



JUSTICE JOURNAL

Advocacy

Grassroots Organizing

Movement Building



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Celebrating Freedom for Lifers: Successes & Shifts in California's Parole Policy

LSPC continues to win freedom for incarcerated domestic violence survivors. Since July 2010, eight women have been released through the efforts of the California Habeas Project, increasing the number of released survivors since the inception of the project to 34! The California Habeas Project is a collaboration that organizes lawyers statewide to provide free legal services to women convicted for crimes related to their experiences of being abused.

Two recent releases include Mary Shields and Karen Narita, who were both released on parole this year. Mary was paroled from prison on Martin Luther King Jr's birthday af-

ter 19 years of incarceration. While behind bars, Mary tirelessly advocated for other survivors of domestic violence, and fought for better health care and dignity for incarcerated seniors. On June 15, 2011, Karen walked out of the Central California Women's Facility after serving more

than 26 years and being denied parole ten times. Karen, mother of two and a recent grandmother, was picked up at the prison gates by her lawyer, LSPC's own Staff Attorney Marisa González. Marisa dedicated six years to working alongside Karen to eventually win her freedom. When asked what it was like to see Karen walk out the prison gates, Marisa says, "It was surreal. I had only seen Karen in prison, so taking her away from there was an incredible feeling." When asked about life after prison, Karen says "I am still in awe about the world. Every

(Continued on page 2)



LSPC Staff Attorney Marisa González and released survivor Karen Narita

LSPC Expands Support Center Services

Legal Services for Prisoners with Children is a statewide support center that provides a variety of services to qualified legal service programs throughout California. We provide trainings, publications, advocacy support and technical assistance that allows a broad range of clients to be served. We are expanding the information available to include an updated web presence. Legal service pro-

grams will be able to access the site and utilize the information to better serve their clients. We expect the updated site to be available mid December 2011. All our published manuals are available on line to assist a disadvantaged and sometimes forgotten group of people. Our expertise includes all aspects of needs for people re-entering the society after in-

carceration. The needs are expansive, i.e. employment housing, social services and education to name a few. In some areas there are policies in place that ultimately prohibit formerly incarcerated people from successful re-entry. LSPC is committed to changing that reality. We appreciate the opportunity to train partners in this work and advocate for changes to effect a more equitable society.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.prisonerswithchildren.org

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LSPC Board of Directors Lt. To Rt. Millard Murphy, Naneen Karraker, Harriette Davis, George Galvis, Arthur League, Margaret Littlefield, Marlene Sanchez, Dorsey Nunn Not shown—Shireen Malekafzali, Ellen Barry, Keith Wattley & Cynthia Martin

Celebrating Freedom for Lifers: Successes & Shifts in California's Parole Policy

(Continued from page 1)

day I see something new, or taste something that I have never had. Only someone who has done the amount of time that I did can truly appreciate what I feel. I have just recently got hired for a job, and have been approved to receive a grant so that I can go to school to become what I have always wanted, and that is to be a Chef. My dreams have only begun.”

The recent successes of the Habeas Project represent one part of a larger shift in California's parole policy. With

the election of Governor Jerry Brown, we have witnessed a significant shift in the number of parole grants for people serving indeterminate life sentences. Since taking office in January 2011, Governor Brown has approved 106 of 130 parole petitions.

Despite these positive developments, new legislation introduced by Senator Ted Gaines aims to put an end to parole for Lifers. SB 391 would allow the Parole Board to deny a prisoner a release date based solely on the seriousness of the offense or past criminal history. The facts of

a prisoner's crime will never change; however, our current parole system is supposed to be guided by the idea that people in prison are capable of personal transformation and rehabilitation.

LSPC believes that Californians are growing weary of costly tough-on-crime policies like SB 391 that fail to make our communities safer. Our organization is part of a broad-based coalition committed to defeating this bill. Contact us for more information on how to lend your voice to help stop SB 391 and win justice for Lifers.

Family Unity Project Leads Classes with Incarcerated Parents

Over the past year, LSPC made significant progress in supporting incarcerated mothers and expanded our work to support incarcerated fathers in advocating for their parental rights. At the request of the Mothers' Alliance, an organization of incarcerated mothers at Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla California, we developed curriculum and lead six classes that included role playing, skill-sharing and hands-on instructions. We trained women on how to file a court order to ensure that a child is able to visit, to reunite with a child upon release from prison, and how to find the right court and forms to address various parental rights issues. Mothers' Alliance members are using what they learn from us to teach other mothers and incarcerated pregnant women about their rights. When asked for feedback on our

classes, women shared the following:

“You guys are a breath of fresh air. We are treated so horrible by staff and you treat us like human beings and that's why we love you coming here.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank [LSPC] for this excellent workshop that has taught me different methods of dealing with the family courts. I am very blessed to be able to learn all this, and I am looking forward to helping all the mothers get their children back. I am a true advocate for the women and their kids. I believe that a child needs their mother and a mother needs her kids in order to keep going. Life without your loved ones is hard.”

“I just want to thank everyone for taking the time out to teach us the tools in helping each other. This workshop

will and can go a long way. The women will be very grateful with the help.”

In response to requests from incarcerated fathers for more information and support regarding their parental rights concerns, LSPC expanded our work to include a series of educational workshops for men incarcerated at the Deuel Vocation Institution (DVI) located in Tracey California. Since the beginning of 2011, we have conducted nine workshops for over 100 fathers at DVI. These trainings educate incarcerated men about their child support rights, provide information on how to file the necessary paperwork to retain custody of their children, and build their capacity to train others. LSPC looks forward to continuing this important work.

LSPC Program Highlights

S.F. Introduces Landmark Anti-Discrimination Ordinance

In 2011, LSPC's All of Us or None project began collaborating on a groundbreaking civil rights campaign in San Francisco. The goal of the campaign is to put an end to the practice of discriminating against people based on their conviction histories. If passed, this ordinance will require fair hiring practices of all employers including all city contractors and private employers. Additionally, all private landlords as well as city-subsidized housing agencies would be prohibited from refusing to rent to people who have an arrest or conviction record. This effort represents the first in the nation that aims to define people with arrest and conviction records as a protected class.

Prisoners Organize Hunger Strike

On July 1st, over 200 prisoners incarcerated in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) at Pelican Bay State Prison began a hunger strike to protest the torture they experience. At least 6,600 prisoners across California joined the hunger strike. LSPC Executive Director Dorsey Nunn served on the mediation team, a body of representatives appointed by the leaders of the hunger strike to help win the prisoner's five core demands. LSPC also joined other organizations from across the country to form the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition.

National Movement Launches

In February 2011, All of Us or None helped convene a gathering of 50 formerly-incarcerated people from across the country in Selma, Alabama during the anniversary of the infamous 1965 Bloody Sunday Civil Rights March over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The purpose of the gathering was to engage in a conversation about the need to build a national movement and create a collective national agenda to restore our human and civil rights. Through this effort, coalesced a national steering committee structure coalesced and participants agreed on a unified vision: "The Fight for the Full Restoration of Our Civil and Human Rights."

Karen Narita Released After 26 Years in Prison

On June 15, 2011, Karen walked out of the Central California Women's Facility after serving more than 26 years and being denied parole ten times. Karen, mother of two and a recent grandmother, was picked up at the prison gates by her lawyer, LSPC's own Staff Attorney Marisa González. Marisa dedicated six years to working alongside Karen to eventually win her freedom.

Pregnant Women Close to Victory

In 2010, LSPC co-sponsored legislation that would have banned shackling of pregnant women during the entire course of their pregnancies. This bill (AB 1900-Skinner) passed the California legislature unanimously only to be vetoed by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. In 2011, LSPC introduced the bill a second time (now AB 568-Skinner) and has great hopes that it will pass

through the legislature and be signed by Governor Jerry Brown.

Communities Learn about "The New Jim Crow"

In the Spring of 2011, LSPC convened two events held in Sacramento and Berkeley for the purpose of educating Black community and faith leaders about the failures of the Drug War and the structural discrimination formerly incarcerated people face trying to secure housing, employee and public benefits. With over 1,500 in attendance, these events featured a lecture and book-signing by Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

Hundreds Benefit from "Clean Slate" Remedies

LSPC and All of Us or None's Sacramento Chapter organized two hugely successful "Day of Forgiveness and New Beginnings" events which provided free legal services to over 700 people from Sacramento and Alameda counties. Participants were assisted in petitioning the courts for dismissals of criminal convictions, getting warrants cleared and having a total of over \$800,000 in past-due fines forgiven. LSPC is in the process of organizing a statewide coalition to improve and expand current clean slate remedies.

LSPC STAFF

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Anna Couey
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Zoe Wigfall
Administrative Assistant



Sacramento Rally Aug. 2011



LSPC Staff Member/All of Us or None Organizer Linda Evans at Sacramento Rally Aug. 2011



LSPC Staff Attorney Carol Strickman speaking at Rally for Pelican Bay Prisoners

Prisoners Organize Peaceful Hunger Strike

On July 1st over 200 prisoners incarcerated in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) at Pelican Bay State Prison began a hunger strike as a means of peacefully protesting the torture they experience living in long-term isolation and to win their human rights. At least 6,600 prisoners across California joined the hunger strike in support of their demands.

LSPC has received letters from prisoners in the Pelican Bay SHU for many years, recounting the horrors that go on there. Particularly terrible is long term sensory deprivation and isolation, lasting in many cases for decades. Behind this inhumane treatment is the prison's policy of requiring prisoners to "debrief" (inform on other prisoners) in order to be released from the SHU. An unwritten policy is in place to stop any lifer in the SHU from ever being paroled. Men imprisoned in the SHU exist for decades in metal and concrete cages, under fluorescent light 24 hours a day, deprived of human touch except for a guard

locking them in handcuffs and shackles.

Organized across racial and geographic lines, the hunger strikers put forth the following five core demands:

1. End Group Punishment & Administrative Abuse
2. Abolish the Debriefing Policy, and Modify Active/Inactive Gang Status Criteria
3. Comply with the US Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons 2006 Recommendations Regarding an End to Long-Term Solitary Confinement
4. Provide Adequate and Nutritious Food
5. Expand and Provide Constructive Programming and Privileges for Indefinite SHU Status Inmates.

The courage and determination of hunger strikers resulted in wide-spread national and international media attention, a legislative hearing that included participation and testimony from hundreds of family members and supporters, and reinvigorated a movement committed to ending the use of long-term solitary confinement. After 20 days of peace pro-

test, prisoner representatives called an end to the hunger strike and issued a public statement declaring a victory:

"Many inmates across the state heard about our protest and rose to the occasion in a solid show of support and solidarity, as did thousands of people around the world! Many inmates put their health and lives on the line; many came close to death and experienced medical emergencies. All acted for the collective cause and recognized the great potential for forcing change on the use of SHU units across the country."

This struggle continues and LSPC remains committed to standing alongside SHU prisoners to win their demands. To stay informed about this issue, visit the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition blog at: <http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com>

LSPC Summer Interns Make Movement Building Partners

"Interning at LSPC allows me to be a part of a movement and reaffirms why I came to law school. I am committed to social justice and determined to work in public interest law." Alison—UC Berkeley School of Law

"It is a great experience to travel around the world and work with outstanding interns at LSPC. This summer internship allows me to put my computer knowledge in practice and know more about the incarcerated parents, children and their families. I enjoy working here so much!

Kathy Fan—Hong Kong Baptist University



2011 Summer Interns

"As a rising college junior, I'm still deciding on what I want to do career wise. I feel so lucky to have an internship that throws me into the real meat of issues; I have participated in rallies and lobbying and have gotten to read letters from prisoners seeking legal advice and advocacy" Maggie—Duke University English Major

2011 Legislative Update

LSPC Shapes Public Policy

LSPC continues to carry the voices and vision of formerly incarcerated people into the halls of the California State Capitol and beyond. For the 2010-2011 legislative session, LSPC's Legislative Tracking Committee is in the process of monitoring and responding to over 100 bills that span a range of issues central to our work. We've identified the following initiatives as among our top policy priorities:

AB 13—(Oppose) LSPC took the lead in defeating AB 13, a bill that would have prohibited people with certain felony convictions from volunteering in their children's school. We organized a broad-based letter writing campaign that ultimately helped defeat this terrible bill. We mobilized formerly incarcerated parents, youth and children of incarcerated people to testify at legislative hearings and participate in legislative action days in an effort to educate lawmakers about the potentially devastating impact this bill would

have on many California families. We are also proud that we convinced our coalition partners to reject proposed amendments to the bill which we felt represented too great a compromise of our principles. Defeating AB 13 represents an affirmation of the right—and responsibility—formerly incarcerated people have to be part of their children's lives.

AB 420—(Support) If passed, this bill would take the first step in correcting the extremely unfair practice of counting incarcerated people residing in their district of incarceration rather than their district of residence. Because of the disproportionate number of people of color incarcerated in California state prisons in comparison to the overall population in California, the impact of AB 420 could be extremely great. This bill would require that the Commission on Redistricting be provided accurate information regarding the place of residence of people

in California's prisons. As a result, they will have the information needed to draw district lines that correctly reflect the population in our state.

AB 568 (Support) LSPC continues to play a leadership role in the campaign to end of shackling of incarcerated pregnant women in California and link their struggles within the larger reproductive justice movement. After Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed AB 1900 in 2010, LSPC helped form a new coalition and worked with Assemblywoman Skinner to introduce 568, a bill that would prohibit the shackling of pregnant women during all her stages of pregnancy, including transport, labor and delivery. As of September 1, 2011, AB 568 has passed both houses of the legislature and has yet to receive a single "no" vote from any legislator. We expect Governor Brown to sign this bill into law.

"LSPC has opened my eyes to the injustices that incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people face every day. By interviewing prisoners and by working with the knowledgeable LSPC staff, I've gained a better understanding of the prison system as a whole, and I'm beginning to question the system more and more."

**Kimberly Kim—
Stanford University,
School of Law**

"This summer I met women prisoners and it was through hearing their stories that I felt connected in their struggles and resistance. I realized that I have to be involved in this movement to fight for prisoners rights—I was touched too deeply to now overlook the injustices of incarceration."

**Lauren Liu—UC
Berkeley, Ethnic
Studies & Asian
American Studies
Major**

LSPC'S WORK HONORED COAST TO COAST

Being recognized for the work one does is always a delight. Hoping to have an impact on the future direction of the society is an even greater feat. LSPC's projects are being honored on several fronts for the impact our work is having in the field of re-entry, (specific to employment rights for formerly incarcerated people) domestic violence work and grassroots organizing.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING HONORED

Leadership development among the people most affected by an injustice represents the core of movement building and change in the society. LSPC's project All of Us or None is being honored for what they do and believe innately; engaging the

community in grassroots organizing. San Francisco's CORO leadership development program honored AOUN in August 2011 for their community grassroots organizing model.

An incredible group of high school students organized and participated in this project to honor AOUN.

(Continued on page 8)

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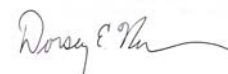
Dear Donors,

Individual donations, businesses and foundations solely fund the work of LSPC. We recognize that funding levels are not guaranteed from year to year and we want to thank all of you for your generous contributions that allow us to do the work we are passionate about and want to continue doing. Your contributions enable us to respond rapidly to an ever-changing political environment.

We rarely take the time to express how much each and every donation matters to the well-being of our organization. From unrestricted funds we are allowed to take on the issue of torture, gang injunctions and to defend women who have been given life sentences for the mere act of defending themselves in abusive relationships. Keeping our doors open allows us to continue to advance the fight to secure the civil and human rights of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people.

Foundation support gives us the ability to carry out our vision for a more equitable society through social and criminal justice reform projects. If you're ever asked what you do to support social and criminal justice movement building, I suggest that you respond by saying you've made a contribution to end torture, you've fought to end the tracking of children and young people for future incarceration through racial profiling, you've contributed to freeing battered women and you've supported the advancement of civil and human rights through your support of LSPC. Thank you again for your generosity!

For Justice,



Dorsey E. Nunn
 Executive Director



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WELCOME NEW STAFF

We are proud to announce that Martha Wallner has been selected for the position of Communications/Media Coordinator at LSPC. With Martha's guidance we're excited about and looking forward to broadening our presence in all aspects of communications.



Martha Wallner
New addition to
LSPC Family

LSPC'S WORK HONORED COAST TO COAST

(Continued from page 5)

HABEAS PROJECT HONORED

Peace over Violence, a pre-eminent Los Angeles based organization with national notoriety, will honor the Habeas Project at their 40th Annual Humanitarian Awards Ceremony this year. The Habeas Project was chosen for all the work it's done that directly impacts the lives of survivors of domestic violence. Through the efforts of the Habeas Project dozens of women have seen relief within the criminal justice system, allowing evidence of domestic violence to be admitted into the court procedure through a writ of habeas corpus.

BAN THE BOX CAMPAIGN HONORED

The National H.I.R.E. Network, a Project of the Legal Action Center, is honoring our Ban the Box campaign work during their awards benefit in New York City (October 2011)

LSPC/All of Us or None was selected to receive this award because of our national work helping individuals with criminal records re-enter society through policy reforms in the employment arena.

OUR MISSION

LSPC advocates for the human rights and empowerment of incarcerated parents, children, family members, and people at risk for incarceration. We respond to requests for information, trainings, technical assistance, litigation, community activism, and the development of more advocates. Our focus is on women prisoners and their families, and we emphasize that issues of race are central to any discussion of incarceration.