All of Us or None is an organizing movement started by people who have been in prison in order to challenge the pervasive discrimination that formerly incarcerated people, people in prison, and our family members face. Our goal is to strengthen the voices of people most affected by mass incarceration and the growth of the prison industrial complex. Through our grassroots organizing, we are building a powerful political movement to win full restoration of our human and civil rights.
As members of All of Us or None, we pledge:

- To demand the right to speak in our own voices
- To treat each other with respect and not allow differences to divide us
- To accept responsibility for any acts that may have caused harm to our families, our communities or ourselves
- To fight all forms of discrimination
- To help build the economic stability of formerly incarcerated people
- To claim and take care of our own children and our families
- To support community struggles to stop using prisons as the answer to social problems
- To play an active role in making our communities safe for everyone

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Movement Maker

Shackles
Activism
Criminalize
Abelism
Leadership
Healthiy
Involuntary
Classism
Confinement
Convict
Servitude
Custody
Oppressor
Solitary
Liberation

Cover Art by Scotty Scott aka Scott Smith

The artist describes this piece as symbolizing Finding Beauty & Life even in our darkest moments.

Submit your art and/or news articles for publication.
Nominate a formerly incarcerated person for the Coming Home section or submit your own story about reentry.

Nominations and submissions may be sent to:
AOUON Newspaper Editor
c/o Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608

Chapter Connections

Tia Ryans, the Executive Director of AOUON in New Jersey, was a habitual juvenile offender. Her only crime was running away from her stepfather who sexually abused her from the ages of 5-13 years old. Her middle school classmate who had a locker next to hers had been murdered by her abuser for speaking up. Everyday at school she saw the flowers next to her locker and memorial letters taped to the young girl’s locker. Ryans felt she had two choices: stay in what was familiar and suffer in silence or run away to the unknown. She chose the latter time and time again.

Ms. Ryans came from a stable home. Her mother and her mother’s mother had worked at the same jobs all of their lives. They made dinner from scratch and kept a routine. They invested in their familiar relationships no matter the accusations. When I asked Ryans, who in her family she admired the most, she said, “My aunt actually. What I liked most about her I liked least about her. She moves every two to three years…. She’s moved so much. I’m like, plant roots already, but how much courage and wherewithal she has to continue starting over.”

The more she described her aunt, the more I thought of Ms. Ryans. Doesn’t she sound like you? I asked. Ryans laughed – this had not occurred to her. Ryans was escaping and her aunt was on an adventure. But neither one of them had been afraid of starting over.

Ms. Ryans had run away so much that the juvenile guards joked that the detention center was her second home. Though she had spent a great deal of her youth in transition, she kept to her school work and excelled. She graduated high school with a 3.8 GPA. Between home, juvenile and living amongst other runaways and orphans in the criminal hemisphere where young kids go unhoused, Ms. Ryans landed back inside with a 12 year sentence. I asked if she, like many, had fantasized about what she would do when she got out. After serving a total of 10 years in prison that time, I wanted to know what dreams she had for herself. Ms. Ryans couldn't relate although she wasn't afraid of running she was practical. “I didn't dream of anything. I just worked. I read. I educated myself.” When Ryans was released, she went back to school and completed her bachelor’s degree in both Political Science and African American & African Studies. She was self-educated and traditionally educated. It shows. When she speaks, she has agency, insight and understanding over her story. She can eloquently define what she has experienced and expound on it.

Still, I was having a hard time understanding where her love for education came from. She was, after all, the first generation of her family to

AOUON New Jersey Tia Ryans

ALL OF US OR NONE - NEW JERSEY
Destination Unknown
Chirae Cannon
Contributing Writer

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Fellows Meet Dr. Dennis Childs

Chapter Connections

Continued from page 3

Congratulations to Paula Lehman-Ewing. On January 27th, it was announced that Paula will be awarded the Silver Heart of Excellence in Journalism from the Northern California Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ NorCal) for her extraordinary dedication to amplifying the unheard voices of formerly and currently incarcerated people.

There are seven prestigious awards given yearly by the SPJ NorCal Board. The Silver Heart is an award that goes to a journalist whose career reflects an extraordinary dedication to amplifying unheard voices and sharing stories from marginalized communities.

Award winners will be honored at SPJ NorCal's Silver Heart of Excellence in Journalism Awards Ceremony on February 17. Due to Covid concern it will be held virtually. Ben Treffry, Executive Director of KALW and current President of the NorCal Society of Professional Journalists said, "It is an honor to recognize wonderful journalists across all media for their hard work and dedication to keeping the public informed and making the world a better place."

The All Of Us Or None newspaper is sent into every prison in California, a total of 22 states, and more than 160 prison yards all over the country. Dorsey Nunn, LSPC Executive Director said, "We thought that news should reflect our purpose from our voices and we recognize that Paula in a lot of hard work into ensuring that that's how the news was covered. And we thank her for that."

On behalf of All Of Us Or None, we thank you Paula Lehman-Ewing. Because of your contribution, voices in the movement for change, as led by those most impacted, will continue to be read inside prison walls and formerly incarcerated communities all over the country.

LSPC’s Policy Manager Joana Billingy is creating an environment for All of Us or None members to learn and support an impressive political movement as well as train the 2022 Elder Freeman Policy Fellows to be all they can be! Here are some of the latest activities of the new fellows led by Joana.

The Fellows have been doing a lot of intensive learning. They have been engaged in curriculum addressing law, policy, and organizing, they have taken on typing and grammar classes, and they have been reading Slaves of the State! This afternoon, Dr. Dennis Childs was kind enough to grace us with his bold advocacy and supportive presence. Our fellows had the opportunity to ask him questions and hear his answers. Important questions surrounded whether or not he likes Tupac, through to understanding the history of how prisoners were determined to be ‘dead’ and therefore ‘slaves of the state.’ So much rich conversation occurred and we look forward to seeing Dr. Childs at Alcatraz. He has an awesome new project coming up and we can’t wait to support his effort to remind folks that “We Still Charge Genocide.”

Notice: The Elder Freeman Policy Fellowship is building a movement. It has had some bumps, but the vision is catching on. What a blessing and a privilege to connect history to the future. Dr. Childs reminded us of the movement New African Prisoners Organization has carried and how AOUON is closely aligned.

We took a screenshot of the gathering. Pictured: Top row: Joana Billingy, LSPC Policy Manager. Michael Getzler, one of our 2020 Policy Fellows, Alissa Moore, Marvin Caldamone, and Tatiana Lewis, our newest cohort of 2022 Fellows.

I was at the start of the Covid pandemic that Paula Lehman-Ewing began working at Legal Services for Prisoners (LSPC). Her assignment was to revitalize the All Of Us Or None (AOUON) Newspaper. The creation of the AOUON newspaper has always been intended to highlight the voices and leadership of current and formerly incarcerated people. Hamdiya Cooks-Abdullah, LSPC Administrative Director, instrumental in hiring Paula, shared that members of AOUON have always wanted to make sure that people both inside and outside of prisons all over this country had a way of staying connected to the work we all do to restore our human and civil rights.

“It is important that we all have a voice in this struggle. This paper is for us” Hamdiya said, then continued, “Paula was given two old copies to see the vision of what we wanted to revamp and she did a wonderful job revitalizing the newspaper, and it’s still going strong.”

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) was founded in 1909. Its mission, in part, is to promote the flow of information, to maintain constant vigilance in protection of the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press, to inspire successive generations of talented individuals to become dedicated journalists, to encourage diversity in journalism, and to encourage a climate in which journalism can be practiced freely.

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Bringing Our People Home - Post Conviction Resentencing

By Chirae Cannon, Contributing Writer

A s part of a national network, AOUON, CURYJ, Urban Peace Movement, & Young Women's Freedom Center have partnered up in Alameda County to develop a participatory defense hub, facilitated by Silicon Valley Debug. For the last two years, the Alameda Participatory Defense Hub has worked to empower families in defense of their loved ones facing criminal charges.

This year the Defense Hub in Oakland implemented a participatory defense project for post conviction resentencing, temporarily named, "Bring Our People Home Oakland Participatory Defense Post Conviction Relief Project." Senate Bill 2942 gives the district attorney discretion "in the interest of justice" to recommend a resentencing to the court. The Bring Our People Home Oakland Participatory Defense Post Conviction Relief Project supports families in preparing post conviction relief packets for the Alameda County District Attorney to review.

Oscar Flores, an organizer with AOUON and the Oakland Participatory defense hub, said, “When you don’t know the system, you feel disempowered.” Flores not only has expertise in doing the work, but he has also been impacted by the criminal justice system. In 2005, Mr. Flores faced very serious felony charges; he was one of the first recipients of an earlier, participatory defense model while it was being developed at Silicon Valley Debug. Debug’s court support impacted the decision to drop the charges. Since then, Mr. Flores has been an integral part in practicing and analyzing this model to, “empower families to be active agents in the defense of criminal charges.”

Flores’ aim is to inform incarcerated people about the Oakland Participatory Defense Post Conviction Relief Project and bring our people home.

What is Participatory Defense?

Participatory defense is just that, participation in your own defense, with a community of supporters. The National Network of Participatory Defense has hubs throughout the country made up of organizers who are experts in the criminal judicial system. Hub organizers work with the court system, the defendant, and the defendant’s friends and family, in a collective effort to drop charges, shorten a defendant’s sentence, or get them immediately released.

In another case, the hub in Contra Costa County created a “social bio” for a CoCo County client that portrayed him in a humanizing manner. This approach was executed so that the courts could picture him as a whole being, and not just a list of his charges. Instead of facing a year inside, the participatory defense hub was able to get their client probation. He is now an organizer with “Resuming Families.”

What is Post Conviction Participatory Defense?

In a Post Conviction Participatory Defense, a participatory defense is conducted with the purpose of supporting an incarcerated person’s effort to obtain a court order to shorten their sentence or release them based on new sentencing laws. A comprehensive review of the defendant’s post conviction record is conducted. This is a team effort between the organizers of the hub and the family or friend of the incarcerated loved one. “During the central file review,” explains Flores, “our main focus is to review the probation report, rules violation reports (RVR’s) and chronos. This information is important in identifying mitigating information, explain the impact of any RVR’s, and uplifting chronos.” Organizers can point out incorrect info based on corruption or incompetency. They also conduct in-depth research, and even confirm that all statements are accurate through incident reenactments. In addition, the Post Conviction Relief Project researches new sentencing laws to see if they are applicable for someone seeking relief, which can again result in shorter sentencing or being returned home immediately.

Bringing our People Home.

Through AB2942 and other resentencing laws, the Oakland Participatory Defense hub has supported the release of three people from long prison sentences, and there are five other families pending a review from the Alameda County District Attorney’s office. The project is in its first phase, doing what Mr. Flores refers to as, “inreach” to folks who have already been referred by CDCR for resentencing. The referrals are based on new court decisions or legislation that can shave off time and/or achieve a parole date sooner.

The Color Purple

By: Will Smith Jr.
“A.K.A. - “X-Plicit”

Black lives matter to us, not them
So it’s not shocking when they kill black men
Like Ahmad Aubrey who was just joggin
When a truck pulled up and white men shot him
Then George Floyd stopped breathing thanks to Derrick Chavin
Guilty on all counts, I guess the jury showed him
But it’s the discrimination we face
That they’re not showing
That make our hertz cold as the weather
When it’s snowing
Because this is a white man’s world
In case you ain’t knowing
And it’s time for us to change
How things are going
Cause when the going get tough
The tough get to going
Since questions speak louder than words
It’s about time we showed them
That our past ain’t our future
Mix the red, white and blue in
And that create the Color Purple

All of Us or None

By: Michael Young
“The Angry Black Poet”

No longer will we stand by and tolerate!
Your condition of mass incarceration
We all will let our voices be heard
Our families will fight for our freedom,
And there will be no long debate
It’s only one way to end today’s slavery,
That’s to open those prison gates.
No more doing life in your prisons
For a non-violent crime
I spent over twenty five years behind bars,
And that’s a very long time
It will be All of Us or None,
And we all have made a choice
Now let justice be served
When you hear the people’s voice
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All of Us or None Membership Form

Name & Number: ______________________________________________________
Institution: _________________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________
Country of Origin: ___________________________________________________
Do you have children? YES / NO. Do you need support with family issues? YES / NO
Earliest Parole/Release Date: ______________ County of Parole/Probation:

- I can organize & facilitate group meeting
- I can help with membership outreach
- I can distribute materials & resources
- I can address & pass along feedback

Mail this form & any questions to:
AOUON
4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608

If you would like to send feedback or contribute to the All of Us or None newspaper, please contact the Editor.
AOUON
4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608
info@prisonerswithchildren.org

Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956)

All of Us or None

Slave, who is it that shall free you?
Those in deepest darkness lying.
Comrade, only these can see you
Only they can hear you crying.
Comrade, only slaves can free you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

You who hunger, who shall feed you?
If it's bread you would becarving,
Come to us, we too are starving.
Come to us and let us lead you.
Only hungry men can feed you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Beaten man, who shall avenge you?
You, on whom the blows are falling,
Weakness gives us strength to lend you.
Come to us, we shall avenge you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Who, oh wretched one, shall dare it?
He who can no longer bear it.
Counts the blows that arm his spirit.
Strikes today and not tomorrow.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Weakness gives us strength to lend you.
You who hunger, who shall feed you?
Hear your wounded brothers calling.
Taught the time by need and sorrow,
Counts the blows that arm his spirit.
Who, oh wretched one, shall dare it?
You, on whom the blows are falling,
Contribute to the All of Us or None
If you would like to send feedback or
Beaten man, who shall avenge you?
Comrade, only slaves can free you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

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