



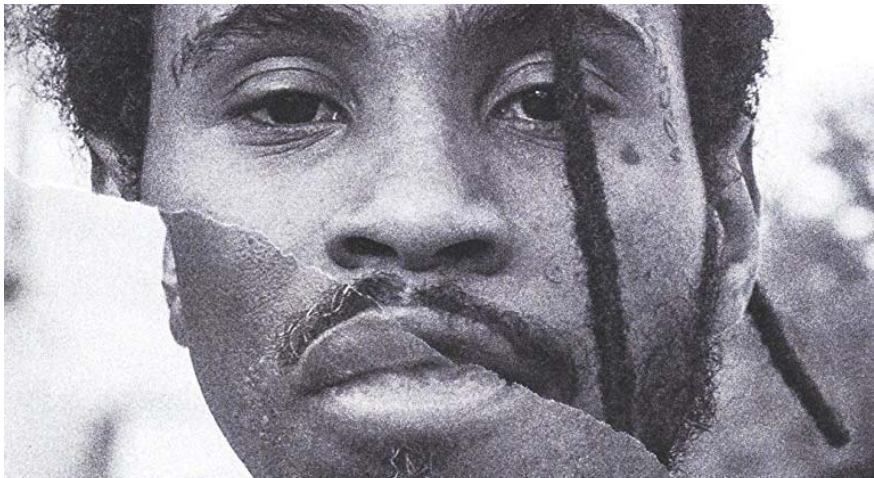
JUSTICE COLLAB NEWS

The Justice Collaboratives is an initiative of the IBW 21st Century

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ISSUE NO 12

FEATURED ARTICLE



Film "Returning Citizens" Receives Community Praise

"Returning Citizens" focuses on a passionate group of individuals who are looking for a second chance – or perhaps a chance they never had to begin with. Taking place in Southeast Washington, DC, the film offers a humanizing perspective on a community that has been negatively impacted by mass incarceration. From freshly returning individuals struggling to rebuild their lives, to community leaders working to end the on-going cycle of crime and violence, the stories unveiled in "Returning Citizens" offer proof that change is possible when the right opportunities are presented."

The Pittsburgh Justice Collaborative (PJC) hosted a successful screening of the film 'Returning Citizens' and a presentation by the central focus of the documentary, Washington D.C. native Charles Thornton. Lamont Carey, also featured in the film delivering a spoken word presentation, was in attendance..

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INSIDE ISSUE NO 12

Message from Dr. Ron Daniels President, IBW

We at IBW are pleased to present another edition of our regular 'Justice Collab' newsletter with updated reports on the recent activities of our Justice Collaboratives in Washington, DC, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh

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DCJC Discusses Restorative Justice

The D.C. Justice Collaborative held its quarterly meeting on Thursday, March 7, 2018 in Washington, D.C. The meeting was well attended and we had representatives from about 9 or 10 social justice organizations in attendance. We heard updates on the following...

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PRJC Makes Progress on VOCA and LEAD

The Philadelphia Region Justice Collaborative met on March 8th, 2018 at the West Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church and the focus of much discussion was on progress made to date on the VOCA program addressing the needs of the African American community.

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JUSTICE COLLAB NEWS
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Message from IBW's President Dr. Ron Daniels



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We at the Institute of the Black World 21st Century are pleased to present another edition of our regular 'Justice Collab' newsletter with updated reports on the recent activities of our Justice Collaboratives in Washington, DC, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

As we move to consolidate and expand the work of our collaboratives, we believe that the time has come for us to invite leaders from other segments of our communities (housing, education, economic development etc.) to join our criminal justice and drug reform advocates and activists at the various collaborative tables. Other voices that are committed to the struggle for overall community empowerment, racial equality, and economic justice will serve to enrich our conversations and energize our activism moving forward.

We at IBW are pleased with progress being made to advance VOCA and to develop Trauma Recovery Centers in both the DC and Pennsylvania regions. The DC Justice Collaborative and the Justice Policy Institute are working together to promote such a center in Maryland and opportunities are opening up in Pennsylvania to advance VOCA in some of the most harmed communities in that state.

Thanks to a planning grant from the Open Society Foundations (OSF), IBW is working actively with the DCJC, the Alliance of Concerned Men and the National Re-Entry Network to establish a law enforcement diversion program in DC's Ward 8. The goal of this initiative is to have the community in that area rely less on law enforcement and create opportunities to implement services that have proven to be effective in other cities.

Congratulations to all the hard-working and dedicated sisters and brothers who keep the Justice Collaboratives forging ahead. IBW looks forward to strengthening and expanding our collective efforts with all of you in the months ahead.

Forward Ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Daniels'.

**Dr. Ron Daniels,
President, IBW**



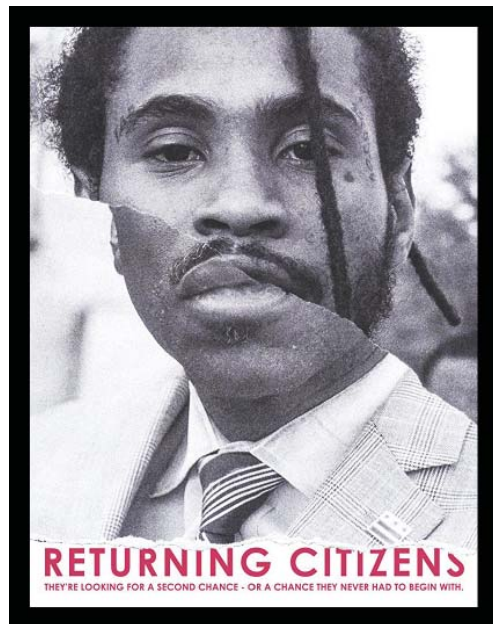
Scene from documentary *Returning Citizens*

Film “Returning Citizens” Receives Community Praise

The Pittsburgh Justice Collaborative (PJC) hosted a successful screening of the Film *Returning Citizens* and a presentation by the central focus of the documentary Washington D.C. native Charles Thornton. Lamont Carey, also featured in the film delivering a spoken word presentation was in attendance and gave a powerful personal witness to the young people in attendance. Institute of the Black World 21st Century Board Chair Rick Adams and Founder and President Dr. Ron Daniels gave opening remarks to the gathering.

The film depicts through first person testimony the struggles to transition back into the community after incarceration, the difficulties returning to their families and the challenge to not be re-arrested as they confront the realities of trying to make a new life.

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Charles Thornton, now Board Chairman of the Correction Information Council and Special Assistant in the DC Office on Human Rights. Before this he directed the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs, the first and still only such office as a part of local government.



Charles Thornton

In the spirited question and answer session following the film an excited group expressed how much they loved the film and brought forth several recommendations for follow up activities:

- 1) to bring the film back for viewing in a larger venue,
- 2) to continue at a minimum the quarterly PJC meetings as valuable networking always occurs between organizational and community representatives,

- 3) to have at a minimum monthly communications between quarterly meetings to foster more timely information sharing and mutual support of member group activities,

- 4) to seek reports from City and County governments about the results of the recent Ban the Box legislation and the City Marijuana Decriminalization regulations all PJC supported reforms and

- 5) have more community education sessions on Bail Bond Reform, Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) funding and Safe Injection Sites

Representatives from Amachi Pittsburgh, Foundation of Hope, the Nation of Islam, Pittsburgh Community Services Incorporated, African American Leadership Association, Strength Incorporated, the P.A.C.T. Initiative, Center for Victims, Infinite Life Style Solutions the House of Manna, Bethany House Academy and the Community College of Allegheny County were present.



DC Justice Collaborative Discusses Restorative Justice

The D.C. Justice Collaborative held its quarterly meeting on Thursday, March 7, 2018 in Washington, D.C. The meeting was well attended and we had representatives from about 9 or 10 social justice organizations in attendance. We heard updates on the following project and initiatives. The agenda consisted of reports/updates from Sister LaShonia Thompson-EL, DC Office of the Attorney General and Founder/Executive Director of the Women Involved Re-entry Efforts (WIRE). She discussed the ongoing effort to assess and evaluate to what extent is restorative justice being used in our communities to avoid entry into the juvenile or adult criminal justice system.

There were two additional updates involving the D.C. Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Project working with four other community based organizations under the umbrella of the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative. This project is ongoing and was briefly delayed but now the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been finalized with the hospital in SE Washington, DC and the project is in progress. The DCJC is engaging individual victims of violence at the hospital as well as in the community at the site of the incident while working proactively to prevent further violence and providing services for the individual and family.

The DCJC is also involved with the DC Peace, Justice and Safety Initiative. This effort involves the collaboration of The National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens, The Institute of the Black World 21st Century, and the Alliance of Concerned Men. The DCJC is currently working and gathering information in the Highland Dwelling Community to hopefully launch a comprehensive community based strategy involving the following components.

- » Exploring ways of expanding and consolidating engagement of formerly incarcerated citizen leaders and organizations.
- » Conducting outreach to identify LGBTQ leaders in the target area and city-wide with the objective of including representatives from this community in the planning process.
- » Establishing an advisory task force of community residents to assist in the oversight of the project.
- » Researching and exploring other concepts with other pre-arrest, diversion or violence mediation programs.
- » Conducting and soliciting information and suggesting from the residents of the affected community.

Overall, the DC Justice Collaborative's first quarterly meeting was a well-attended and successful event.



Philadelphia Region Justice Collaborative Makes Progress on VOCA and LEAD

The Philadelphia Region Justice Collaborative met on March 8th, 2018 at the West Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church and the focus of much discussion was on progress made to date on the VOCA program addressing the needs of the African American community.

It was reported that two new African American VOCA members will be invited to the next PRJC meeting. Special gratitude was expressed to Laura Dijols who continues to be present for all the meetings in Harrisburg and puts pressure on the VOCA administrators to advocate and make sure the board looks like the people it represents.

It was agreed that extra efforts will be made to set up a meeting with State Representative Joanna McClinton and District Attorney Larry Krasner and that Kassandra Frederique from the Drug Policy Alliance will be invited to the next forum.

Ron Hampton, co-convenor of the DCJC, updated the team on LEAD and how PRJC could possibly present this program to the new administration in Philadelphia.

He also discussed some of the challenges that the 17th District Police Station faces with implementing the LEAD initiative.

Laura Dijols has made contact with an organization called 'Every Murder Is Real' who are interested in partnering with PRJC to look into a Trauma Recovery Center with Hahnemann Hospital. Laura also provided the group with information regarding the agencies that have been funded for the next set of VOCA grants. Congratulations were extended to Dorothy Speight of Mothers-in-Charge who was recently awarded a grant to continue to do the much-needed work that she does in the community. The PRJC also congratulated Laura Dijols who was honored on March 24th at the Philly National Action Network's Legacy Banquet.

The next PRJC meeting will be held June 14th at The West Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church at 6pm.