



JUSTICE COLLAB NEWS

The Justice Collaboratives is an initiative of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century



From the Desk of Dr. Ron Daniels, IBW's President

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

Over the past four months our Justice Collaboratives in Washington DC, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Baltimore have continued their impressive work to advance our collective progress towards the strategic objectives of meaningful drug policy and criminal justice reforms at both the local and national levels.

Special commendations go out to the DC Justice Collaborative (DCJC) for partnering with the Drug Policy Alliance, the ACLU and members of DC's faith community for educating the public and raising community awareness around the need to pass Ballot Initiative 71 which called for legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana. The initiative passed overwhelmingly in the Nov. 4, 2014 referendum but implementation is now being held up by the Republican-dominated Congress. Meanwhile, we applaud President Obama's publicly stated support for the initiative and we will continue to urge the ratification of this harm-reduction measure by the US Congress.

Kudos also to the Philadelphia Region Justice Collaborative (PRJC) on celebrating its first anniversary last November which was marked by a very successful Town Hall Meeting and one-day conference at the historic Church of the Advocate in downtown Philadelphia. The Town Hall meeting, which featured a stellar line-up of national and local speakers, was broadcast live on Philadelphia's WURD radio and later rebroadcast to the country via Bro. Mark Thompson's popular program on the Sirius Satellite Radio Network.

The outstanding work of many PRJC member organizations (especially Mothers-in-Charge) in the areas of violence reduction and mitigation of youth incarceration has drawn the attention of Philadelphia's civic and elected leaders. At the PRJC's urging, the

UPCOMING EVENTS

DC Justice Collaborative Meeting

January 28th, 2015 — 6-8PM
Mt. Carmel Baptist Church

Contact: Ron Hampton
 Tel: 202-744-2897

Pittsburgh Justice Collaborative Meeting

February 5th, 2015
CCAC, 800 N. Allegheny Ave.
Northshore

Contact: Rick Adams
 Tel: 412-580-8084.

LEAD Site Visit to Seattle

Feb. 15-19, 2015

Reparations Summit Conference

April 9-12th, 2015
New York City

Drug Policy Alliance International Conference

November 18-21, 2015
Washington, D.C.

city's Police Department is now seriously examining the adoption of various aspects of Seattle's pioneering LEAD program.

In mid-February, IBW will take a delegation comprised of representatives from the DCJC, the PRJC and the ACLU on a fact-finding visit to Seattle where they will engage with leading officials from that city's LEAD program. Plans are also underway for some of those Seattle officials to visit Pittsburgh for discussions with that city's community leaders and criminal justice officials.

In recent weeks, members of the Pittsburgh Justice Collaborative have met with that city's new Police Commissioner who has been making national headlines for his condemnation of racism and discrimination practiced by police officers in his and other major cities across the country.

And in Baltimore, members of the Baltimore Justice Collaborative (BJC) along with the Maryland NAACP, have been engaged in the effort to save Sojourner Douglass College, a pioneering HBCU that has been denied an extension of its academic accreditation without proper justification.

Several black professional organizations who are members of IBW's Black Family Summit continue to brainstorm various ways and means of organizing "Family Healing Circles" in conjunction with the four justice collaboratives throughout 2015. Stay tuned for future developments on that front.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish all who are active in the work of our four collaboratives a Happy, Healthy and Justice-filled New Year. The struggle continues.

Forward Ever, Backward Never!



2014 Was a Great Year for the D.C. Justice Collaborative

By Ronald E. Hampton
Co-convener, DCJC

The D.C. Justice Collaborative has had a very good year in 2014. It started with a visit to Seattle, Washington to observe the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD). The delegation consisted of representatives from the cities of Pittsburgh, Pa., Washington, DC and the staff of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century. We got to see firsthand the operation of the program as well as an opportunity to talk with service providers, police officers, social workers, prosecutors, and others involved in the day-to-day operations of the L.E.A.D. program.

Later in the year, after attending the International Drug Policy Conference in Denver, Colorado, where the leadership of the IBW, Dr. Ron Daniels and other members were asked to conduct a workshop session on the creation and use of the justice collaborative concept to bring together local social justice organizations to work together on criminal and social justice issues and concerns.

Before leaving the conference, we met with Sis. Andrea James. At this meeting, we were introduced to Sis. James plan to stage a "Free Her Rally" in Washington, DC. The purpose of the rally was to lift up the issues and concerns of incarcerated women and released women in America.

The DC Justice Collaborative committed its members and resources to assisting Sister Andrea James with planning and executing the "Free Her Rally". The rally was a success in many ways, starting with the coming together of approximately 500 to 600 women and men, Black and White, and young and old to highlight the over 800% increase in the incarceration of women in America over the past twenty years. Lastly, as observers, we witness the renewing of old relationships and the happy and tearful reunions of the women and their families.

Finally, we were asked to assist the Drug Policy Alliance with the D.C. Initiative 71 which was designed to make legal two ounces or less of marijuana. Our task was to reach out and bring together representatives of the religious community. A diverse group of individuals came together to call for the end to marijuana prohibition in the nation's capital which has resulted in gross racial disparities in the arrests of marijuana users. As a result of the efforts of many dedicated and hard-working advocates the initiative was approved with a margin of two to one by voters in the city only to be later blocked by the US Congress. The struggle continues.

Philadelphia Region Justice Collaborative (PRJC) Hosts Successful Town Hall Meeting and One-Day Conference

By Lois Hayman-El, Co-Convener, PRJC

The Philadelphia Regional Justice Collaborative (PRJC) celebrated its one year anniversary on November 22, 2014 in grand style. PRJC commemorated its birthday by holding its second annual Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2014 and an all-day conference the day after.

Both events were held at Philadelphia's historic Church of the Advocate. The Town Hall Meeting was free and open to the public from 6-9 pm. The theme for both the Town hall Meeting and the one-day conference was "**Our Brothers and Sisters Keepers: Strategies to Address Violence and Fratricide in Our Communities**". The one-day conference included continental breakfast, a plenary session, workshops, a very tasty lunch, and a wrap-up session highlighting strategies developed by workshop participants.

Neither of these events could have come to fruition without the hard work of our local partners: the Church of the Advocate, the Alliance of Black Social Workers, the Office of Behavioral Health



Deputy Police Commissioner Richard Ross Jr.



Jasiri X



Dr. Cleora Levetter



Nick Taliaferro

and Intellectual Disabilities, The Fatherhood Institute; the African Art Cultural Forum; The Church of the Overcomer of Trainer, Pa., Mothers in Charge; PAAN; 700 Villagers, Pa. Chapter of NAN; Racism Non-Anonymous; the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice, Pa. Chapter; Wayland Temple Baptist Church; Yusef Jackson, and Shondell Revell, Assistant Managing Director of the Philadelphia.

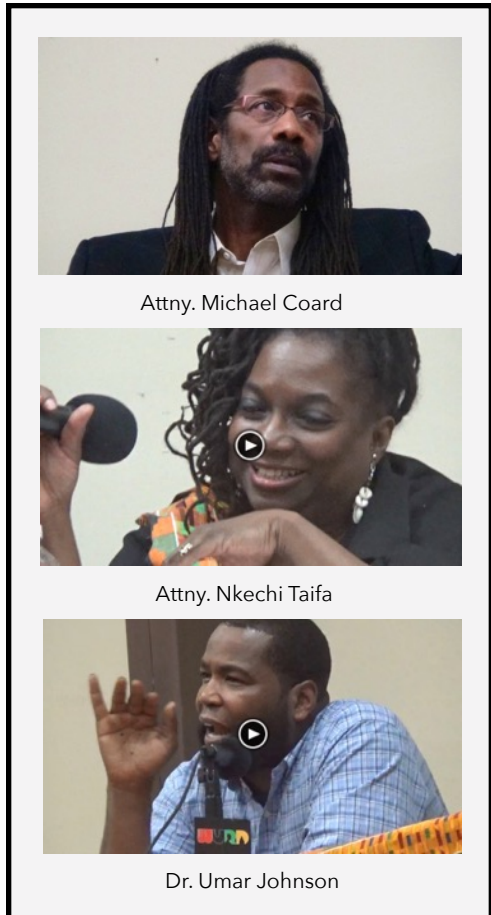
Our major underwriter for the conference was The Institute of the Black World 21st Century.

The Town Hall Meeting was simulcast on WURD Radio. The Moderator for the panel discussion was Nick Taliaferro, WURD Radio Talk Show Host. We had renowned national and local leaders as our special guests.

Dr. Mark Lamont Hill, CNN Huff Post Commentator New York; Nkechi Taifa, Esq., Senior Policy Analyst Open Society Foundations in Washington, D.C.; and Jasiri X, Hip Hop Activist from the Pittsburgh Justice Collaborative were national leaders on the panel.

Prominent speakers from Philadelphia included Richard Ross, Jr., 1st Deputy Commissioner of Philadelphia County Police; Dr. Cleora Levetter, Educational and Motivational Consultant; Dr. Umar Johnson, Child Psychologist; and Michael Coard, Esq. from Avenging the Ancestors. Our host at the Church of the Advocate was Vicar/ Chaplain Rev. Renee McKenzie Hayward.

The timeliness of the topic attracted more than 220 attendees.



Attny. Michael Coard

Attny. Nkechi Taifa

Dr. Umar Johnson

[Click here to watch the video archive of the Town Hall Meeting](#)



Robert Ximines, PRJC

Deputy Commissioner Ross emphasized the need for individuals and organizations to mentor youth. Dr. Umar Johnson challenged the audience to work toward repairing the education and economic development in Philadelphia.

He advocated for the restoration of vocational education programs so that Black students have preparation for building trades and other occupations. Dr. Cleora Levetter, a retired Administrator from the Department of Human Services, challenged the audience to push for reinstatement of an advisory board for the Department of Human Services.

The audience was horrified to hear that only 2-3 million dollars of the DHS funds are dedicated to prevention. That is not even 10% of the total of the budget. Jasiri X eloquently spoke to the need for individuals and organization to build relationship with young people in the community to combat violence and fratricide. Dr. Mark Lamont Hill was passionate about utilizing the assets that

exist in our communities for self-development.

During the conference, Deputy Mayor Richard Negrin, addressed the conferees about the importance of the concerns about violence and fratricide in light of recent events in Florida, New York, and Missouri. He spoke about the importance of keeping open lines of communication between the general public and the police.

Mark Lamont Hill, CNN Huff Post Commentator New York; Nkechi Taifa, Esq., Senior Policy Analyst Open Society Foundations in Washington, D.C.; and Jasiri X, Hip Hop Activist from the Pittsburg Justice Collaborative Dr. Cleora Levetter, Educational and Motivational Consultant; Ron Hampton from the Washington, D.C. Collaborative; and Michael Coard, Esq were on the panel for the plenary session of the conference. Each of the panelists did their parts to set the tone for the day.

Pittsburgh Justice Collaborative Hosted Meetings With the City's New Police Chief

By Richard Adams

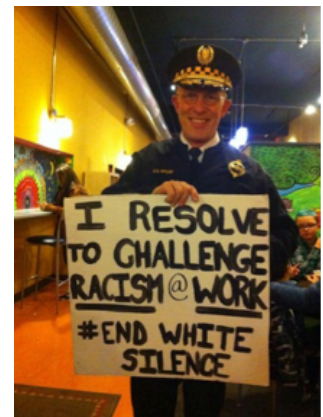
Back in December of 2012 the City Council of Pittsburgh passed 'Ban the Box' legislation after an intense grass roots lobbying effort led by PJC member Dean Williams, director of the Formerly Convicted Citizens Project.

Two years later in November of 2014, the Allegheny County Council which includes Pittsburgh, approved a County-wide 'Ban the Box' legislation. The ordinance covers 1.3 million county residents and was implemented as policy on January 1, 2015. Across the country, more than 80 municipal governments have now eliminated asking about an applicant's criminal background on job applications.

Pittsburgh recently hired a new Police Chief, Cameron McLay, and Justice Collaborative member organizations lead respectively by Tim Stevens, Brandi Fisher and Rick Adams; the Black Political Empowerment Project B-PEP, Alliance for Police Accountability (APA) and the Western Pennsylvania Black Political Assembly (WPBPA) hosted three community forums and a breakfast to give members of the community the chance to ask the new chief questions about his policies and philosophies of policing. Chief Mclay expressed interest in exploring arrest diversion and LEAD-type initiatives.

Incoming Chief Mclay has aroused controversy in the city and across the nation with a tweeted photo of him holding a placard saying that he was going to challenge racism in the workplace. So far the Pittsburgh community, in general, and the PJC in particular, have welcomed a law enforcement leader who can say the following:

"The reality of US policing is that our enforcement efforts have a disparate impact on communities of color. This is a statistical fact. You know, as well as I, the social factors driving this reality. The gross disparity in wealth and opportunity is evident in our city. Frustration and disorder are certain to follow. The predominant patterns of our city's increased violence involves black victims as well as actors. If we are to address this violence, we must work together with our communities of color.



“Crime and disorder take us to the disadvantaged communities, which are predominantly those of color. The disparities in police arrest and incarceration rates that follow are not by design, but they can feel that way to some people in those communities”.

This attitude is a refreshing departure from the mindset that prevailed within the Pittsburgh Police Department for many decades. We can only hope that the new commissioner’s actions and policies moving forward will match his progressive-sounding words.

Baltimore Justice Collaborative (BJC) joins with local community leaders and citizens in supporting Sojourner Douglass College

Several members of the Sojourner Douglass College staff, are members of the Baltimore Justice Collaborative (BJC). The college continues to serve as the host of the BJC meetings and Kareem Aziz, Director of its Institutional Research and Planning, has served as the convener of the BJC, since its inception. For the past few months, as the college undergoes its accreditation reviews, the BJC has participated in a number of community events as it stands firm in its support of SDC.

Sojourner-Douglass College (SDC) strives to continue the legacy of self-determination that began in the 1970’s. The driving forces have remained the same: educating adults and empowering members of the community. At Sojourner-Douglass College, the focus on administration and the social sciences has grown out of a desire to transform the members of the local communities into decision-makers. In every area of its programs and services—from politics and business to education and health care SDC prepares its students to make decisions that affect young people, elders, and everyone in-between.



Kareem Aziz

The purpose of the College is to provide a learning model which will aid students in increasing their capacity for self development and self expression, and thus facilitate their engagement in effective social action as members of the world community.

At Sojourner Douglass College, there are no sharp distinctions between living, learning and working. Therefore, the approach the community as a learning laboratory where learning can be reconciled with action and study remains a concept that reflects student growth through social and academic utility.

Statement from the Maryland Conference NAACP on the Revocation of Accreditation of Sojourner-Douglass College

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) unequivocally opposes the recent decision of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education to revoke accreditation of Sojourner-Douglass College.

We believe that Sojourner-Douglass has been treated unevenly. An examination of Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) (http://www.msche.org/institutions_directory) and National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) data (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionList.aspx>) revealed that while several schools in the Middle Atlantic Region were experiencing financial difficulties, only Sojourner-Douglass College received the ultimate action of recommendation of withdrawal of accreditation.

Sojourner-Douglass College has implemented revenue enhancement and cost containment measures in an effort to deal with its financial problems, while preserving its core instructional mission and high academic standards. This calculation appears reasonable to us. It is a reflection of the vision and mission under which the College has operated since its beginning, rather than a reflection on Sojourner-Douglass Colleges' administrative decisions.

The most striking aspect of the MSCHE rationale for revoking Sojourner-Douglass College's accreditation is that it does not provide any academic reasons for doing so. By all accounts, Sojourner-Douglass College has consistently provided quality education to thousands of students. Sojourner-Douglass College's academic success is no doubt related to the stability and quality of its faculty. The resultant academic success of Sojourner-Douglass Colleges' students has won the praise of informed observers.

The NAACP applauds the Sojourner-Douglass College faculty, staff, and students for maintaining their commitment to quality education under extremely difficult conditions.

As word of this decision spreads, faculty at public and private institutions of higher education in Maryland and beyond have expressed their strong disapproval of the MSCHE's ruling. These developments must be reversed as soon as possible.

The NAACP's denunciation of the Revocation of Accreditation of Sojourner—Douglass College joins several major organizations such as the Urban Institute, Baptist Ministers' Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity, the Greater Baltimore Urban League, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, and the Better Maryland Committee, respectfully but emphatically request that the MSCHE reverse its decision to withdraw Sojourner-Douglass College's accreditation.

This statement confirms the community's commitment to Sojourner-Douglass College, and its support for Sojourner-Douglass College faculty and students.

Maryland State Conference NAACP

Gerald Stansbury
President