

Each facility has their own rules. Check with the facility where your loved one is located to learn what their visiting policy is for children.

### **Can a child visit an incarcerated parent without supervision?**

It all depends on the age of the child. Check with the facility you want to visit to learn their rules.

### **My child is going to visit his/her incarcerated parent for the first time. What should we expect?**

It's difficult to predict exactly how a child will react but you can imagine that their feelings will probably be similar to yours: a mixture of sadness, fear, helplessness, and shock. It's a good idea to pay a visit a loved one who is incarcerated without children first, so that you know what to expect yourself and are better able to control your own emotions and stay strong for the child. It's also a good idea to talk to the child before the visit to

**'Due to** my husband's prior record I  
knew the day we got the phone call that he was arrested that it would not just be dismissed. At the time, we were trying to get him into a program because he went back to drugs and alcohol. Finding out he was arrested took away any hope we had that things would get better. My two children, ages fourteen and three at the time, both took it very bad. My fourteen-year-old felt scared for him, hurt and angry. He was her stepfather but she loved him as her own because he was there for her every day over the past four years. Our three-year-old daughter in common could not express the abandonment. She became very clingy, afraid I would leave next. She had nightmares and had angry outbursts. They both acted out and I was scared for them and where this emotional upset would lead them. I was forced to go on welfare and the house that we shared with my sister had to go up for sale because we could not afford to keep up with the bills. I was never more scared in my life, mostly because my

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explain what they will see when they arrive to help make the experience a little less frightening.

### **What can a mentor do for a child whose parent is incarcerated?**

Mentors, often recruited from houses of worship, community organizations, and civic groups, can help to bolster kids' relationships with their parents and support families while they are struggling with all of the pain of having a loved one behind bars. They can help children connect with incarcerated parents through letters, phone calls, and prison visits. Mentoring alone is not going to be enough for every child, so it needs to be combined with other sorts of support and services.

### **What if my incarcerated loved one is the primary caregiver of a minor child? Can s/he lose custody of the child?**

Under New York's *Adoption and Safe Families Act* (ASFA), the foster care agency is almost always required to file a proceeding to terminate parental rights if a child is in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months. (The median minimum sentence for women in New York State pris-

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children now only had me to depend on. Some people I knew would act very concerned about what happened to my husband and I would open up and be honest with them only to find they were just being nosy. Others just treated us differently after they found out that my husband was arrested. Needless to say, the whole world seemed to fall all on me and I wanted to run. The only thing that kept me grounded was my kids and not knowing what might happen if I bailed out on them.

Because my husband was straight and living as a responsible and dependable person for the last five years, we had no safety net when this happened. I had no warning or way of preparing; one day he was gone. I felt helpless and I do not like feeling helpless especially if I have to stay in a situation....I then looked around and saw what I was left with to have to try to make better. My children were my first priority. I put my older

(Continued on page 49)

ons is 36 months and ASFA makes no exceptions for incarcerated parents.) Under ASFA, if an incarcerated parent, as the primary caregiver, does not maintain consistent contact with their child or if they fail to adequately “plan for the future” of the child, then child welfare can make the case that the child is abandoned or permanently neglected and file a proceeding to terminate parental rights. After parental rights are terminated, parents have no legal relationship with their children; they are legally considered a stranger to their children and are not permitted to have any contact with them.

### **What happens if my loved one is pregnant at the time she is sentenced?**

Bedford Hills and Taconic have the capacity to house approximately 29 and 15 mothers and their infants, respectively. Several aspects of a woman’s past are examined before she can participate in these nursery programs. Some factors are: who is going to have custody of the child; the mother’s history with child welfare systems; the length of her sentence; her incarceration history, and the nature of her crime. Women who have committed arson or who have a history of child abuse are not eligible for the nursery. A woman must give birth while in custody to qualify for the program.

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daughter and myself in therapy to help deal with it all. My older daughter began to do better and stopped doing self-destructive things. The therapist helped me handle my three-year-old and I let her cling to me as long as she needed until she was assured that I was not leaving. The nightmares stopped and her temper is still being managed. I encourage both of them to keep open and express what they feel....They have not seen their father in a while now and he has become a part of the system. He shut down and shut us out, something I feared he would do so that he does not have to deal with the pain. I know I have a long road ahead of me with them both, but as long as I stay on top of them, by the grace of God, we will be okay.”

—Kelly Busso-Fisher, FREE! member

## **What about child support?**

In New York, incarcerated parents must continue to pay child support during their sentence. It is very common for incarcerated parents to fall behind on child support payments because they cannot earn any real income. This can cause lots of stress and strain on your family. To get the most accurate information about the child support system, contact your local Division of Child Support Enforcement (<https://newyorkchildsupport.com/home.html> or call 1-888-208-4485. Encourage your incarcerated loved one to discuss these responsibilities with a counselor.

### **Justice for Incarcerated Mothers**

In May 2009, the Anti Shackling Bill (S.1290/A.3373-A) was passed. It ensures that women in labor will not have to endure the health risk and the indignity of being shackled as they bring their newborn into this world. It prohibits state and local correctional authorities from using restraints on an incarcerated pregnant female who is being transported for childbirth, during labor and delivery, and in post-natal recovery. An exception to this rule is made when restraints are determined to be necessary to prevent the woman from injuring herself, or medical or correctional personnel. In these instances, a pregnant woman may be cuffed by one wrist.

## **Does anyone care about the welfare of children with incarcerated parents?**

There are many good organizations out there committed to helping children cope with having an incarcerated parent. Flip to the Appendix section of this guide to find the names and contact information for some of these organizations.

In 1996, several hundred children from around the world drafted *The Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights* to address the many ways that the criminal justice system has neglected the needs of children who have a parent in prison or jail. The bill lists the rights that all children have so that they can grow up free from abuse, thrive in the world, and participate in shaping their futures.

*Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights*

1. I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent.
4. I have the right to be well cared for in my parent's absence.
5. I have the right to speak with, see and touch my parent.
6. I have the right to support as I struggle with my parent's incarceration.
7. I have the right not to be judged, blamed or labeled because of my parent's incarceration.
8. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

To get an informational booklet, you can call 209-938-0727 or write to:

Friends Outside  
2540 Pacific Avenue, #8  
Stockton, CA 95204

Section 6:  
***Healthcare***

Health care for the incarcerated is either completely absent or extremely limited: quality varies from facility to facility. As far as your loved one is concerned, it is truly better to think as if healthcare in prison *does not* exist. This approach will arm you with the perspective necessary to fight for your loved one's health and safety.

**Are health conditions bad in jail and prison?**

Yes, health care in the jail and prison is very poor. There are several areas of extreme concern in New York's jails and prisons. Family members of the incarcerated should be aware of the current spread of infection and available treatment for HIV and Hepatitis in the correctional facilities.

**Is HIV a serious problem?**

In a 2001 study by the Department of Correction (DOC) and activist groups including the Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP!), it was determined that approximately 7,000 people are known to be living with HIV in jail or prison. One can only imagine that this rate has increased, partially due to the fact that condoms *cannot* be distributed in prison and homosexual intercourse and prison rape does occur.

Most incarcerated people living with the virus have at best limited access to required medications. A man who suffered from HIV while incarcerated in Sing-Sing had to choose each morning between showing up for his HIV medications or showing up for breakfast. While most of us can afford to skip a meal, if he did his medications would make him sicker. He had no one to advocate for his care.

HIV infection in the criminal justice system is a problem for our entire society. Like the vast majority of incarcerated individuals, those who are HIV-positive return home eventually and may infect their loved ones, thus continuing this deadly cycle of rapid disease spread, if they do not understand the virus—or know they have it.

## **What about Hepatitis?**

There is also a high rate of Hepatitis-B and Hepatitis-C infections among the prison and jail population. According to a report published by the Department of Correction (DOC) in 2003, approximately 1 in 7 incarcerated people are infected with Hepatitis-C, and more females than males. The Center for Disease Control requires that all incarcerated people be tested for Hep-C and, upon diagnosis, receive treatment. Through the Hepatitis-C Continuity Program, formerly incarcerated people can receive continued treatment once they are released from prison (Prison Safety in New York, 2006).

## **What can I do to protect my loved one's health while s/he is incarcerated?**

The NYS Department of Correctional Services webpage provides important information for those advocating for their loved one's health ([www.docs.state.ny.us/directives.html](http://www.docs.state.ny.us/directives.html)).

First, establish clear communication with your loved one about any illnesses or symptoms s/he has and any medications s/he takes. Be sure to write down what you learn. Have your loved one record the dates and times s/he requests a "medical call-out."

Second, be sure that you or someone with a direct family relationship to your incarcerated loved one—parent, spouse, sibling, etc.—has made contact with his/her counselor. This person will be your first line of defense whenever your loved one is sick and you need answers. If your loved one has a medical problem that you are aware of, it is advisable to call the facility as soon as your loved one arrives, locate his/her counselor, introduce yourself, state your concern, and have them take note of your loved one's condition.

Third, have your loved one complete a HIPPA form (see the Appendix) and give it to his/her counselor. Make sure you keep a copy for yourself. Although it may not always be useful, it can help you provide the leverage you need to get specific information about your loved one's condition.

Fourth, know the numbers to various state agencies in Albany as well as the treatment facilities your loved one may be taken to for outside treatment. Be familiar with the New York State Department of Health and Department of Mental Health and have their contact information handy. If your loved one becomes sick, you need to advocate for him/her to receive the needed treatment. This means making phone calls and writing letters to everyone involved—the counselor, the Superintendent, the Commissioner of Corrections and various health directors in the state offices. You need to make your voice heard in order to get your loved one the care s/he needs and deserves.

### **My incarcerated loved one is transgender. What resources are out there to help us?**

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) works with transgender people in prison and in jail ([www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org) or 212-337-8550). Queers for Economic Justice is a progressive non-profit organization committed to promoting economic justice in a context of sexual and gender liberation ([www.q4ej.org](http://www.q4ej.org) or 212.564.3608).

### **My incarcerated loved one is mentally ill. What can I do?**

Understanding mental illnesses is a challenge to those who are expertly trained in the field but even more challenging to correctional officers who usually don't have any specific training to develop the awareness to properly handle these issues. This often leads to incarcerated people with mental illnesses being placed in Solitary Housing Units ("the SHU"), a 23-hour solitary lockdown unit also known as "the box." Because of the punitive nature of solitary confinement, mentally ill individuals can suffer for long periods of time without their needs being recognized because their "bad behaviors" overshadow their illness.

Thankfully, in New York State, several agencies that make up the Mental Health Alternatives to Solitary Confinement (MHASC) coalition, which is currently working to abolish solitary confinement in state prisons by advocating for the passing of legislative bill S333/A4870, which would put a stop to the endless confinement of mentally ill prisoners. Rights of Incarcerated People with Psychiatric Disabilities (RIPPD) is an-

# "My husband

Don has throat cancer and I've been fighting DOCS for months to get him treated. Well, good news: now he's at Westchester hospital, starting radiation treatment and chemo. The doctor there has been so helpful. DOCS wanted to have my husband transported everyday for 7 weeks, cuffed and shackled, back and forth from Greenhaven to the hospital with a breathing tube in him and a feeding tube. I complained to the warden and Albany and everyone I could, threatening lawsuits if anything happened to my husband during transport with NO medical staff in the van. Now they will be keeping him at the hospital for the whole 7 weeks. I am so relieved. The doctor said the radiation and chemo will work well, so he won't lose his voice box, and he'll be good as new soon again!"

—Maria Ferrin, FREE! member

other grassroots organization that was founded by people with psychiatric disabilities to fight against the injustice in the prison systems, to find alternatives to incarceration and to advocate for better mental health care in New York State prisons.

Your requests for mental health information should be addressed to the Satellite Mental Health Unit of the facility where your loved one is located and sent to the attention of the Unit Chief. If the facility does not have a mental health presence, the request should be forwarded to:

Office of Mental Health  
Bureau of Forensic Services  
44 Holland Ave.  
Albany, NY 12229

## **My incarcerated loved one has a substance abuse problem. What sort of treatment can s/he get?**

There are a number of "treatment" programs documented in the New York correctional facilities. Each of these programs is designed for specific individuals, have certain criteria that the incarcerated person must meet to qualify for entry and are only available in certain facilities. For more information on the nature of these programs, visit [www.docs.state.ny.us/ProgramServices](http://www.docs.state.ny.us/ProgramServices).

## **What happens if my loved one passes away while incarcerated?**

Facilities are required to report a person's death to the Commissioner of Corrections within six hours of the death and provide a detailed report of the circumstances. Family members and people formerly incarcerated agree on this fact: Something needs to be done to create a transparent procedure for the handling of the death (expected or sudden) of a loved one while incarcerated. Sadly, we've heard too many stories like this one: "I seen ladies die, get picked up by an ambulance from the outside hospital, and after that all information is kept secret. Also when that happens, officers take the time to listen to phone conversations coming in—and they place the person who called the family or relatives of the loved one who died in the SHU. So, nobody takes the chance to call and talk about the incident."

## **Someone in our family is nearing death. Can my loved one visit them?**

There is actually some humanity to the whole notion of prisons regarding the death of a close family member. Ac-

### **Mama's Gone:**

#### **Dealing with Death and Incarceration**

Cynthia Hill was something like an enigma; a proud, strong African-American woman who raised three children while permanently bound to a wheelchair. I was always afraid to ask Moon how his mother ended up in the wheelchair, paralyzed from her waist down, but curiosity burned my insides. I loved Cynthia like a thorn loves a rose, but I loved her as if she were my very own mother.

A month had passed when I realized I hadn't spoken to her. Then the phone rang and my sister-in-law called to say, "Ma is in the hospital..." The pregnant pause at the end of that sentence meant this time was unlike any other. Then came the question: "Who would tell Moon?" He was her only son and he was serving a 15-to-life sentence at Five Points. How would he react? Should we tell him in person? Should we write a letter? Would we wait until we knew more or tell him now that something was wrong? What do you do when the one you love is locked

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up?

I spent nights with a knot in my stomach trying to reason through this madness - if I tell and nothing happens, did I screw up? If I don't tell and something happens, did I screw up? I went to Cynthia's bedside and held her hand and she read my thoughts before I uttered a word, "tell him I'm sick but I'll be okay."

The journey to Five Points was extremely long that Saturday; the visit became a blur. I walked into the facility and told a lie that even I believed, "Ma is sick but she's going to be okay and she'll be home soon..." Ma shrunk from a healthy, robust woman to an emaciated figure that resembled a child; something had gone terribly wrong. We now had a troubling decision to make - should Moon make the journey home to be by her bedside in those last hours or should we wait for the funeral?

cording to DOC Directive #4206, the incarcerated are allowed to make a deathbed visit or attend a memorial for their loved one. To do this, contact the facility where your loved one is and ask the chaplain to notify him/her of the ill person's state. The chaplain will arrange to meet with your incarcerated loved one to discuss what has happened. As the family, you must provide information about the ill person including: the name and location of the hospital or funeral parlor, and the relationship between your incarcerated loved one and the terminally ill person. The facility will verify the information. Often times, they will allow your loved one to make one family phone call. Next, the family must decide if they want a "bedside" or "funeral" visit. 90% of the time, when these procedures are followed carefully, DOCS will arrange for your loved one to be transported to the hospital or funeral home, accompanied by DOCS officers.

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(Continued from page 57)

When your life is wrapped up in the DOC there's not much time or space to negotiate; there's a small window of "opportunity and kindness" that you can seize in a time of trouble. We contacted the prison counselor to tell him what was happening, contacted the prison chaplain to say that my mother had only a few hours left and could my husband come home; then my sister-in-law made the difficult decision to ask that he come home after Cynthia passed, which split the family apart.

Cynthia held on long enough for all of the loose ends to be tied; but she wouldn't let go without a word from her baby boy - and then the call came...On Wednesday night the chaplain from Five Points called to say that Moon had asked to call his mother, "Was this Cynthia Hill?" In the next few breaths, Moon spilled his soul to his mother, and she did the same. She reminded him to take care of us - Ronnie and Denise - and be strong for us, to do the right thing and come home soon...And then she let go.

The days started to weave together with no beginning or end as you work with the DOC at their mercy to bring your loved one home; series of phone calls to counselors and chaplains and funeral homes and endless faxes and numbers exchanged to verify the end of a life and baited breath waiting, waiting, waiting, WILL HE COME HOME? Death exists on a DOC timeline and as outsiders you must coordinate your life to the last minute to ensure that everything falls into place. You do not know the exact time that your loved one will arrive home so you live within a window of hope. Cynthia's wake was from 1 pm to 4 pm with the funeral immediately following, therefore as a safety precaution, we could only know that Moon would be home at some point during the day.

We woke at the crack of dawn awaiting his arrival, waiting for the call from the DOC.

(Continued on page 59)

*(Continued from page 58)*

Finally around 1:30 we were alerted by the funeral home that the DOC had called and they would be sweeping the premises before Moon arrived. We made a mad dash to get to the funeral home and stood outside waiting for him to arrive. Minutes later the green van pulled up, the facilities were swept and for one moment in time the shackles disappeared, and my family was together again. Even though there were two armed officers by the door, it was as though we were back at 193 Albany Ave. and Cynthia was still with us.

Time passed so quickly, the daydream ended, the shackles became real and we had to let go. We had to let him go back, as we had to let Cynthia go back to her maker. I never felt so much loss at one moment as I felt that day. As I stood on the sidewalk with my arms wrapped around my stepson, watching the officers help Moon back into the van, lighting his Newport for the 5 hour ride, I felt a love unlike any other as the tears rolled down all of our faces, there was one intricate drop that fell into a stream of hope that one day, one day, we would all be FREE!...

—Denise Barnes, FREE! Steering Committee member

Section 7:

***Rights of the Incarcerated?***

***Things that Can Happen without Anyone's Consent...***

*"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist with the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction..."*

—13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution

Simply stated, the conditions of imprisonment are equivalent to a form of slavery. The incarcerated have limited rights because they are considered “State property.” Many injustices occur “behind the wall” and only when informed advocates pay attention and take action—or in the case of the Attica Riots, when the incarcerated stand up for simple human rights—will conditions improve in the prison industrial complex.

**My loved one was just transferred and we had no idea this was planned. Can that really happen?**

Stability for our incarcerated loved ones is a joke; at any given time they can be transferred without prior notice. This process is known as “the draft.” Generally, the incarcerated are sent on “the draft” after a disciplinary incident (tickets) or if there is a conflict (or a potential conflict) with another incarcerated person. The corrections officers will approach the individual in their cell and tell them to pack their belongings in plastic bags. They are not “allowed” to notify family members of their future location for safety reasons. For this reason, most incarcerated people will ask each other to call their family members and tell them that they are being transferred.

**My loved one was transferred. How can I find out where s/he is now?**

Family members can generally find out their location prior to their loved one’s arrival at a new facility using the NYS DOCs Inmate Locator at: [www.docs.nys](http://www.docs.nys).

## **How do transfers work?**

Incarcerated people are also eligible for “transfers” based on periodic good behavior, usually after 6 months to a year. A request can be made to the counselor for the incarcerated person to be sent to another facility within the “hub” or group of prisons in one area. An incarcerated person can request to be sent to a small choice of facilities. Requests are not guaranteed: they are based on availability and other factors. The person will generally end up at an equivalent facility within the same hub. After several years in prison, your loved one’s classification may change, which makes them eligible to move to a less restrictive environment (from a maximum to a medium security facility, for example). This is also considered a transfer.

## **What is a hardship transfer?**

Family members can petition the state for a “hardship transfer,” which may or may not be granted. These transfers are sometimes granted under dire circumstances, such as: the sole visiting family member has a severe disability and is immobile; the visiting family member is elderly; or the visit would put extreme undue stress on the family member to travel, etc.

If you decide to petition for a hardship transfer, a sincere, heartfelt letter should be sent to the Department of Inmate Movement and Classification (NYS Department of Correctional Services, Bldg. 2, 1200 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12226-2050), so you have a far better chance of being heard. You need to know how to plead your case and make a very thoughtful argument for the transfer. You will not be notified directly of any transfers, but if your loved one is moved closer within a reasonable amount of time, you may have had a hand in the transaction.

## **Does prison abuse happen?**

Abuse by officials inside prison is generally labeled the same way as abuse by police officers outside of prison: “self-defense.” The case is made that the individual is resistant, or violent and therefore needed unnatural force to yield submission.

We recall a visit where a young man was alleged to have received drugs from his mother on the visiting floor; after a few minutes corrections officers streamed out of every possible door to the visiting room, some wearing black gloves, the different colored shirts indicated the higher ranking officers and they all descended on the bathroom the young man had entered. Seconds later, screams from the bathroom penetrated the visiting room; there were loud thumps against the wall and the screaming continued, soon the officers walked out with bloody shirts and inmate porters had to go in to clean up the mess. The young man's nose had been broken and eyes were blackened as they "searched" him for drugs.

Water torture may have disappeared from New York State prisons but the quiet little secret of prison abuse is still rampant in the Department of Corrections. Folks who have spent time in Attica talk about an "alleged Black Hand" sect of officers who have a different set of rules than your everyday correctional officers. In Sing Sing, inmates in "the Box" are sometimes placed on "the Loaf" diet when they continue to misbehave – and yes that's bread and water...

While there are several statistics about violence between incarcerated people, or incarcerated folk and guards, there seem to be no visible records of the number of attacks on our incarcerated loved ones by prison guards.

### **What is solitary confinement?**

The starker form of abuse inside New York State prisons is the extensive use of the *Solitary Housing Unit* (SHU), better known as "the Box." In New York State there are several "Box" facilities that are strictly for inmates with disciplinary infractions; among those are Five Points, Southport and Upstate. Currently New York State has over 5,000 inmates housed in the SHU with indiscriminate sentences.

The theory behind the SHU, according to a 2006 DOCS report, is that "the general public and the general population of inmates" are being protected from unnecessarily violent individuals. The thinking goes that the very thought of the solitary confinement

will force “violent” folk to become better behaved individuals. It’s a little ironic to think that when 2 “violent” individuals are locked down in a 5’ x 9’ cell for 23 hours a day—only sometimes afforded a shower and given little or no privileges—that they will somehow become better citizens.

People held there can be confined to a 5’ x 9’ cell for 23 hours a day, restricted from human contact with the exception of the occasional visiting correction’s officer. They are allowed a once-a-week visit with someone from the outside and one hour a day dedicated to physical activity that takes place in a small “pen” outside of the cell. In some facilities incarcerated men and women are on a “behavior modification system” where “privileges” are restored as time passes and the inmate “proves” to be worthy of basic amenities (Lakeview Shock).

Currently there is a campaign to “Ban the SHU” ([www.bantheshu.org](http://www.bantheshu.org)) because several men and women have died while in the Box due to inadequate care. We found this story in a report compiled by the Mental Health Alternatives to Solitary Confinement (MHASC) group and from my personal experiences with a loved one in the SHU, we can attest that these allegations are not exaggerations!

“Many incarcerated people believe that their food is sometimes tampered with when they are in the SHU so they either do without or resort to alternative diets to receive ‘shrink-wrapped’ food that has no evidence of tampering. Sometimes when incarcerated folk are sent to the SHU—which happens without a lot of time to prepare for departure—their belongings are left unsupervised in their cells, where they can be stolen or damaged: “In the following weeks, I was able to learn more about the charges and was allowed to review the property that was forwarded in my name. Most of the property belonged to someone else, and mine was declared missing. I was told there was nothing that could be done. I eventually filed a claim, which the court threw out for failure to serve the opposing party—but I know that was definitely done.”

“Recreation consisted of a possible hour standing in a cage behind the cell looking out

into nothingness, or watching other inmates perfect their skill at fishin' for contraband. The one hour allotted to us was to get some cold fresh air in our lungs, which was very different from the many smells attributed to two angry strangers who barely, if ever, considered the feelings of the other cellmate. If an inmate was not standing at his cell door at chow time, he lost the opportunity to eat that meal. Showers were given for ten minutes every three days. Shaves and haircuts requiring the use of clippers were once every two weeks, for ten minutes. And though there were radio plugs in each cell, first-level inmates were not allowed to be entertained. There were three levels of punishment in the SHU 200. The first level basically deprived you of everything except what you were given when you first went in. The second level was given



to you after thirty days, which allowed you to get a pair of headphones and a commis-sary sheet for cosmetics (real soap, lotion, writing pads, etc.). After thirty more days of what was considered good behavior, a person could graduate to the third level, where he would be allowed to receive a pair of sneakers and shorts to walk around in and magazines and books to read. If he was chosen to be of minimal concern, he might well be given the opportunity to work as a porter and clean the halls, or cut the other inmates' hair. The only good thing about the SHU's 200 boxes was that many standard violations by officers were curtailed because of the cameras.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>© 2005 by Mental Health Alternatives to Solitary Confinement.

## Section 8:

### **Homecoming**

With the way sentencing is these days, if there is a release date for your loved one then there is hope for another chance. It's so important to do the work necessary to prepare for this homecoming while your loved one is in prison and not wait until a month or two before his/her release date to start making all the necessary plans and preparations. As long as the road may feel until their release, use this time wisely: make calls, get connected. That's what folks mean by the saying "do the time, don't let the time do you." This phrase doesn't only apply to your incarcerated loved one; the same applies to you as a family member as well.

#### **My loved one is going to go before the Parole Board. What should we expect?**

After serving the minimum term of a sentence, your loved one is automatically scheduled to make his or her first Parole Board appearance. The Board examines your loved one's institutional adjustment, disciplinary record, earned eligibility status, and criminal history, along with other factors, to determine whether release should be granted. Release interviews are conducted by a panel of two or three members of the Parole Board. Parole staff and a hearing reporter, who will record what is said during the interview, will also be present. Your loved one's attorney may not be present at such interviews.

#### **What is temporary release?**

Temporary release is a DOCS program that allows your loved one temporary release from a correctional facility into the community for specific purposes. Every facility has a committee to screen and process applications.

#### **What can I do to help my loved one get out of prison and onto parole?**

When your loved one appears before the Parole Board, it is important for them to have "evidence of rehabilitation" to help them make the case that s/he should be released. Evidence about participation in any positive life activities—school, jobs, trainings,

counsel and social service programs, parole or probation officer, clergy, volunteer work—will help your loved one prove “rehabilitation.” Brainstorm about who can prepare these letters. Ask the writer of the letter to talk about any and all details that can convey your loved one’s good qualities: the length of time and good attendance in any sort of school, programs, or jobs, his/her grades and motivation, punctuality, useful skills learned, the ability to get along well with others. If your loved one has a disability that prevented him/her from working (for example, your loved one’s drug or alcohol problem), make sure the writer explains this. These letters should not only address your loved one’s accomplishments before incarceration but what s/he has achieved during their sentence. To learn more, get in touch with the Center for Parole Restoration at 888-590-9212 .

### **My loved one has been put on parole. What does a Parole Officer do?**

A Parole Officer (or “P.O.”) will supervise your loved one in the community if s/he is approved for temporary release. Details about eligibility requirements and application procedures are available from the DOCS staff at the prison.

### **What else should I know about parole?**

The Division of Parole charges people on parole, conditional release, presumptive release or post-release supervision, a supervision fee of \$30.00 per month. This fee can be waived if your loved one can provide proof of indigence (poverty) and unreasonable hardship. Counties are not supposed to collect additional fees.

### **What can I do to prepare for my loved one’s return home?**

One FREE! Member says: “Manage expectations. Everyone has changed. Be proactive in staying out and keeping your family together.” Research every avenue and map out a plan! Know who your loved one is, and be proud of any and all their accomplishments. Be positive and be optimistic to help your loved one gain the confidence to truly believe that they have the power to turn their life around. Learn as much as you can about the challenges faced by others who have been through this experience to help you and your loved one prepare. Join groups like FREE! to get connected to a support system.

### **What is shock incarceration and how does it affect parole eligibility?**

Shock is a highly successful DOCS program for certain people convicted of non-violent crimes (mainly those convicted of drug offenses), who are in prison for the first time. It teaches self-discipline and features academic education, intensive substance abuse treatment, group and individual counseling, life skills education and physical training. Shock serves as an alternative to up to three years in prison and is also open to non-drug offenders. Generally, participants who successfully complete the program are issued a Certificate of Earned Eligibility and are eligible for parole release consideration prior to completing their court-imposed minimum sentence. For more information, visit <http://parole.state.ny.us/Handbook.pdf>.

### **My loved one has served his/her time. Does this mean that the nightmare is over?**

Once that your loved one is released from incarceration, you will find that many barriers exists that make it very difficult for him/her to resume “life as usual.” Even though your loved one has served his/her time and “repaid their debt” to society, a criminal record creates many roadblocks that will make even the most basic things in life—locating a place to live, finding a job, pursuing their education, raising children, establishing financial stability, etc.—very hard. These challenges are known as some of the of the “collateral consequences” of incarceration.

### **Will my loved one’s criminal record always be an issue?**

Many states allow certain types of convictions to be “expunged” from someone’s record after a certain period of time. New York State is *not* one of them. But there is something that your loved one can do to help to overcome some of the barriers s/he faces: apply for what is called a “Certificate of Rehabilitation.” There are two different types of certificates: Certificates of Relief from Disability and Certificates of Good Conduct. When your loved one applies for certain jobs or occupational licenses, s/he could be denied automatically based on their criminal history—these are called “statutory bars.” However, if your loved one has a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities or a Certificate of Good Conduct, an employer or licensing agency is required by law to consider it as

evidence that he or she is “rehabilitated.” This means that your loved one’s conviction history cannot result in him or her being rejected for employment or refused a license. However, the law still permits an employer or licensing agency to refuse to hire or license your loved one if s/he is not qualified or if the conviction is job-related.

### **What is the difference between a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities and a Certificate of Good Conduct?**

The difference between these two certificates is who can apply, which is based on a person’s conviction history. Once the appropriate certificate is granted, they both serve the same purpose (except for one special case: individuals who wish to run for public office).

Unfortunately, the rules surrounding these certificates are very confusing. To learn more, read the informative pamphlet “Certificates of Relief from Disabilities and Certificates of Good Conduct,” written by the Legal Action Center. You can download the pamphlet on their website ([www.lac.org](http://www.lac.org)) or contact them to request a hard copy if you do not have computer access at 212-243-1313.

### **Which of the two certificates should my loved one apply for?**

Your loved one should apply for a Certificate of Relief from Disability if s/he has no more than one felony conviction and/or any number of misdemeanors (the number of misdemeanors does not matter). Your loved one must apply for a Certificate of Relief from Disability for each charge related to their felony conviction. Your loved one should apply for a Certificate of Good Conduct if s/he was convicted of two or more felonies (in addition to any number of misdemeanors).

### **When can my loved one apply for their Certificate?**

If your loved one is eligible for a **Certificate of Relief from Disability**, s/he can apply for the certificate immediately after their conviction if 1) all s/he has on his/her record is misdemeanors or 2) they have a felony conviction that did not require time

spent in state prison. If they have spent time in state prison for their conviction, they can apply as soon as they are released through their Parole Officer.

If your loved one is eligible for a **Certificate of Good Conduct**, your loved one is required to wait for a certain period of time depending on the kind of conviction. If your loved one was convicted of “A” or “B” felonies, s/he must wait a period of five years from his/her last conviction, payment of fine, or release from prison—whichever of these is latest. If your loved one was convicted of a “C,” “D”, or “E” conviction, s/he must wait three years from his/her last conviction, payment of fine, or release from prison—whichever of these is latest.

### **How can my loved one apply for a Certificate of Relief from Disability?**

Each court has its own (often confusing) procedure, so call them to find out exactly how the process works. If your loved one has one felony, but served no time in state prison *or* a misdemeanor, s/he must apply for the certificate through the court in which they were convicted.

If your loved one was convicted of a felony and served time in state prison, s/he must apply directly to the New York State Board of Parole. To request the application, contact:

Certificate Review Unit  
New York State Division of Parole  
845 Central Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206  
518-485-8953

Be sure to follow all instructions on the application very carefully to avoid delays! The application must be notarized.

## **How can my loved one apply for a Certificate of Good Conduct?**

Once the required waiting period of either three or five years has passed, request the application from:

Certificate Review Unit

New York State Division of Parole

845 Central Avenue

Albany, NY 12206

518- 485-8953.

It takes at least six months to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct. If your loved one needs the Certificate in a hurry, explain why in a letter to the Certificate Review Unit sent with the completed application form. When a job or occupational license is at stake, they make every effort to speed up the application process but they do not *have* to rush the processing of this application, so it is important to apply as soon as you are eligible. Don't wait until a job offer is on the line!

## **Can my loved one come back home and live with me after s/he is released?**

Having a place to go after release from incarceration is probably the most important ingredient to your loved one's successful "reentry." If you own your own home, consider yourself lucky: nobody can tell you

**'Each** situation, each human is different, but there is one truth for all: your loved one has been wounded by the horror of being locked up. What must take place is healing, not just for him but for you also. It will happen. It takes time, love and absolute faith, but it does happen. Be aware of what he has been through and where he has been, and don't allow your home to become a prison also. Help him to clean the prison out of him and replace that empty void with home. Do not allow the prison to run your lives any longer. In order to be free, you and your loved one both must feel free. Remind yourselves constantly that you are free! All that I had hoped for and wished for has come to be. My husband is truly home and we are stronger and more united for the experience. We truly value love, companionship, partnership and each other. We do not take for granted the small precious moments of life. The healing is well underway for us both. Keep your faith and hope....it will be a good day, and a good life."

-FREE! member

who can and cannot live there with you. If you live in New York City public housing (NYCHA), on the other hand, there are rules that actually ban people with certain sorts of convictions from living in a family member's apartment or renting one of their own—at least for a certain period of time. This is another area where a Certificate of Relief from Disability or a Certificate of Good Conduct can come in handy as proof of "rehabilitation."



Anthony Dye

Section 9:  
***Get Involved!***

Formerly incarcerated people and their families have seen their stories go from being a source of shame to a force for change. Because so many people are affected by incarceration — not only those who are locked up themselves, but also their family, friends, and neighbors — there are very few people in our communities who have not been personally affected by the criminal justice system.

Take care of yourself by joining a group like FREE! to gain strength through the experience of others. And share your experience to help others who at the start of this long, difficult journey to build the strength they need to survive.

**Now that my loved one is no longer incarcerated, what else can I do?**

Get empowered, get involved! We are living in a climate of “Yes We Can” politics. Don’t be afraid to tell your story — policymakers are listening! Be courageous. Your voice can give many others like you a message of hope and that is true freedom. Don’t be afraid to let people know what your loved one, you, and your family have gone through. Educate people. Explain that if your loved one and the thousands of other men and women leaving the system can be more prepared prior to their release and return home to a fair chance at a productive life, everybody — you, your family, your community and society as a whole — gains.

**“By** keeping your family together through it all, no matter what, you are an organizer and advocate whether you know it or not.”

-FREE! member

**Can I really make a difference?**

Your voice can make a difference! The Family Connections Bill, started by a coalition of family members with incarcerated loved ones, changed the way the prison phone system works. We didn’t just sit around and complain, we ended the 57.7% kickback

**"It is** true that the huge victory of Spitzer's decision on the NY Campaign for Telephone Justice was the result of the hard work and strong support of many, many people. The soldiers of Prison Families Community Forum [now FREE!] were battling this phone issue for a long time before CCR ever became involved. The Center would not have known of the issue had it not been for these people. They have kept the issue alive among their members and provided the fuel for the engine of the campaign. PFCF bears a great responsibility for what occurred. PFCF trekked to countless community boards and stayed late into the night in order to get their support, PFCF quadrupled the number of campaign endorsers, PFCF greeted families at the buses on cold rainy winter nights, PFCF tirelessly etched the work of the campaign into all of our minds and hearts by constantly keeping folks in the loop and meaningfully -- not symbolically -- involved in the campaign and PFCF passionately insisted that family members be the center of this campaign in every way. That's what leads to victory. Much love, respect and gratitude to you all."

—Annette Dickerson,  
Campaign Coordinator

(backdoor tax) on New York's prison telephone contract and ensured that no future Governor can reinstate it.

### **Where do I start?**

Are you a devoted family member with a loved one in prison with little time but lots of interest in the issues that affect your daily life? Do you want to meet others with similar interests to learn more about public policy decision making? Would you like to participate in advocacy efforts to make your home/community a better place to live? Well, if you answered yes to any of these questions, **consider joining FREE!**, a nonprofit organization working to affect positive changes to public policy through education, advocacy and participation. As a member, you will be part of a unique organization who affect positive change in their lives.

As a member, you will receive hands-on experience with prison industrial complex and family issues through:

- free admission to our public programs that discuss and debate issues;
- access to our monthly calendar of events;

- action alert emails about current and emerging policy and legislative issues;
- access to elected and public officials;
- the opportunity to serve on one or more of our committees that advocate for our families and our loved ones in prison such as: health care, smaller classes and better funded schools, more affordable housing, informed urban planning, reproductive justice and equality for women, social programs that lift people out of poverty, and government reforms to ensure accountability and transparency.

As a member, we will give you a voice in what matters to you, and your voice will strengthen ours as we work to promote policies of fairness, equity and inclusion for families of people in prison. And, as a member, you will decide how much time and effort you can give.

Contact **FREE!** today.

<http://www.freefamilies.us/>

Tel: 718-300-9576

[freefamiliesinc@gmail.com](mailto:freefamiliesinc@gmail.com)

**Please take a moment to write us and let us know if you found the guide to be useful:**

Families Rally for Emancipation and Empowerment

PO Box 90

Syracuse, NY 13201

Intern or Volunteer with us:

<http://www.prisonfamiliescommunity.org/node/188>

### **What FREE! Means to Me**

“FREE! means to me a group of strong individuals, sharing a bond like no other and choosing to band together for change and justice. No matter the relationship, we all have one goal: fairness for anyone affected by incarceration. If that means we have to fight an issue, we will as a collective. We proved we are strong with the STOP THE CONTRACT campaign and will grow even stronger as time goes on.”

**-Jovita Lopez**

“Family members that have come up with a solution for all those in need of an answer or of a shoulder to lean or cry on...FREE! always seems to know the perfect thing to say or do. I am truly touched by the generosity of FREE's members' spirit and willingness to go out of there way to help others. And I am indeed thankful.”

**-Shan**

“FREE is a place where I can share my thoughts with other family members who have family in the New York State prison system.”

**-Joanne Sinovoi**

“FREE is a great group of people all over the country fighting to end the injustice in the phone contract with NYS and the prison population. It is great meeting people from NYS plus other states in our fight. Last but not least letting other people like the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club about our fight and having them support our fight along with our great State Senator Tom Duane in our fight.”

**-Lee**

“FREE means to me based on my experience it is a group of family members who have come together to resolve certain issues such as the Prison Family Telephone system. FREE members have always been resourceful, no matter what the issue may be. The group has grown and a great success day by day. I am glad to be a part of FREE.”

**-Mona**

“FREE is about self awareness and support for women and men in an honest and open way that I have not found with too many other groups-and we handle our business! I felt safe from the gate with these folks.”

**- FREE! member**

### **Can You Hear Me Now?**

You split us up when our family gets incarcerated  
You try to break up our Family  
You try to treat us like we are beneath you  
You try to degrade us  
You try to make us feel like we are criminals  
You judge us because we care about people in jail  
You look at us like aliens  
You expect us to just sit around like were your flunkies  
You want us to bow down and say, "Hail the King Verizon!"  
You want us to keep you on your perch like you are some type of God  
You expect us to keep giving up our hard-earned money, so we can keep in contact with our loved ones  
Just so you can sit up in your big office with your fancy cars  
Knowing you cheated us  
You try to act like you're smarter and wiser than we, which you're not are  
However, today we make a stand and show you you're not  
Your #1 quote is "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW",  
Good personally if you ask me it should be "PAY ME NOW GOOD!"  
But today I am standing up and saying, "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW"  
We will no longer allow you to cheat and bamboozle us  
We're all hip to your scheme  
Therefore, I hope that this message is loud and clear:  
**YOU WILL HEAR, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!**  
**YOU WILL LISTEN TO ME!**  
**YOU WILL STOP STEALING FROM ME!**  
**YOU WILL STOP MENTALLY ABUSING ME!**  
**BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING:**  
**YOU WILL SHOW ME R-E-S-P-E-C-T!**  
**GOOD**  
**BECAUSE IT STOPS TODAY!**

-By Jasmine M. Killebrew, Age 14, PFCF Member

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## ***Appendix***

We know that it's impossible to address all the questions, concerns and needs that you have in one resource guide. Take the time to read through this list of helpful resources and contact these organizations for assistance. Each section of this appendix corresponds to a section of the resource guide to make it easier to find the information you need. Learn as much as you can about the system so you can be the best advocate for your loved one!

### **Section 1: Getting the Call that a Loved One Has Been Incarcerated**

#### **New York State Correctional Facilities Addresses**

##### **Adirondack**

Box 110  
Route 86  
Ray Brook, NY 12977-0110  
Essex County Supt.: Thomas Sanders  
518-891-1343; Fax ext. 4199

##### **Albion**

3595 State School Road  
Albion, NY 14411  
Orleans County Supt.: Anginell Andrews  
716-589-5511 / Fax ext. 2099

##### **Altona**

Box 125, Devil Den Road  
Altona, NY 12910  
Clinton County Supt.: Michael Parrott  
518-236-7841

##### **Arthur Kill**

2911 Arthur Kill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10309-1197  
Richmond County Supt.: Dennis Breslin  
718-356-7333

##### **Attica**

Box 149, Exchange St.  
Attica, NY 14011-0149  
Wyoming County Supt.: Victor Herbert  
585-591-2000

##### **Auburn**

135 State St.  
Box 618  
Auburn, NY 13021  
Cayuga County Supt.: Hans Walker  
315-253-8401

##### **Bare Hill**

Caller Box #20, Cady Road  
Malone, NY 12953  
Supt.: John Donelli

##### **Bayview**

550 West 20th St.  
NY, NY 10011-2878  
New York County Supt.: Roberta Coward  
212-255-7590

##### **Beacon**

PO Box 780, Asylum Road  
Beacon, NY 12508-0780  
Dutchess County Acting Supt.: Cathrine Cook  
845-831-4200

##### **Bedford Hills**

247 Harris Road  
Bedford Hills, NY 10507-2499  
Westchester County Supt.: Elaine Lord  
914-241-3100

##### **Buffalo**

PO Box 300  
Alden, NY 14004  
Erie County Supt.: Lyle Starkweather  
585-937-3786

**Butler ASACTC**

PO Box 400  
Red Creek, NY 13143  
Supt.: Daniel Alexander  
315-754-8001

**Camp Gabriels**

P.O. Box 100, Route 86  
Gabriels, NY 12939-0100  
Franklin County Supt.: Justin Taylor  
518-327-3111

**Camp Georgetown**

3191 Crumb Hill Road  
Georgetown, NY 13072  
Madison County Supt.: James Morrissey  
315-837-4446

**Camp Pharsalia**

Route 23 South  
Plymouth, NY 13344-9729  
Chenango County Supt.: James Wilkinson  
607-334-2264

**Cape Vincent**

Route 12E, Box 599  
Cape Vincent, NY 13618  
Jefferson County Supt.: Anthony Zon  
315-654-4100

**Cayuga**

P.O. Box 1150, Route 38A  
Moravia, NY 13118  
Cayuga County Supt.: Joseph McCoy  
315-497-1110

**Chateaugay ASACTC**

P.O. Box 320, Route 11  
Chateaugay, NY 12920  
Franklin County Supt.: Alan Roberts  
518-497-3300

**Clinton**

Box 2000, Cook St.  
Dannemora, NY 12929  
Clinton County Supt.: Daniel Senkowski  
518-492-2511

**Collins**

PO Box 490  
Collins, NY 14034-0490  
Erie County Supt.: James Berbary  
716-532-4588

**Coxsackie**

Box 200, Route 9W West  
Coxsackie, NY 12051-0200  
Greene County Supt.: Gary Filion  
518-731-2781

**Downstate**

PO Box 445, Red Schoolhouse Rd.  
Fishkill, NY 12524-0445  
Dutchess County Supt.: James O'Connell  
845-831-6600

**Eastern NY**

Box 338, Route 209, Institution Rd.  
Napanoch, NY 12458-0388  
Ulster County Supt.: David Miller  
845-647-7400

**Edgecombe**

611 Edgecombe Avenue  
NY, NY 10032-4398  
New York County Supt.: Harold McKinney  
212-923-2575 / 607-962-3184

**Elmira**

P.O. Box 500  
Elmira, NY 14902-0500  
Chemung County Supt.: Floyd Bennett  
607-734-3901

**Fishkill**

P.O. Box 1245  
271 Matteawan Rd.  
Beacon, NY 12508  
Dutchess County Supt.: William Connelly  
845-831-4800

**Five Points**

Caller Box 400, State Route 96  
Romulus, NY 14541  
County: Seneca Supt.: Thomas Poole  
607-869-5111

**Franklin**

PO Box 10, Bare Hill Road  
Malone, NY 12953  
Franklin County Supt.: Roy Girdich  
518-483-6040

**Fulton**

1511 Fulton Avenue  
Bronx, NY10457-8398

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Bronx County Supt.: Eduardo Nieves  
718-583-8000

716-792-7100

**Gouverneur**  
PO Box 370, Scotch Settlement Rd.  
Gouverneur, NY 13642-0370  
St. Lawrence County Supt.: Thomas Poole 315-287-  
7351 Fax: 287-2533

**Lincoln**  
31-33 West 110th St.  
NY, NY 10026  
212-860-9400

**Gowanda**  
South Road, PO Box 350  
Gowanda, NY 14070-0350  
Erie County Supt.: Tim Murray  
716-532-0177

**Livingston**  
**Lyon Mountain**  
Box 276, NY Route 374  
Lyon Mountain, NY 12952-0276  
Clinton County Supt.: John Donelli  
518-735-4546

**Great Meadow**  
Box 51, Route 22  
Comstock, NY 12821  
Washington County Supt.: George Duncan  
518-639-5516

**Marcy**  
PO Box 5000, Old River Road  
Marcy, NY 13403  
Oneida County Supt.: Gary Greene  
315-768-1400, Fax: 315-768-1419

**Green Haven**  
Route 216  
Stormville, NY 12582  
Dutchess County Supt.: Charles Greiner  
845-221-2711

**Mid-Orange**  
900 Kings Highway  
Warwick, NY 10990-0900  
Orange County Supt.: Henry Garvin  
914-986-2291

**Greene**  
PO Box 8, County Route 9  
Coxackie, NY 12051-0008  
Greene County Supt.: Joe David  
518-731-2741

**Mid-State**  
PO Box 216, Route 291  
Marcy, NY 13403-0216  
Oneida County Supt.: Joseph Costello  
315-768-8581

**Groveland**  
Route 36, Sonyea Road  
Sonyea, NY 14556-0001  
Livingston County Supt.: Timothy Murray  
585-658-2871

**Mohawk**  
PO Box 8450, 6100 School Road  
Rome, NY 13440  
Oneida County Supt.: Kenneth Perlman  
315-339-5232

**Hale Creek ASACTC**  
279 Maloney Road  
Johnstown, NY 12095 Fulton County Supt.: Hazel  
Lewis  
518-736-2094

**Monterey Shock**  
RD #1, 2150 Evergreen Hill Road  
Beaver Dams, NY 14812-9718  
Schuyler County Supt.: Michael Rabideau Dixon  
914-241-3010

**Hudson**  
Box 576, East Court St.  
Hudson, NY 12534-0576  
Columbia County Supt.: Herbert McLaughlin  
518-828-4311

**Moriah Shock**  
PO Box 99, Fisher Hill Road  
Mineville, NY 12956-0999  
Essex County Supt.: Carol Nuote  
518-942-7561

**Lakeview Shock**  
PO Box T, Lake Avenue  
Brocton, NY 14716  
Chautauqua County Supt.: Robert Moscicki

**Mt. McGregor**  
1000 Mt. McGregor Road  
P.O. 2071  
Wilton, NY 12831  
518-587-3960

**Ogdensburg**  
One Correction Way  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669-2288  
St. Lawrence County Supt.: Dana Smith  
315-393-0281

**Oneida**  
6100 School Road  
Rome, NY 13440  
Oneida County Supt.: Melvin Hollins  
315-339-6880

**Orleans**  
35-31 Gaines Basin Road  
Albion, NY 14411  
Orleans County Supt.: John Beaver  
585-589-6820

**Otisville**  
P.O. Box 8, Sanatorium Avenue  
Otisville, NY 10963-0008  
Orange County Supt.: Ernest Edwards  
845-386-1490

**Parkside**  
10 Mt. Morris Park West  
NY, NY 10027-6395  
New York County Supt.  
212-860-6835

**Queensboro**  
47-04 Van Dam St.  
Long Island City, NY 11101-3081  
Queens County Supt.: Frank Tracy  
718-361-8920

**Riverview**  
PO Box 158, Route 37  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
St. Lawrence County Supt.: Mike Bintz  
Franklin County Supt.: John Sabourin  
518-483-8411

**Rochester**  
470 Ford St.  
Rochester, NY 14608-2499  
Monroe County Supt.: Lyle Starkweather  
585-454-2280

**Shawangunk**  
P.O. Box 750, 750 Prison Road  
Wallkill, NY 12589-0750  
Ulster County Supt.: Leonard Poruondo  
845-895-2081

**Sing Sing**  
354 Hunter St.  
Ossining, NY 10562-5442  
Westchester County Supt.: Brian Fischer  
914-941-0108

**Southport**  
PO Box 2000, Institution Rd.  
Pine City, NY 14871  
Chemung County Supt.: Michael McGinnis  
607-737-0850

**Sullivan**  
Box AG, Riverside Drive  
Fallsburg, NY 12733-0116  
Sullivan County Supt.: Jim Walsh  
845-434-2080

**Summit Shock**  
R.F.D., Dibbles  
Road Summit, NY 12175-9608  
Schoharie County Supt.: Jeff McKoy  
518-287-1721

**Taconic**  
250 Harris Road  
Bedford Hills, NY 10507-2498  
Westchester County Supt.: Alexandreena Dixon  
315-837-4446

**Ulster**  
Berme Road, PO Box 800  
Napanoch, NY 12458  
Ulster County Supt.: Joseph Smith  
845-647-1670

**Upstate**  
Bare Hill Road, PO Box 2000  
Malone, NY 12953  
Franklin County Supt.: Thomas Ricks  
518-481-5251

**Wallkill**  
Box G, Route 208  
Wallkill, NY 12589-0286  
Ulster County Supt.: George McGrath  
845-894-2021

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**Washington**

Box 180, Lock 11 Road  
Comstock, NY 12821-0180  
Washington County Supt.: Israel Rivera  
518-639-4486

**Watertown**

Dry Hill  
Watertown, NY 13601-0168  
Jefferson County Supt.: Gale McGuane  
315-782-7490

**Wende**

PO Box 1187, 3622  
Wende Road Alden, NY 14004-1187  
Erie County Supt.: Edward Donnelly  
585-937-4000

**Willard Drug Treatment Campus**

7116 County Road 132  
Willard, NY 14588  
607-869-5500

**Woodbourne**

Riverside Drive  
Woodbourne, NY 12788  
Sullivan County Supt.: John Keane  
845-434-7730

**Wyoming**

PO Box 501, Dunbar Road  
Attica, NY 14011  
Wyoming County Supt.: Michael Giambruno  
585-591-1010

**Public Defender Contacts**

**American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)**

1-877-6-PROFILE  
[www.aclu.org/profiling](http://www.aclu.org/profiling)  
Get help if you have been a victim of police brutality or racial profiling.

**Office of the Appellate Defender**

11 Park Place, Suite 1601  
NY, NY 10007  
212-402-4100  
Provides high quality, client-centered appellate and post-conviction representation to individuals convicted of felonies in Manhattan and the Bronx.

**Bronx Defenders**

860 Courtlandt Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10451  
Tel: 718-838-7878  
1-800-597-7980  
Fax: 718-665-0100  
Provides holistic, client-centered legal representation, brief advice, resources and referrals to low-income individuals in the Bronx.

**Legal Action Center**

225 Varick St., 4th Floor  
NY, NY 10014  
Tel: 212-243-1313  
Provides free legal services to formerly incarcerated people, recovering addicts and HIV+ people. Published the "Know Your Rights" pamphlet for youth affected by the criminal justice system.

**Legal Aid Society**

90 Church St  
NY, NY 1000  
Tel: 212-577-3530  
Conducts all action litigation on behalf of people incarcerated NYS prisons and NYC jails.

**Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem**

(The Harlem Re-Entry Advocacy Project)  
2031 Fifth Ave., 2nd Fl.  
NY, NY 10035  
Tel: 212-876-5500  
[www.ndsny.org](http://www.ndsny.org)

**Direct Services**

**Argus Career Training Institute (ACT I)**

760 East 160th St.  
Bronx, NY 10456  
Tel: 718-401-5700  
Welfare-to-work program substance abuse counseling training, supervised internships and job placements.

**America Works**

228 East 45<sup>th</sup> St, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
NY, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-599-5627  
Offers entry-level job placement assistance, work readiness, and skills building for individuals on public assistance or receiving food stamps.

**30th St. Shelter (formerly Bellevue Men's Shelter)**

400-430 E. 30<sup>th</sup> St.

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NY, NY 10016  
Tel: 212-481-0771

**Binding Together, Inc.**  
200 Hudson St.  
NY, NY 10013  
Tel: 212- 334-9400  
[www.bindingtogether.org](http://www.bindingtogether.org)  
Provides job training and placement, financial incentives, and counseling.

**Bowery Residence Committee**  
1000 Grand Concourse, Suite 2E, Bronx 10451  
Tel: 718-590-1235  
BRCC's SPAN program provides information and referral to forensic mentally ill people.

**Bronx Psychiatric Center**  
Ginsburg Outpatient Clinic  
1500 Waters Place  
Bronx, NY 10461  
Tel: 718-862-4745  
Offers outpatient services for clients who have been incarcerated or who have problems with the criminal justice system.

**Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of NY**  
1011 First Ave.  
NY, NY 10022  
Tel: 212- 371-1000  
A comprehensive program, including clothing, bail fund and referrals (including job referrals). Services are also available to families of people in prison.

**Center for Constitutional Rights**  
666 Broadway, 7th Floor  
NY, NY 10012  
Offers publications including the Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook and Women's Appendix in collaboration with the National Lawyer's Guild.

**Citizen's Advice Bureau**  
890 Garrison Ave  
Bronx, NY  
Tel: 917-918-4495

**City Harvest Food & Hunger Hotline**  
159 W. 25<sup>th</sup> St  
NY, NY  
Tel: 917-351-8777

**The Correctional Association of New York**  
2090 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. Suite 200

New York , NY 10027  
Tel: 212-254-5700 x. 311  
[www.correctionalassociation.org](http://www.correctionalassociation.org)  
Offers career development services, job search skills, assistance in housing, family, and entitlement issues, assistance in entry level job skills training, substance abuse and education programs.

**Medgar Evers College**  
Tel: 718- 270-6434  
[www.mec.cuny.edu](http://www.mec.cuny.edu)

**Critical Resistance**  
976 Longwood Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10459  
Tel: 718-676-1660  
Fax: 718-676-1672

**Drug Policy Alliance**  
[www.drugpolicy.org](http://www.drugpolicy.org)  
Seeks new drug policies based on science, compassion, health and human rights and a just society in which the fears, prejudices and punitive prohibitions of today are no more.

**Ebenezer of Deliverance Prison Ministry Outreach**  
35 Downey Place  
Staten Island, NY 10303  
Tel: 718-922-6080  
Provides a quarterly newsletter, pen pal services and visits to correctional facilities, provides support to people during their incarceration and their re-entry with provisions for basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, employment, vocational training and housing.

**Exodus Transitional Community**  
161 E. 104<sup>th</sup> St.  
NY, NY 10029  
Tel: 917- 492-0990  
[www.etcny.org](http://www.etcny.org)

**FAIR Families in Action for Incarceration Reforms**  
309 Mamaroneck Ave., Suite 293  
White Plains, NY 10605  
Tel: 914-946-2734  
Reaching the media for prison reform and human rights.

**Fortune Society**  
29-76 Northern Blvd.  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
Tel: 212-691-7554  
[www.fortunesociety.org](http://www.fortunesociety.org)

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Provides a full range of re-entry services including: crisis intervention, housing placement assistance, health services for HIV+, family services, career services, education, alternatives to incarceration and advocacy.

**Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE)**

81 Willoughby St., Suite 701  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel: 718-852-2960

Grassroots organization of low-income families working to change the system so that all people's work is valued and all of us have the right and economic means to decide and live out our own destinies.

**Joseph Hayden**

Tel: 646- 915-8829  
[www.allthingsharlem.com](http://www.allthingsharlem.com)  
[www.info@allthingsharlem.com](mailto:www.info@allthingsharlem.com)  
Grassroots current events media coverage of the Harlem community.

**S.T.A.R. Project**

2090 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, 12th Floor  
NY, NY 10027  
Tel: 212-865-0775

Steps To A Renewed Reality Project (Howie T. Harper Advocacy Center) offers programs for people with mental illness who have a history of incarceration. The Forensic Peer Specialist Program trains participants to be peer counselors and the Assisted Competitive Employment Program offers eight weeks of job readiness training for work in a large variety of fields.

**Make the Road by Walking**

301 Grove St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11237  
Tel: 718-418-7690  
[www.maketheroad.org](http://www.maketheroad.org)  
Promotes economic justice and participatory democracy by increasing residents' power to achieve self-determination through collective action.

**NEW (Nontraditional Employment for Women)**

243 West 20th St.  
NY, NY 10011  
Tel: 212- 627-6252, Fax: 646- 486-2293  
[www.new-nyc.org](http://www.new-nyc.org)

**Osborne Association**

175 Remsen St., 8th floor

Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel: 1-800-344-3314, 718-707-260 0

Clearinghouse of information on visitation, transportation resources, packages, transfers, parole and other issues. Provides informational workshops for prison families on employment opportunities and provides referrals for educational and treatment programs.

**Parents in Action**

3753 90th St. 2nd Floor  
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Tel: 347-624-4830

[www.parentsinaction.net](http://www.parentsinaction.net)

An organization dedicated to protect, preserve, and strengthen families.

**Project Torch**

840 Flatbush Avenue Extension ??<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel: 718- 439-4345

[www1.va.gov/visns/visn03/homelessny.asp](http://www1.va.gov/visns/visn03/homelessny.asp)

Services Project TORCH offers a variety of services to homeless veterans

**Queers for Economic Justice**

16 W. 32nd St. #10H  
NY, NY 10001  
Tel: 212-564-3608  
[www.q4ej.org](http://www.q4ej.org)

A progressive non-profit organization committed to promoting economic justice in a context of sexual and gender liberation.

**Roberto Clemente Family Guidance Center**

540 East 13th St.  
NY, NY 10009  
Tel: 212-387-7400  
Individual/family/group counseling and psychotherapy for families under stress due to incarceration.

**Smart University**

306-308 W. 38<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 601  
NY, NY 10018  
Tel: 212-564-3282

Provides treatment and prevention education and support for women and youth living with HIV/AIDS in order to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem.

**STEPS to End Family Violence**

Tel: 212-410-4200  
[www.egscf.org/endviolence.html](http://www.egscf.org/endviolence.html)

Provides services to abused women, teens and children who have witnessed and/or experienced abuse in their

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homes to prevent inter-generational abuse and incarceration.

**Vocational Foundation**  
1 Hanson Pl, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor

Brooklyn, NY  
Tel: 718- 230-3100 x1007  
Vocational and educational training, counseling, job placement & career mentoring.

**Women and Work**  
25 West 43<sup>rd</sup> St., Suite 1005  
NY, NY 10036  
Tel: 212-642-2070

Offers free 15-week job and life skills training program for women: computer training, communication and interpersonal skills, dressing for success. High school diploma or GED, working knowledge of English, and the ability to work legally in the United States required.

**Women's Prison Association**  
110 2nd Ave  
NY, NY 10003-8302  
175 Remsen St.,  
Brooklyn, NY11201  
Tel: 212-674-1163  
[www.wpaonline.org](http://www.wpaonline.org)

Alternatives to incarceration, family reunification and support, housing, and case management, employment assistance and mentoring) for formerly incarcerated women and their families.

**The College Initiative**  
555 W. 57<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 604  
NY, NY 10019  
Tel: 212-484-1176  
Assistance with educational needs/goals.

**Learning for Living**  
Tel: 718-401-5700  
Provides GED help.

**New York City Employment & Training Coalition**  
11 Park , 7<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
NY, NY ZIP  
Tel: 212-253-6873  
[www.nycetc.org](http://www.nycetc.org)

**Streetwise Partners, Inc.**  
Tel: 212-971-0078

[www.Streetwisepartners.org](http://www.Streetwisepartners.org)

**Management Leadership for Tomorrow**  
7 W. 36<sup>th</sup> St, 16<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
NY, NY  
Tel: 212-736-3411  
[www.ml4t.org](http://www.ml4t.org)

**New York Urban League**  
204 W. 136<sup>th</sup> St.  
NY, NY  
Tel: 212-926-8000 x126  
[www.nyul.org](http://www.nyul.org)

**Career Gear**  
120 Broadway, 36<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
NY, NY 10005  
Tel: 212-577-6190  
[www.careergear.org](http://www.careergear.org)  
Interview clothing and counseling.

**Minority Community Empowerment Network,**  
1411 Pacific St.  
Brooklyn, NY  
Tel: 718-363-9010

**Brooklyn Workforce Innovations**  
141 5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Brooklyn, NY  
Tel: 718-857-2990 x23  
[www.bwiny.org](http://www.bwiny.org)

**Long -Term Substance Abuse  
Residential Treatment Programs**

**Greenwich House Parole Treatment Program**  
122 West 27th St.  
NY, NY 10003  
Tel: 212-463-8244  
Substance abuse and counseling services to clients referred to Greenwich House through the New York State Division of Parole.

**Palladia, Inc.**  
10 Astor Place, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
NY, NY 10003  
Tel: 718-583-5399  
[www.palladiainc.org](http://www.palladiainc.org)

**Samaritan Village**  
38 Forbell St.  
Brooklyn, NY11208  
Tel: 718-277-6317 x 125

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[www.samvill.org](http://www.samvill.org)

**Odyssey House**  
219 East 121<sup>st</sup> St.  
NY, NY 10035  
Tel: 212- 987-5114 / [www.odysseyhouseinc.org](http://www.odysseyhouseinc.org)

**El Regreso, Inc.**  
Women's Residential Treatment Program  
141 South 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11211  
Tel: 718-384-6400 / Fax: 718-486-6957  
Men's Residential Treatment Program  
189-191 South 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11211  
Tel: 718-599-6892 / Fax: 718-384-0540

**BASICS Inc.**  
1064 Franklin Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10456  
Tel: 718- 861-5650 x 4

**Project Greenhope for Women**  
448 East 119 St.  
NY, NY 10035  
Tel: 212-369-5100 / Fax: 212-348-3684  
[www.projectgreenhope.org](http://www.projectgreenhope.org)

**Serendipity**  
977 Bedford Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11205  
Tel: 718- 802-0572 female referrals  
Tel: 718- 398-0096 male referrals

## Section 2: After Sentencing

**Transportation Services to Correctional Facilities**

A& J Transportation: 212-369-4581, 917-552-6991  
C.J. Express Travel Services: 877-202-3200  
Cecils' Van Service: 845-518-1760, 845-465-6300  
Ebony Van Service: 212- 365-8899  
Flambouyant Bus: 718- 324-3603; 718- 325-6784, 718- 325-7468  
Greyhound/Trailways Bus Services: Tel?  
Jefferson-Carter Underground Corp.: 347-210-1527, 347 675-2441  
Kismet Bus & Van: 718- 346-9076, 646- 294-1180  
Manney's Bus & Van Service: 718- 469-1170  
Munro Transportation Inc.: 718- 735-8551, 917- 650-5253

Operation Prison Gap: 800-734-3733, 914-287-0800,  
Yonkers 914-376-7771  
Pauly Coach: 718-284-7517  
Queensbridge: 917-731-4286, 247-204-5398  
Rosie's Van Service: 718- 639-5573  
Socttie Transportation Service: 718- 216-3165, 718- 293-7339  
T 'n' J Transportation: 347-413-3002  
Travel Star Transportation: 516-789-8406

**Prisons Foundation**  
1718 M St., NW, #151  
Washington, DC 20036 [www.prisonsfoundation.org](http://www.prisonsfoundation.org)  
Tel: 202-393-1511  
Seeks to encourage and facilitate educational and artistic development among the incarcerated to maximize rehabilitation and therapeutic opportunities in preparation for release.

**Prisoners Rights Project of Legal Aid society**  
Tel: 212-577-3530

**Parole Revocation Defense Unit, Legal Aid Society of NY**  
90 Church St.  
NY, NY 10007  
Tel: 212-577-3530  
Conducts call action litigation on behalf of people incarcerated in New York.

**Prison Action Network Judith Brink**  
P.O. Box 6355  
Albany, NY 12206  
Tel: 518-364-3088  
[prisonaction@hotmail.com](mailto:prisonaction@hotmail.com)  
Prison Action Network seeks to unite people who are incarcerated in NYS, people who have a loved one in a NYS prison, and people who care about the impact incarceration has upon our society.

**Prison Families of New York, Inc.**  
40 North Main Avenue  
Albany, NY 12203  
Tel: 518-453-6659  
Provides information, support, community-development, advocacy, policy information and progressive prison/parole strategy development for prison families and people of conscience. PFNY provides training for professionals on the issues of children and families of Prisoners and representation of those issues before state and local government, the NYS Legislature and agencies and faith communities statewide

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**Reaching Out**

NA World Services, Inc.

PO Box 9999

Van Nuys, CA 91409

Provides free quarterly recovery newsletter to incarcerated addicts.

**Stay 'N Out Criminal Justice Program**

500 8th Ave., Room 801

NY, NY 10018

212-971-6033

Provides comprehensive treatment for incarcerated men and women with drug-related offenses. This program has established segregated units in Arthur Kill and Bayview Correctional Facilities. Inmates of all NY State facilities are eligible for this program after meeting the criteria.

**Prison Families Anonymous**

P.O. Box 343

Central Islip, NY 11722

[www.hiddentruthtv.net](http://www.hiddentruthtv.net)

## **Section 4: Maintaining and Building Intimate Relationships**

Suggested reading:

*The Prisoner's Wife* by Asha Bendele

*Boundaries: Where You End and I Begin* by Ane Katherine

*How Can It Look So Good—And Feel so Bad? Your Guide to Inner Peace* by Tracie Rose Ryder

*Diary of a Crack Addict's Wife* by Cynthia D. Hunter

## **Section 5: What about the Children?**

**Angel Tree**

44180 Riverside Parkway

Lansdowne, VA 20176

Tel: 800-552-6435

[www.angeltre.org/contentindex.asp?ID=527](http://www.angeltre.org/contentindex.asp?ID=527)

For all prison families struggling to buy a gift for their children.

**Bridge St. AWME Church Prison Ministry**

277 Stuyvesant Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11221

Tel: 718- 452-3936

Mentoring services and parenting classes to incarcerated women and women recently released from prison. Offers incarcerated women a monthly newsletter, and assists their children

**CHIPS Support Group (Syracuse, NY)**

115 E. Jefferson Street

Syracuse, NY 13202

Tel: 314-422-5638

[www.communityalternatives.org/programs/CHIPS.html](http://www.communityalternatives.org/programs/CHIPS.html)

Support groups for children with incarcerated parents conducted in collaboration with the local school district to address issues of isolation, self-esteem and shame, making positive choices, goal setting, self-reliance, developing support systems, substance abuse, the corrections system (visitation, contact, parole, release), and legal issues.

**City Year**

20 West 22<sup>nd</sup> St.

NY, NY 10010

Tel: 212- 675-8881

[http://www.cityyear.org/sites/new\\_york/](http://www.cityyear.org/sites/new_york/)

Young people age 17 to 24 engage in a variety of activities to meet critical needs in their communities focused on the education and development of youth, serving as mentors in public schools and organizing and running after-school program, domestic violence prevention, AIDS awareness, and diversity. Corps members receive a weekly stipend and an award towards higher education at the completion of their service.

**The Children's Aid Society**

105 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street

New York, NY 10010

Tel: 212-949-4800

Services are available for youngsters from infancy through young adulthood ranging from adoption and foster care, education, health care, and counseling, to specialized eye and dental clinics, homemaker services, Head Start classes, afterschool/weekend/summer programs, drug and teen pregnancy prevention, parenting programs, and emergency assistance.

**Court Employment Project**

346 Broadway, 3rd Fl.

NY, New York 10013

Tel: 212-732-0076

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An alternative to incarceration program for felony offenders age 13 and older. It offers Basic Education, GED preparation, ESL, job preparation and development, job referrals, counseling, drug education and prevention, and advocacy for those with open court cases.

**The Door: A Center for Alternatives**

555 Broome St., Manhattan Mail address: 121 6th Avenue, NY, NY 10013  
Tel: 212-941-9090

Provides crisis intervention services to adolescents (age 12-21) in need of welfare, Medicaid and emergency housing. Family planning services as well as legal, educational and vocational counseling also provided.

**Friends of Island Academy**

330 West 38th St. Room 301  
NY, NY 10018  
Tel: 212-760-0755

Serves youth age 11-24 who have been released from Rikers Island or other juvenile and adult detention facilities and are returning to New York City with case management, leadership training, computer classes, employment placement assistance, referrals to educational programs, tutoring.

**Getting Out and Staying Out**

9 East 116<sup>th</sup> St.  
NY, NY 10029  
Tel: 212-831-5020

Males age 18-24 before and after release from Rikers and/or upstate facilities. Male mentorship model. Voluntary program. Clients come in as often as possible and get sent on job interviews.

**Girl Scouts Beyond Bars**

[www.girlscouts.org/program/program\\_opportunities/community/gsbb.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/program_opportunities/community/gsbb.asp)

Incarcerated mothers and their daughters participate together in traditional Girl Scout activities to enhance visits between mothers and daughters, reduce the stress of separation, improve daughters' self-esteem, and reduce

**Hour Children, Inc.**

36-11 12th St.  
Long Island City, NY 11106  
Tel: 718- 433-4724

Supports mothers and their children providing resources and services outside and inside NYS prisons.

Offers support groups, substance abuse counseling, job training, internships, independent living skills, child-care, adult education and recreation.

**Incarcerated Mothers Program/Edwin Gould Services for Children**

1968 Second Avenue, 2nd Floor  
NY, NY 10029  
Tel: 212- 876-0367

Advocacy, foster care prevention, counseling and vocational training. Program for children 9-19 whose parents have been or are incarcerated. Saturday groups and Grandparents as Parents support group.

**In Arms Reach, Inc.**

Parents Behind Bars: Children in Crisis  
The City College of New York  
Harris Hall Bldg.  
NY, NY10031  
212-650-5894 / Fax. 212-650-8483  
[www.inarmsreach.org](http://www.inarmsreach.org)  
Services to heal children, families and communities.

**Justice Works Community**

1012 Eighth Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY11215  
Tel: 718-499-6704  
[www.justiceworks.org](http://www.justiceworks.org)  
Serves incarcerated women, formerly incarcerated people and their families. Letters of reasonable Assurance to the Parole Board and post-release referrals are offered. Educate, organize and mobilize a partnership of concerned citizens and organizations to advocate for just humane and effective criminal justice policies, emphasizing alternatives to incarceration for women with children.

**Seven Neighborhood Action Partnership**

**(JusticeWorks Community)**  
199 Lincoln Avenue, #307  
Bronx, NY10454  
Tel: 347-597-7061  
SNAP is designed to empower citizens of the neighborhoods most impacted by prisons to advocate for the repeal of New York's mandatory minimum Rockefeller Drug Laws and more humane criminal justice policy.

**Times Square Ink Employment Program**

**Times Square Youth Job Readiness Program**  
Midtown Community Court  
314 West 54th St.  
NY, NY 10019

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Tel: 646-264-1338 / Fax: 212- 664-7940  
[www.timesquareink.org](http://www.timesquareink.org)  
Work readiness and academic achievement program  
for out of school youth ages 17-21.

**Children's Village (TRIP Program)**

1 Dassern Dr.  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-3119  
Tel: 914-674-9179  
[www.childrensvillage.org/](http://www.childrensvillage.org/)  
Treatment for Residents with Incarcerated Parents  
Program (TRIP) provides individual and group therapy  
to address children's emotional issues and provides  
regular visitation with incarcerated parents and ongoing  
family therapy with the child, the incarcerated par-  
ent, and other family members.

**Rikers Island Visiting Program**

Administration for Children and Families  
[www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/  
cop\\_whathappens.htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/cop_whathappens.htm)  
Provides facilitated visits with incarcerated mothers  
and fathers detained on Rikers Island.

**Prison Family Visiting Programs**

Interfaith Hospitality Center  
P.O. Box 3062  
Elmira, NY 14905  
Tel: 607-732-6453  
Hospitality House for families visiting their loved ones  
in Elmira.

**Albion Orleans Visitors' Center**

P.O. Box 313  
Albion, NY 14411-0313  
Tel: 716-589-9014  
Hospitality and waiting center that provides food, chil-  
dren's activities and informal counseling

**Hope Hospitality House**

30 Wyoming Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14215  
Tel: 716-892-5574  
A service of Hope Prison Ministries that strengthens  
ties between prisoners and their families. Hope Hospi-  
tality House is a service of Hope Prison Ministries.  
Offers van transportation services from Buffalo to  
family members of prisoners in Wyoming, Wende and  
Attica Correctional Facilities to Buffalo area residents  
and out-of-town families.

## **Section 6: Health and Wellness**

The HIPPA (Authorization to Use and Disclose Health Information) form is like the one you get when you sign into a doctor's office that allows others to receive information about your medical condition. Folks could actually take the format and make their own form and have their loved one who is incarcerated sign it and send it to the health office and counselor at the facility where they are located. Having this form could make a difference in the care that is provided to your loved one in prison, as well as all of your family members.

-Denise, FREE! member

### **AUTHORIZATION TO USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION**

#### **1. INDIVIDUAL PATIENT**

I give my authorization to use or disclose my protected health information as described in section 2 below.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Legal Responsibility

If you are 18 years old or older, you are legally responsible for yourself, check this box.

If you are an emancipated child or teenager and your parents no longer have custody over you, check here.

If you are a child or teenager and your parents are divorced, please check this box. Below please list the name of the parent or guardian who has custody over you.

#### **2. THE USE AND / OR DISCLOSURE**

A. I understand that under the HIPAA regulations, my health information will be used and disclosed to any health care provider who is involved with my medical treatment or services, my health insurance plan, and any medical billing clearinghouse who is involved with your insurance claims fulfillment.

B. Under these new regulations the following people must be authorized by you to have access to your health information: your spouse, other family members, and friends; nurse or home aid; legal guardian; or other person/organization who is not involved with your medical treatment, insurance plan, or payment.

Below Please list the people /organizations that you authorize to have access to your information:

Persons/Organizations Receiving the Information:

1) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to the Patient: \_\_\_\_\_

What Specific Information to Disclose \_\_\_\_\_

When Date Will the Disclosure Expire \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to the Patient: \_\_\_\_\_

What Specific Information to Disclose \_\_\_\_\_

When Date Will the Disclosure Expire \_\_\_\_\_

#### **3. CHANGING YOUR MIND ABOUT THE AUTHORIZATION**

I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time by giving written notice to your Privacy Officer.

#### **4. METHOD OF CONTACT**

I authorize the office of to contact me the following manner: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Written  
Mail \_\_\_\_\_ OK to leave message with detailed information \_\_\_\_\_ OK to mail to my home address \_\_\_\_\_ Leave message with a call back number only \_\_\_\_\_ OK to mail to my work/office address \_\_\_\_\_ Ok to fax to this number \_\_\_\_\_ Work Tel: Number \_\_\_\_\_ OK to leave message with detailed information \_\_\_\_\_ Leave message with a call back number only \_\_\_\_\_

#### **5. STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

I have reviewed and I understand this Authorization. I also understand that my health information will be used or

disclosed to certain business associates of who are part of the health care process. These business associates will also

keep your heath information confidential.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Patient)

Or By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Patient's Representative)

Description of Representative's Authority \_\_\_\_\_

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Instant HIPPA Forms at:<http://www.teamlead.com/instantHIPPAForms.asp>

## **Health Resources**

### **ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project**

125 Broad St., 18th Floor  
NY, NY 10004

Advocates for pregnant women while incarcerated to receive the reproductive health services that are needed, distributes "Know Your Rights" fact sheet.

### **Bronx HIV Care Network**

Montefiore Medical Center

3058 Bainbridge Ave.

Bronx, NY 10467

Coordinate comprehensive health and social services for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in the Bronx.

Tel: 717.231-

### **CitiWide Harm Reduction**

226 E. 144th St.

Bronx, NY 10451

Tel: 718-292-7718, ext. 262 / Fax: 718- 292- 0500 /  
[www.CitiWideHR.org](http://www.CitiWideHR.org)

Safe and supportive participant-led community offering a wide variety of outreach, services and care to homeless and low-income drug users living with and at risk for HIV/AIDS.

### **Exponents, Inc. Case Management Connection**

151 West 26th St.

NY, NY 10001

Tel: 212- 243-3434

Offers long-term case management for HIV+ individuals transitioning from correctional facilities back to the community.

### **Harm Reduction Coalition**

22 West 27th St., 5th Floor

NY, NY 10001

Tel: 212- 213-6376

Provides trainings, seminars, workshops and support groups inside and outside of prison, and distributes "Hepatitis- C Awareness" newsletter.

### **Latino Commission on AIDS**

24 West 25th St., 9th Floor

NY, NY 10010

212- 675-3288

### **National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project (NATAP)**

580 Broadway, Suite 1010

NY, NY 10012

Provides Hepatitis-C and HIV/Hepatitis -C co-

infection handbooks by mail.

### **NYC Aids Housing Network**

80A Fourth Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Tel: 718-\ 802-9540

Membership organization comprised and led by low-income people living with HIV/AIDS to empower and organize our community including the nonprofits that serve us, to advocate for more housing, better housing and sound public policies.

### **The Osborne Association**

AIDS in Prison Project  
809 Westchester Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10455

Tel: 718-707-2600 or 800-344-3314

Brochures for HIV positive people, transitional housing, substance abuse treatment, job readiness and case management for recently released people.

### **Protecting Your Health & Safety: A Litigation Guide for Inmates**

c/o Prison Legal News (PLN)  
2400 NW 80th St., #148  
Seattle, WA 98117  
Litigation manual \$10 (Formerly produced by Southern Poverty Law Center

### **Mental Health Alternatives to Solitary Confinement (MHASC)**

[www.boottheshu.org](http://www.boottheshu.org) in

A coalition of New York State agencies that are currently working to abolish solitary confinement in state prisons by advocating for the passing of legislative bill S333/A4870, which would put a stop to the endless confinement of incarcerated individuals with mentally illnesses.

### **Rights of Incarcerated People with Psychiatric Disabilities**

123 William Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
NY, NY 10038

<http://rippo.org/justice>

RIPDD is a grassroots organization founded by people with psychiatric disabilities to fight against the injustice in the prison systems, to find alternatives to incarceration and to advocate for better mental health care in New York State prisons.

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## **Know Your Rights**

**Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook**  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
666 Broadway  
NY, NY 10012

**Legal Publications in Spanish, Inc.**  
PO Box 623  
Palisades Park, NJ 07650  
800-432-0004

**Legal Aid Society Prisoners Rights Project**  
199 Water St.  
NY, NY 10038  
Tel: 212-577-3346

**Prisoners Legal Services Central Intake**  
114 Prospect St.  
Ithaca, NY 14850

**Prisoners Legal Services**  
301 S. Allen St.  
Albany, NY 12208

**Prisoner Assistance Center**  
Tel: 718-275-6037  
Our mission is to provide quality criminal justice services to Prisoners in all NY jails and prisons and their families. We strive to help Prisoners obtain freedom in and out of jail.

**MICA Project**  
Provides enhanced legal and social work services to clients with mental illness and chemical addiction ("MICA") issues to prevent relapse and further criminal activity following clients' release from incarceration.

**Immigrant Defense Project**  
3 West 29th St., Suite 803  
NY, NY 10001  
Tel: 212- 725-6422  
[www.immigrantdefenseproject.org](http://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org)  
Family members, defense lawyers, other criminal justice advocates, immigrant advocates and immigrants themselves who seek training, legal support or guidance on criminal/immigration law issues.

**Families for Freedom**  
3 West 29th St, #1030  
NY, NY 10001  
Tel: 646- 290-5551 / Fax: 800-895-4454

[www.familiesforfreedom.org](http://www.familiesforfreedom.org)  
An organizing center against deportation that offers support, education, and campaigns for directly affected families and communities both locally and nationally.

**Reentry Net/NY**  
860 Courtlandt Avenue  
Bronx, NY10451  
Tel: 718-838-7878  
[www.reentry.net/ny](http://www.reentry.net/ny)  
A collaborative network and online training and support center of Bronx Defenders that provides valuable information and materials for non-citizens charged with crimes.

## **Section 8: Homecoming**

**Housing and Treatment Organizations**  
(your loved one may be referred to one of these directly upon release from incarceration)

**Bridge Iyana House**  
248 W 108<sup>th</sup> St.  
NY, NY 10025  
Tel: 212-663-3000 or 212-423-5733  
Permanent, supportive housing for 16 women diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness, including women with co-occurring disorders of mental illness and substance abuse for women being discharged directly from Bedford Hills.

**Common Ground Rap**  
505 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, 15<sup>th</sup> floor  
NY, NY 10018  
Tel: 212-471-0881 / Fax: 212-271-0825  
[www.commonground.org](http://www.commonground.org)  
Rental assistance program for clients who are either on parole or are defined as frequent users.

**The Doe Fund**  
520 Gates Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY11216  
Tel: 718-622-0634 / Fax: 718-622-0877  
[www.doe.org](http://www.doe.org)  
Supportive housing and employment program for formerly incarcerated men who are homeless upon discharge from Queensboro.

**The Fortune Academy (of The Fortune Society)**  
26-76 Northern Blvd.  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
Tel: 212-691-7554 / Fax: 212-255-4948

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[www.fortunesociety.org](http://www.fortunesociety.org)

A drug-free transitional housing facility for formerly incarcerated men and women with a history of substance abuse offering case management, substance abuse counseling, support groups, healthcare coordination, independent living skills training, and employment counseling.

**“Frequent Users” Public Safety Pilot Project NYC**

**Department of Homeless Services**

33 Beaver St., 15<sup>th</sup> Floor

NY, NY 10004

Tel: 212-361-0984 / Fax: 212-361-5586

[www.nyc.gov/dhs](http://www.nyc.gov/dhs)

Services The Public Safety Pilot project targets “frequent users” of the jail and shelter systems: individuals with a minimum of four stays in.

**Palladia Parole Transition Program**

1808 Third Avenue

NY, NY 10029

Tel: 212-348-7548 Fax: 212-410-9205

[www.palladiainc.org](http://www.palladiainc.org)

**Project Renewal Parole Support and Treatment Program**

200 Varick St.

NY, NY 10014

Tel: 212- 620-0340 x 352 Fax: 212- 243-4868

[www.projectrenewal.org](http://www.projectrenewal.org)

Serves people with a co-occurring diagnosis of mental illness and substance abuse who are released from prison and on parole for a minimum of one year. Scatter-site transitional housing and wrap-around, mental health, medical, and employment services.

**Providence House Parole-Funded Transitional Housing for Women and Children**

703 Lexington Avenue

Brooklyn, NY11221

Tel: 718-455-0197 x 14 / Fax: 718-455-0692

[www.providencehouse.org](http://www.providencehouse.org)

Runs 6 congregate care transitional residences, a 15 apartment transitional housing program, and a permanent housing program for women who are transitioning back into the community from prison in Brooklyn, Queens and Westchester County. Provides case management, housing placement services substance abuse and mental health services.

**Pathways to Housing Keeping Home Project**

55 West 125th St., 10th Floor

NY, NY 10027

Tel: 212-289-0000

[www.pathwaystohousing.org](http://www.pathwaystohousing.org)

A collaborative supportive housing program co-operated with the Mount Sinai Hospital Narcotics Rehabilitation Center. Provides clients with apartment, ACT (assertive community treatment) team services and methadone treatment. Participants must meet their criteria.

**Sunflower House c/o Women’s Prison Association**

110 Second Avenue

NY, NY 10003

Tel: 212-213-0221 Fax: 212-213-0225

[www.wpaonline.org/services/permanent.htm](http://www.wpaonline.org/services/permanent.htm)

A self-governed, sober house for formerly incarcerated women.

**Employment**

**Career Connections**

60 Madison Avenue, Suite 705

NY, NY 10010

Tel: 212- 683-8641

A structured employment program for low income single people with any past criminal conviction or any history of substance abuse recovery. Offers a job readiness program, training and counseling, job placement, post-placement support, and rewards for staying on the job.

**Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**

32 Broadway

NY, NY10004

Tel: 212-422-4430

On-the-job work experience for people on parole, probation or in work-release programs. Must be referred by parole or probation officer.

**National H.I.R.E. Network**

225 Varick St., 4th Floor

NY, NY 10014

Tel: 212-243-1313 / [www.hire www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hire www.hirenetwork.org)

Helping Individuals with criminal records Reenter through Employment.

**Connections 2009 and The Job Search**

A newly updated guide for formerly incarcerated people to information sources, job interviewing and resume writing, preparation in prison, avoiding job discrimination as a formerly incarcerated individual, and telling the truth about your conviction(s) on a job ap-

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plication. You get it at your public library, and it is in the prison library. [http://www.nypl.org/branch/services/connections/2009\\_Connections\\_Final.pdf](http://www.nypl.org/branch/services/connections/2009_Connections_Final.pdf)

#### **New York State Department of Labor**

Brooklyn: 9 Bond St, 5<sup>th</sup> fl, 718-246-5219  
Bronx: 358 E. 149<sup>th</sup> St, 2<sup>nd</sup> fl, 718-960-7099  
2501 Grand Concourse, 3<sup>rd</sup> fl, 718-960-4686  
NYC: 215 W. 125<sup>th</sup> St, 6<sup>th</sup> fl, 917-493-7000  
Queens: 168-46 91<sup>st</sup> Ave, 718-557-6755  
29-10 Thomson Ave, 718-609-2130  
[www.labor.state.ny.us](http://www.labor.state.ny.us)  
Re-entry services, job training & placement assistance.  
Federal Bonding Program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program

#### **Community Networks**

#### **Episcopal Social Services**

305 Seventh Avenue, 4th Floor, Manhattan 10001  
Tel: 212-886-5602

Re-entry program for formerly incarcerated men and women. There are six sites in the NYC area where participants come together to meet the challenges of transition in the context of a four-part meeting. Meetings instill discipline, build self-esteem, foster education, teach conflict avoidance and resolution and create community. Trained facilitators conduct all Network sessions.

#### **ICARE**

6 Sylvan Court  
NY, NY 10035  
Tel: 212-426-9881  
[info@nyicare.org](mailto:info@nyicare.org)

The Interfaith Coalition of Advocates for Reentry and Employment (ICARE) works to eliminate barriers to reentry by leading a "Restoration of Rights" campaign in the Restorative Justice tradition.

#### **Prisoner Re-Entry Institute at John Jay College**

The City University of New York  
555 West 57th St., Room 601-08  
NY, NY 10019  
Tel: 212-484-1327

#### **Project New Life Path Bridge Back to Life**

175 Remsen St. 10th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY11201  
Tel: 718-852-5552  
<http://www.bridgebacktolife.com>  
Provides services for formerly incarcerated women

with a history of mental illness and substance abuse.

#### **Wildcat Service Corporation**

17 Battery Place, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
NY, NY 10004  
Tel: 212- 209-6000  
[www.wildcatatwork.org](http://www.wildcatatwork.org)  
Provides case management, counseling services, job training, job placement and post-employment services to formerly incarcerated adults and parolees.

#### **ReConnect**

2090 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd., Suite 200  
NY, NY 10027  
Tel: 212-254-5700  
[www.correctionalassociation.org](http://www.correctionalassociation.org)

The Women in Prison Project's leadership training program for women who are currently in transition home from prison, jail, or an alternative to incarceration (ATI). Through interactive workshops, ReConnect participants examine the root causes of women's incarceration, ways to overcome systemic barriers to employment, housing, parental rights, consumer rights, and higher education, and how to work collectively to change the policies that adversely impact incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women.

## **FREE! Historical Timeline**

### **May 2002**

Families of New York State's incarcerated including Founding Member Ivey Walton hold their first meeting to discuss the impact of incarceration on their lives. Prison Families Community Forum (PFCF) is recognized as a collective grassroots group.

### **Summer 2002**

Membership expands through efforts by Amy Levine; Participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Breaking the Chains" event.

### **Winter 2002**

PFCF embarks upon the "Stop the Contract" campaign and PFCF partners with Public Utilities Law Project (PULP) and Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR).

### **2002-2003**

PFCF hosts a series of legal and advocacy workshops for families led by a host of professionals.

### **2003**

PFCF initiates "Stop the Contract" petition (created by Founding Member Jovita Lopez) and letter writing campaign to demand that the Public Service Commission grant an open hearing to families paying exorbitant fees charged by MCI/DOCs.

Founding member, Ruth Marshall, speaks at Columbia University in reference to the Stop the Contract campaign.

PFCF joins with Prison Families of New York, CCR, the JEHT foundation and other organizations to develop a multi-tiered campaign to reform the telephone policies in correctional facilities in 3 states.

PFCF secures donations from *Essence Magazine* and Starbucks to distribute to families at Columbus Circle bus departure site where PFCF does monthly outreach.

### **February 2004**

Marion Rodriguez joins the staff as Outreach Coordinator of the NY Campaign for Tele-

phone Justice and elevates the telephone campaign to new heights.

### **Summer 2004**

PFCF members Denise Barnes and Jovita Lopez initiate monthly advocacy meetings in the Bronx at the Osborne Association.

PFCF members Amy Levine and Ivey Walton are honored at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “Breaking the Chains” event.

### **Fall 2004**

PFCF in conjunction with the NY Campaign for Telephone Justice launch a video outreach tool.

### **Spring 2005**

PFCF officially separate from the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Committee becoming a stand-alone, member led, grassroots collective. Steering Committee to include Kym Clark, Dana Kaplan, Marion Rodriguez, Ivey Walton, Denise Barnes, Cheri O’Donoghue and Rickey O’Donoghue.

### **Winter 2006**

PFCF is honored with the prestigious Union Square Award for its commitment and dedication to grassroots organizing.

### **January 2007**

Stop the Contract Victory! Governor Spitzer ended the backdoor tax on New York State's Prison Phone Contract, effective April 1, 2007. Families in New York with a loved one in prison won a long-awaited victory .

### **Spring 2007**

PFCF is the recipient of grants from the following organizations to fund its continued work in advocacy and skills training for families of the incarcerated:

NY PRESBYTERY  
THE NORTH STAR FUND  
THE FUNDING EXCHANGE

PFCF receives a Tactical Media Grant from Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN)

to produce various video tools documenting its work and the ongoing struggles of families of the incarcerated.

### **Summer 2007**

PFCF attends the United States Social Forum in Atlanta, GA and participates in a panel on incarceration in the U.S.

PFCF Steering Committee member, Cheri O'Donoghue, appears in the Russell Simmons film, Lockdown USA, to discuss her personal encounters with the Rockefeller Drug Laws.

### **Fall 2007**

PFCF begins to produce a series of local cable television shows addressing issues related to families of the incarcerated, such as the war against MCI, which are shown on MNN.

PFCF sponsors a table at the annual Family Empowerment Day organized by Prison Action Network and the Otisville Lifer's Group.

PFCF joins the Real Reform Coalition to advocate for the repeal of the draconian Rockefeller Drug Laws and attends the Drug Policy Alliance Conference in New Orleans, LA.

PFCF is awarded a grant from the Drug Policy Alliance to organize families around the repeal of the Rockefeller Drug Laws.

### **2008**

PFCF redefines itself as Families Rally for Emancipation & Empowerment (FREE) and moves into shared office space with Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE) in Brooklyn, NY.

FREE launches its interactive website to keep families informed of the issues related to incarceration in New York State ([www.freefamilies.us](http://www.freefamilies.us)).

F.R.E.E continues to produce video outreach tools and train members of the community in video production in conjunction with MNN.

F.R.E.E relocates to Long Island City to share office space in the renowned Fortune Society complex.

**2009**

F.R.E.E further utilizes media as a means of outreach and partners with The Maysles Cinema in Harlem, NY to host monthly film screenings of documentaries that detail critical issues related to crime and punishment in America.

## ***Notes***

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