

LSPC Newsletter May 2017

Susan Burton Book Signing Celebrates Legacy of Formerly Incarcerated Leadership

LSPC / All of Us or None was honored to host Susan Burton on her book signing tour for her recently published memoir *Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to Recovery to Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women*. Susan read from her work and spoke about her journey and activism to an audience that packed [Laurel Book Store](#) in Oakland on June 5, 2017.



Susan Burton signs copies of her recently-published memoir at Laurel Books in Oakland, CA on June 5, 2017.

Few people have created opportunity to aid and empower so many as Susan Burton. After a life that included her young son run over and killed by Los Angeles police, drug addiction, and multiple periods in prison, Susan started an organization to provide re-entry housing and assistance to women and their children. Decades later, A New Way Of Life is going strong with several houses helping dozens of formerly incarcerated women at a time.

The all-woman organizing committee for the reading included LSPC Administrative Director Hamdiya Cooks-Abdullah, Executive Assistant Tina Nunn, Organizer Aaliyah Muhammad, and former Policy Director Endria Richardson, in addition to Azadeh Zohrabi, National Campaigner for the Ella Baker Center, and Essie Justice Group Founder and Executive Director Gina Clayton.





**BECOMING
MS. BURTON**
From Prison to Recovery to Leading
the Fight for Incarcerated Women
SUSAN BURTON & CARI LYNN
with a foreword by MICHELLE ALEXANDER

Becoming Mr. Burton is currently available in hardback from The New Press.



All of Us or None Organizer Aaliyah Muhammad introduces Susan Burton at Laurel Books in Oakland, CA.



A New Way of Life Executive Director Susan Burton flanked by LSPC Policy Director Marcus McKinney (left) and Executive Director and longtime friend Dorsey Nunn.



Susan Burton receives an award of recognition from LSPC Administrative Director Hamdiya Cooks-Abdullah for all her work for formerly incarcerated women. (Photo: Wanda Sabir)

Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to Recovery to Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women by Susan Burton and Cari Lynn, and with a forward by Michelle Alexander, is [available from The New Press](#).

No New Jails

LSPC continues working with other

Bay Area activists and organizations to push back against the rapid jail expansions across the region. We recognize that county sheriffs and officials are perpetuating mass incarceration with their desire to expand and build jails.



L-R: Natalia Marques, Diana Block (California Coalition for Women Prisoners), Joseph Johnson, Sandra Johnson, Mohamed Shekh (Critical Resistance) at San Francisco City Hall after speaking for real alternatives to incarceration.

As a member of the [No New SF Jail Coalition](#), we also provide support to the Contra Costa and [Alameda County](#) jail fights. On June 6th, Policy Fellows Sandra Johnson and Joseph Johnson and Intern Natalia Marques provided public comment against the Contra Costa jail expansion.



L-R: LSPC Policy Fellows Joseph Johnson and Sandra Johnson, and Intern Natalia Marques speak to the SF Board of Supervisors.

On June 13th, we spoke to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors against the proposed "alternatives" to building a new jail in San Francisco. While Mayor Lee's proposal, which includes such programs as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and electronic monitoring, appear to be alternatives to incarceration, in reality these programs perpetuate many of the harmful effects of mass incarceration, such as racism and over-policing.

In an [Op-Ed piece published in the S.F. Examiner](#), Natalia wrote that "our opposition to jail expansion

should not be used to justify more systems of state surveillance or to increase law enforcement's power over marginalized communities." At LSPC, we continue to fight for community empowerment over building new jails.

2017 National Restorative Justice Conference

All of Us Or None and LSPC made a powerful impact at this year's [National Conference on Community and Restorative Justice](#), June 16-18 in Oakland, California. AOJON co-founder Linda Evans and California Families Against Solitary Confinement organizer Dolores Canales spoke to a packed room during the "Formerly Incarcerated Women and Movement Building" panel. Linda, Dolores, and other women spoke to ways in which formerly incarcerated people practice restorative justice while in prison and when returned to our communities.

Staff member Harriette Davis spoke on a panel focusing on "Formerly Incarcerated Women and Trauma Healing". Harriette (seated left in photo) stated, "There is no way to talk about restorative justice without bringing formerly incarcerated people into the the conversation." As a formerly incarcerated woman herself, she knows that FIPs are a part of our communities, and therefore need to be part of community dialogue.



LSPC founder Ellen Barry played an integral role in organizing the conference, ensuring that formerly incarcerated people played an active role in the conference and participated in many panels. Ellen said that bringing formerly incarcerated people "helped to really shift the ways that people are thinking about restorative justice and trauma healing." LSPC continues to shift the dominant discourse regarding current and formerly incarcerated people.



Participants honoring the Ohlone land and the shared space, and invoking peace and justice during the Opening Ceremony at the 2017 NACRJ Conference in Oakland, CA.



LSPC Board Member and CURYJ Executive Director George Galvis shares ways formerly incarcerated people create cultura cura (culture of healing) in our communities.



Albino Garcia (La Plazita Institute) demonstrates how pouches of herbs—such as lavender—can help relax a person and aid in processing the trauma of incarceration.



LSPC founder and Development Director Ellen Barry takes a brief pause from organizing the conference. Thanks for all your hard work, Ellen!



Participants pack the room to listen to the "Formerly Incarcerated Women Building A National Movement Rooted In RJ" panel on Friday, June 16.



L-R: Kathy Boudin, Linda Evans, Topeka Sam, Dawn Harrington, and Dolores Canales share their experiences organizing formerly incarcerated people and families.

Juneteenth

LSPC / All of Us or None was honored to celebrate Juneteenth with the Berkeley community this year. This year marked our fourteenth year participating in the celebration in the East Bay.

While many LSPC / All of Us or None staff, interns, and volunteers enjoyed connecting with fellow community members throughout the warm, near-summer day, Policy Fellow Joseph Johnson merits special recognition for his all-day activism: from picking up the canopy at dawn, to hauling remaining supplies back to the office, and to energetically engaging everyone in between—Joseph embodied the best of All of Us or None at all times.

Hamdiya Cooks-Abdullah, who has been involved in coordinating AOUON's Juneteenth booth for many years, believes in the importance of continually connecting with folks in the community: "Juneteenth gives our organization an opportunity to directly engage with the people we serve, and understand how we are serving them well and what we could be doing better."



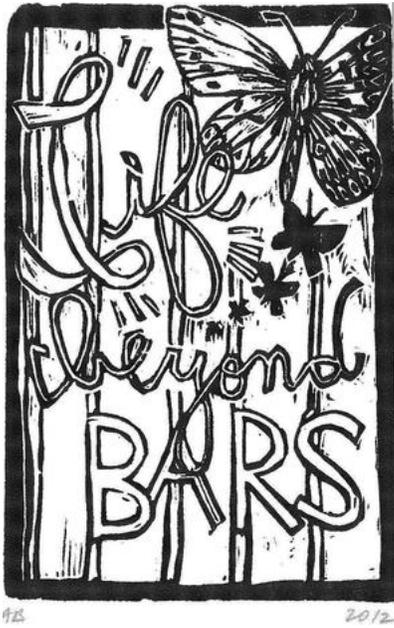
L-R: LSPC Policy Fellows Joseph Johnson and Sandra Johnson, with AOUON co-founder Sam Brooks at Juneteenth in Berkeley.



LSPC Intern Alena Yarmosky and Sandra offer information and AOUON merchandise to revelers at the Juneteenth celebration in Berkeley, CA.

Solitary Confinement Update: Parole After SHU

About 2,500 prisoners were transferred from SHU (solitary confinement) to general population between 2012-2016 as a result of the historic prisoner hunger strikes, CDCR's administrative reforms, and the federal class action settlement in *Ashker v. Governor*. SHU prisoners who were lifers were never paroled by the parole board. Now in general population, former-SHU lifers were hopeful that their prospects for parole would increase. They are older prisoners with no recent violence who have served longer prison sentences than is the norm for their conviction offenses.



However, many are receiving psychological assessments that rate them as "high risk" of violence. While CDCR is no longer using prisoners' gang validations as grounds to house them in the SHU, these validations are used in other ways to penalize prisoners. Gang validations are often based on flimsy evidence and remain in a prisoner's record despite the passage of time. Parole psychologists read more into a validation, and other confidential information in a prisoner's file, than is warranted. These prisoners are finding that the parole commissioners who hear their cases are pressuring them to debrief. They are treating a gang validation as presumptive grounds to find them unsuitable for parole in the same way they denied these prisoners parole while in SHU.

The Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition, which formed in 2011 to support the 2011 hunger strikers, is continuing to support these prisoners as they transition to general population. LSPC is a founder and active participant in that coalition. In 2016, the coalition formed a parole committee to work on parole issues. We are collecting and analyzing current parole hearing transcripts and psychological reports. We wrote a position paper urging the Board of Parole Hearings to adopt a different approach for these prisoners. We have met with the Office of the Inspector General, Board of Parole Hearings officials, and the Board's chief psychologist to express our concerns. We have presented [a training for parole attorneys and family members on how to assist prisoners with these issues](#). We are connecting with other groups concerned about parole issues.

To date, we are aware of only one validated former SHU prisoner who has been granted parole. The placement in solitary confinement of prisoners for validations alone was a violation of their constitutional rights. They endured mental suffering, loss of credits, loss of educational and work programming opportunities, loss of calls and contact visits with their families, etc. It is simply unfair to further penalize these prisoners, particularly those who served very lengthy SHU terms, for the same reason.

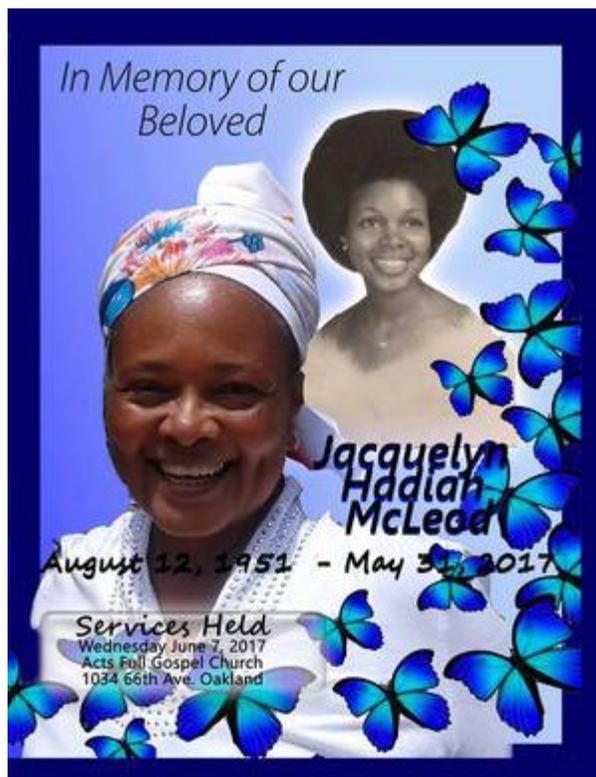
To get involved with this effort, contact Carol Strickman:

Rest in Power, Hadiah

Jacquelyn Hadiah McLeod passed away on May 31, 2017 in Oakland, California. Hadiah, as she was known to many, was a community activist from an early age. As a young woman she accepted the religion of Islam and became a Muslim. She earned her teacher's credentials and taught for many years. She was an asset to our community, and involved with many organizations over the years, including the Timers and All Of Us Or None where I met her and got to know and love her. She worked with many African women's groups, and was an impetus for many healing circles and workshops. She was a mom to many, and a grandmother, aunt, daughter, sister, sister friend, teacher... and so much more. She will be missed. But her life shines on

through the work she did and the family and loved ones she left behind.

—Harriette Davis



LSPC Calendar

CFASC Legal Workshop & BBQ Picnic

When: Saturday, July 15 — 12:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.

Where: Chapman Park - 2515 San Carlos Dr., Fullerton, CA 92831



California Families Against Solitary Confinement host presentations on CDCR and the current state of solitary confinement, as well as laws and litigation pertaining to people in SHU and attempting to gain parole once released to general population.

Food, Raffle Prizes... bring the kids! The event is in an air-conditioned community center but we will also have outside table with BBQ & playground in the park.

PRESENTERS:

12-2 P.M.

Carol Strickman, Senior Staff Attorney, Legal Services for Prisoners With Children: Parole preparation for those who have been in SHU

2-5 P.M.

Frankie Guzman, Attorney, National Youth Law Center: Update on SB260, SB261 & Prop 57

Jules Lobel, Lead Attorney, Center for Constitutional Rights: Update on Ashker VS Brown

Please RSVP with Dolores Canales:

dol1canales@gmail.com or [\(714\) 290-9077](tel:(714)290-9077)

Letter-Writing Night

When: Monday, July 24 — 5:30-8:30 P.M.

Where: LSPC Offices — 1540 Market St. Suite 490, SF, CA 94102



Please join us to write letters to people in prison requesting information! Letter writing nights are the fourth Monday of each month at 5:30-8:30 pm. We start with a light dinner, training, and conversation about the types of issues we will be addressing in the letters, and then we respond to some letters.

We hope you can join us for this educational and important work! For more information contact Eva:

eva@prisonerswithchildren.org or 415-625-7049.

Family Law and Self-Help Conference

When: Monday, July 24 — 8:30 A.M.—4:50 P.M.

Where: The Ronald Reagan State Building - 300 S. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 10013

LSPC staff will participate in the Family Law and Self-Help Conference, a series of trainings for legal service providers, court-based staff, and pro bono attorneys in California.



Together with Anjuli Arora Dow of Legal Services with Children, LSPC Senior Staff Attorney Carol Strickman and Staff Attorney Brittany Stonesifer will present "Family Unity Issues for Immigrants at Risk of Deportation". Later in the day, Brittany will join Jude Pond (Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights) and Theresa Zhen (East Bay Legal Services) to present "Conquering Court Debt: Arguing 'Ability to Pay' in Traffic Court".

LSPC is proud that our Family Unity Project and Fines & Fees experts have the opportunity to share their legal expertise and experience to train

hundreds of attorneys at this prestigious conference, which is organized by the Judicial Council and the Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC).

For more information, [please go to the LAAC website here](#).

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