

# THE DRUM

## IN THIS ISSUE

EVENTS  
TEAMWORK  
CITIZEN SPOTLIGHT  
TEAM HIGHLIGHT  
COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS  
RESOURCE OF THE MONTH  
READ WATCH LISTEN  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
CONEY ISLAND KETCHUPS

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PROJECT REENTRY WEDNESDAY WELLNESS

There is no doubt the pandemic sparked a trend to focus mental health and well-being. It's time to pick up where we left off with Wednesday Wellness. Depending on interest, we will begin in May and have meetings every other week until September 1, 2021. For those interested in attending, you can reach out to SADO Reentry at [reentry@sado.org](mailto:reentry@sado.org).

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE CAFE

EVERY Thursday at 10am, Safe and Just Michigan's Community Engagement Specialist Rick Speck and Fresh Coast Alliance's Advocacy and Engagement Specialist Nate Johnson interview an individual doing criminal justice work and also provide an update of current events. Tune in to Safe and Just Michigan's Facebook page where it's livestreamed to hear from some incredible people doing great work across the country, and stay up to date on current issues.

### FAMILY SUPPORT CALL

American Friend Service Committee and Safe and Just Michigan Family Support Call:

EVERY Friday  
3pm via Zoom

This zoom meeting provides community support to persons with loved ones incarcerated. Daniel Jones, project coordinator for Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration and Rick Speck, Safe and Just Community Engagement Specialist facilitate the group.

For more information and Zoom link:  
Contact Kate McCracken  
[kate@safeandjustmichigan.org](mailto:kate@safeandjustmichigan.org)

## DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER: THE COFFINS

*By Andolian Napraja, Author of "Colombian Blood", Available on Amazon*

In March 2020 I arrived at the frontier of hell- a place I became to know as "The Coffins". The inhumane bowels of Pendleton Correctional Facility in Pendleton, Indiana, just outside of the city of Anderson where I was arrested a couple years prior on a drug king pin conspiracy with a large number of other individuals who were my co-conspirators. Pendleton Correctional Facility sits south of Madison County where it is rumored that founders of the Klu Klux Klan originated. Anderson shows much diversity in ethnicity amongst the Hispanic, African-American, mixed, and European (white) or Caucasian populations, but racism is apparent in its justice system as each and any every courtroom showcase vintage photographs of confederate-like figures wearing white-haired wigs and plantation style attire who stands as the fathers of presiding magistrates and judges. I myself experienced a coil of racial discrimination in my own case from soiled judges, affixed prosecutors with malign grudges, and even defense attorneys-retained and appointed with underhanded wrongful agendas who were just out to get me because of my race, nationality as a Columbian American, and urban background and cultured heritage. Though I stood before these foul accusers of ill will a man of pride, valor, and even acceptance for the crimes I was accused of allegedly committing, because I am a Diamond and Diamonds are conditioned to withstand nearly anything outside of another Diamond. In my youth, I became conscious of mankind and the evil plays the world threw out me, and throughout a slew of egregious circumstances I encountered, it forced me to strengthen weaknesses I never knew I had, thus molding me into an impenetrable gem- a Diamond. Diamonds are the hardest carbon substance on earth known to man. It is a metal that derives from immense pressure and unbearable heat, combined with long distance of time.

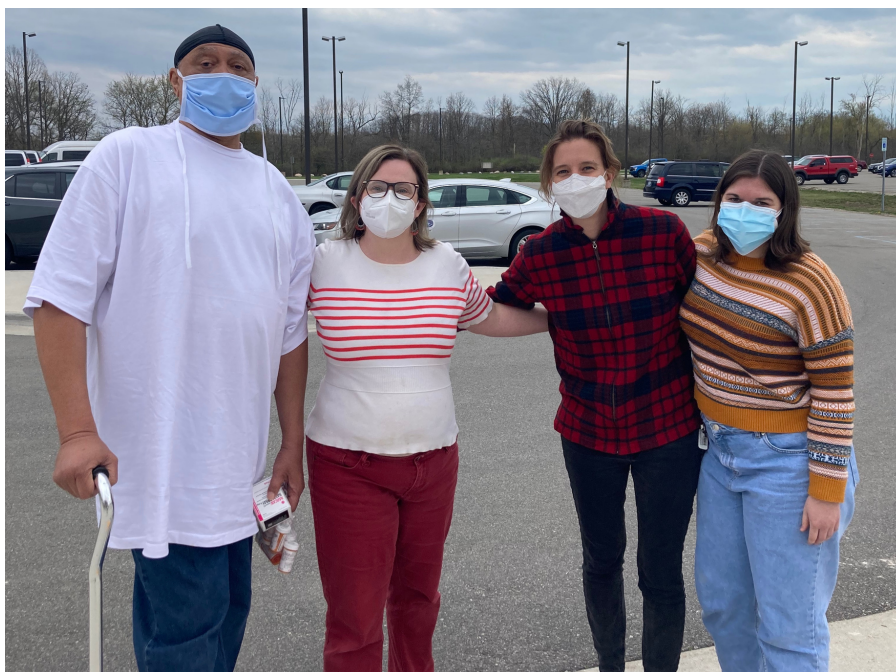
# DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

*Continued...*

Henceforth, it goes through so much adversity to become the precious stone that we all love and adore so that we can flaunt its beauty and brilliance amongst our peers, friends, and socialites in our society, though many are ignorant as to what comprises such a beautiful gem. This is why I always likend myself to a Diamond and my soldiers as well, because I was able to mold them in my own image. So when I arrived out Pendleton Correctional Facility I felt in my mindset that I was prepared for anything. However, I was wrong! I had no idea of the inhumane treatment, neglect, psychological torment, borderline starvation, uncleanliness, and the assortment of other heal code and constitutional violations that I would be compelled to experience here while it permeated its walls and cell houses. Not to mention the prison itself is surrounded by 25 ft. high concrete walls that divide us from seeing any form of the outside world. In other words, this place is a systematic disgrace and no human being should be subjected to such treatment- no matter their mishaps with the criminal justice department. No one knows the horrors that goes on inside this place, and I'm no saint! I've seen and done many bad things in my lifetime so I know bad when I see it. Since I've been here, for the past year or so, there has been countless inmate deaths, some suicide, others murders, many from neglect and irresponsible correction officers failing to accommodate prisoners in need of mental health and human compassion and attention. Within each cellhouse there are hallows of spaces and bunks where someone once thrived but are now darkened by the gloom of shadowed death-as I feel at any moment my time could move to be next, so I dwell in my misery submerged and awakened by the confinement of this forsaking coffin I have been placed in. Where I await unknown ethers within this solitude, Brothers-Hispanic, Black, and White, combatting and killing each other as I bare witness to their lack of understanding and hate for one another-their perspectives and initiatives astray, aiming at the wrong enemy- where they should be angry at the oppressors and the ones who subjected us to these inhospitable conditions. I can only hope that the blind regains their sight, the lame learn to walk comprised of knowledge and empowerment, the diseased mentality of these men are cleansed , the deaf hear, those who are dead from ignorance are raised, and the unfortunate find prosperity. Blessed are those who seek truth, for they shall find it. I am a stranger in this embowelment, but I am one of them as well. Whatsoever they feel, I feel too. Their cries and desires are my own. Yet thou I walk through the valley of hell, I fear no evil. I am with thee. A Diamond knows not its own worth but relies solely on its natural fortifications and strength, so I remain strong and hopeful that one day the world will hear my cry. If not, it will be muffled by the universe as time silences all life. Asi es-y-asi sera! (so it is, so shall it be).

## TEAMWORK

SADO's Project Reentry's purpose is to develop Comprehensive Reentry Plans (CRPs) in preparation for client sentencing and parole hearings, and for those who are nearing their release dates. The Comprehensive Reentry Plan is a person centered approach to reentry planning that begins months before someone is released to ensure their basic needs are met. It serves two purposes: in litigation as evidence that the client has thought about and planned for reentry, and as a resource guide for those reintegrating. Reentry staff collaborates with attorneys and mitigation specialists who refer clients for services. In the month of April, the hard work and endurance from SADO attorneys, mitigation specialists, paralegal teams, clients, reentry, and advocacy organizations paid off and we welcomed home four individuals, all who served over 40 years in prison. Attorney Jackie Ouvry (pictured second from left) worked with her client Kevin (pictured far left) on his case for 5 years. Together they experienced periods of loss and uncertainty but they never gave up and Jackie remained a source of consistent support. SADO Mitigation Specialist Chelsea (pictured right) was assigned to the case at the beginning of 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. Chelsea went above and beyond thoroughly researching prior mitigation work and identifying more areas to investigate making a significant difference in the case outcome. When the legal work was at a standstill, Jackie and Chelsea still made time to meet with their client and eventually brought on the SADO reentry team and legal interns to provide additional support. Soon after, Kevin and his team were communicating with community reentry providers and his support network gradually expanded into something he could trust, rely on, and believe in. On April 14th he walked out of prison after 47 years. His team met him at the door and drove swiftly away from the prison. Since that day his support network has only grown. He connected with more family, met with SADO Reentry Specialist Jose Burgos, and is receiving services from an amazing organization. Thank you Fresh Coast Alliance. This exemplifies holistic defense, which is what SADO and its community partners try to achieve through legal representation and reentry planning. Although in Kevin's case the pieces fell together rather smoothly, it could not have been done without immense support from reentry and advocacy organizations, which SADO is extremely grateful for. Thank you to all who are out there making a difference, fighting for justice, and spreading hope!





# CITIZEN SPOTLIGHT

## CHRISTOPHER TOBAR

### CAME HOME

October 2020

### HOMETOWN

Benton Harbor, MI

### HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

Doing puzzles, watching movies with my fiancé, drawing and sketching, exercising, and decorating.

### SUCCESSES AFTER INCARCERATION

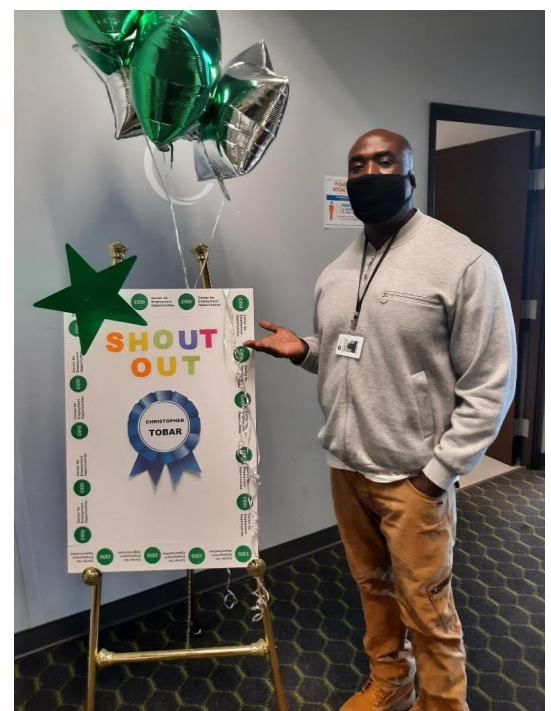
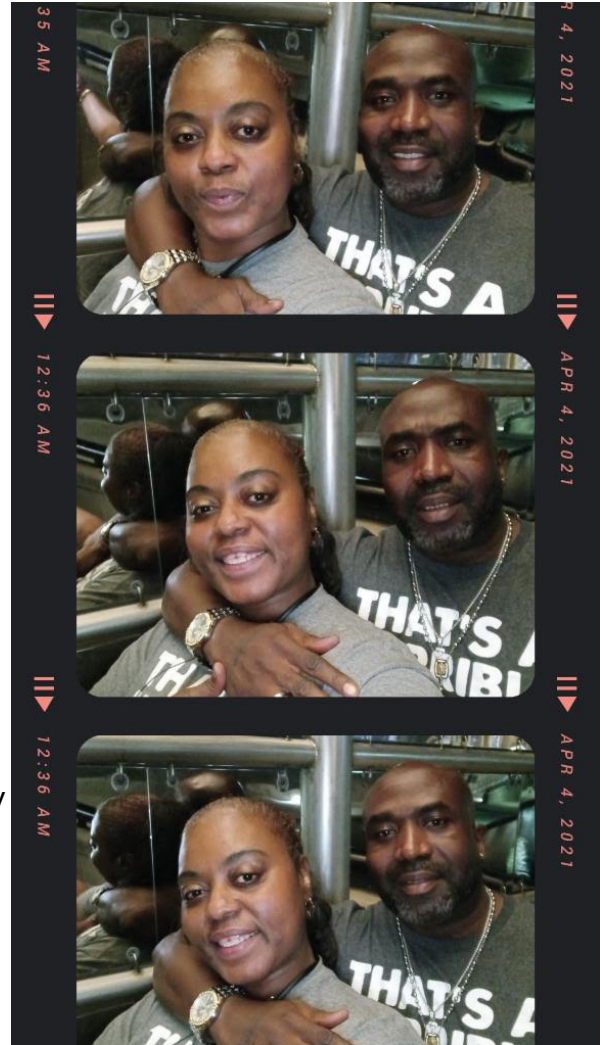
I have had many successes. I got engaged to my beautiful fiancé, I also was the very first employee of the month at the first job that I worked, I transferred my parole and had immediate job offers in the state I moved to because of my hard work ethic and reputation. I am being recruited by colleges to attend school. I voted in the 2020 election on my second day out, and I am in the process of buying a house! Overall, one of the biggest successes is simply being free and being able to go out and see family and friends, make decisions and have choices.

### STRUGGLES AFTER INCARCERATION

In the beginning I struggled because I was at a community placement with a lot of recovering addicts and alcoholics who were struggling, and I couldn't relate to them. They also asked me what I had been in prison for and how much time I did and it was embarrassing at first. I felt naked and exposed. Additionally, I was let out of MDOC without essential documents like my birth certificate, and it was very frustrating not to have a State ID for a while. I tried to cash a stimulus check with my parole ID, and I was so embarrassed.

### MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

If you have your chance at freedom, take advantage of it. There is going to be challenges but stay strong and stay focused. If you need help, ask for it. Be as open and as communicative to people who are helping you or who aren't. When you go into a job interview try to relax. Make sure when you go in you are dressed properly and that you articulate yourself properly. Don't let the small things deter you from staying free or completing parole successfully.



# MEET THE TEAM: SADO REENTRY SPECIALIST

## MARCUS WILLIAMS TALKS JOBS

My name is Marcus Williams, I am a native Detroit. I graduated from Clark Atlanta University where I obtained my BA in Psychology. I came back to Detroit after college in 2010 and started working in Workforce Development for Michigan Works in the city of Detroit. I started as a career advisor then began working directly with Returning Citizens which evolved into working on several special reentry projects and programs. I started working for SADO as a Reentry Specialist in October of 2020.

### **What are some of your hobbies and interests outside of work?**

I love to play chess and fish.



### **You have been doing reentry work for a long time, what do you like most about the work?**

I have been doing reentry based work for about 7 years. The thing that drives me to wake up and go to work is that I genuinely enjoy helping people and my career blesses me with that opportunity. What I enjoy most about my job is that it gives me the ability to provide people hope and assist people with bettering their lives.

### **What do you find most challenging about the work?**

The most challenging thing about work is dealing with situations where you do everything you can to help a person but still not get the end result you were looking for.

### **What advice do you have for people getting out of prison looking to begin their job search?**

I would tell anyone getting out of prison that proper preparation and timing is key to your success. Build relationships and don't be afraid to seek help.

### **Do you recommend revealing your criminal history to employers before getting the job?**

I wouldn't recommend withholding any information if the subject of criminal background comes up, but the focus is honestly on how a person reveals it. There is a right way and a wrong way to present information.

### **If a job application asks you to check whether or not you have been convicted of a felony and to provide an explanation, how much information should someone reveal on the application alone?**

ALWAYS be transparent and check yes because you legally have to and I would either put the category of the offense i.e., violent or non-violent and willing to discuss during interview.

### **What interview tips can you provide?**

I would suggest writing out your responses to every interview question you think you will encounter. Once your responses are on paper, read them out loud and don't be afraid to make the proper corrections and adjustments because everyone generally sounds different from what they think or write. Lastly research who and where you are interviewing at. The more you know the more you should be prepared.

# MASTERS ESSAY: A SERIES *Submission By Timothy Greer*

## CHAPTER 2 EMPLOYMENT

Akin to the difficulties with securing housing upon release, imprisonment can have a disastrous impact on an ex-prisoner's employment prospects. Yet one of the most basic needs of ex-prisoners is finding employment upon their release from prison. Travis (2005) noted that "[f]inding work is a critical need for returning prisoners" (p. 162). In this study, conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice, he noted that "the number-one concern" of the forty-nine New York State ex-prisoners questioned was "landing a job" (p. 162). Not only is securing employment a priority for basic survival reasons, in many cases, obtaining employment is a condition of parole for most ex-prisoners. And, if the ex-prisoner has a family, particularly children, the sense of urgency to secure employment may be increased exponentially. As well, an individual's sense of self-worth receives an enormous boost if the ex-prisoner believes that he or she is a contributing member of society. Furthermore, in a recent Los Angeles Times op-ed piece on the negative impact prison educational and vocational training has on recidivism, Davis (2013) wrote: "Prisoners who participated in academic and vocational training programs had a 13% better chance of finding employment than those who did not. And prisoners who participated specifically in vocational training programs were 28% more likely to be employed after release from prison than those who were left out." But some employers may have good reason not to hire ex-prisoners, regardless of their skill-set. Other times some employers' attitudes and decisions regarding this segment of a potential workforce can border on outright discrimination.

A criminal record by itself – let alone a past incarceration – can have a devastating impact on an ex-prisoner's employment prospects. There have been several studies that have examined the negative impact a criminal record has on ex-prisoners seeking employment. In a study conducted by Stoll and Bushway (2008), the impact employer-initiated criminal background checks had on employers' decisions to hire ex-offender job applicants was examined. They concluded that criminal background checks precluded many employers from hiring ex-offenders. Because of this, the authors speculated that many ex-prisoners simply avoided seeking employment opportunities in those industries and/or professions that had shown a disinclination to hire ex-offenders, such as those within the service industries.

There are also two landmark studies that addressed the issue of the negative impact a criminal record has on the employment of ex-prisoners, with even more dire outcomes for Black ex-prisoners than white ex-prisoners. The first study was by Pager (2003), which "focused on the consequences of incarceration for the employment outcomes of [B]lack and white job seekers" (p. 937). In the author's experimental audit, which matched two pairs of Black and white subjects who applied for entry-level jobs, she found that a criminal record presents a major barrier to employment, with important implications for racial disparities. The author also noted that, "[e]mployers, already reluctant to hire [B]lacks, appear even more wary of [B]lacks with proven criminal involvement" (p. 959).

In the second study, Pager and Quillian (2005) followed up on these findings with an article that explored employers' attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders and their actual hiring practices. They found that there was a large disparity between the employers' stated likelihood of hiring Black ex-offenders and their (i.e., the employers') actual hiring practices. They also concluded that "the results support the perspective there has been a growing gap between the principled statements and beliefs of white Americans in favor of racial equality and their concrete actions." (p. 374).

In her study entitled *Systems of Oppression: The Collateral Consequences of Incarceration and Their Effects on Black Communities*, Finzen (2005) investigated the extent to which “collateral consequences” laws disproportionately impact Black communities as a whole in the area of employment and other necessities taken for granted by many people in this country, both Black and white. She noted that:

The most serious economic collateral consequences laws are those that affect an individual’s ability to find work after release from prison. In addition to informal social discrimination that makes it difficult to find employment, numerous federal statutes prohibit individuals convicted of various crimes from obtaining certain kinds of employment, either for a specified period of time or permanently. Furthermore, various occupational and licensing restrictions throughout the states further restrict a convicted felon’s opportunity to obtain employment. (pp. 307-308).

Coupled with these restrictions is the fact that many ex-prisoners, particularly those who are Black and/or poor, return to the same economically-depressed communities that they had departed because of their incarceration. For the most part many of the residents in these communities encourage – and often reward – criminal and/or anti-social attitudes and behavior rather than encourage and reward productive and pro-social attitudes and behavior such as securing and maintaining gainful employment. Thus, when one links the fact that many ex-prisoners lack reliable networks that may lead to legitimate employment opportunities, as well as viable marketable skills and employment histories to show that they may be good hires, to the immutable factor of racial background, this mix can have devastating consequences on the communities in which many ex-prisoners find themselves upon their release from prison.

With that in mind, Rose and Clear (1998) stated that “an overreliance on incarceration as a formal control may hinder the ability of some communities to foster other forms of [local social] control because they weaken family and community structures.... Thus, these communities may experience more, not less, social disorganization” (p. 441). In their follow-up study on two high-incarceration neighborhoods, Clear, Rose, and Ryder (2001) concluded that because of their inability to “self-regulate” (p. 336), these communities suffer from more crime, not less.

The ability for a community to “self-regulate” effectively is dependent on the interplay between private, parochial, and public controls (Rose & Clear, 1998, p. 445). Examples of private control are derived from groups such as family or friends; parochial control stems from interpersonal networks found in school or church; and public control is via interaction between the neighborhoods and outside agencies such as the police. As the community comes to rely more on the formal public controls such as the police, the courts, and prisons, they eventually replace reliance on the informal social controls, or friends and family.

## *To Be Continued.*

Do you have a message you'd like to send to the community? We would love to share it! Please send any written pieces, artwork or images to [reentry@sado.org](mailto:reentry@sado.org) to be featured in an upcoming Drum!

**\*Stay tuned for more of Timothy Greer's enlightening essay on prison reentry and criminal justice reform. If you would like the full essay mailed or emailed, please reach out to SADO Reentry by emailing [reentry@sado.org](mailto:reentry@sado.org).**





## RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

### YOUTH JUSTICE FUND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Youth Justice Fund will be offering occupational therapy sessions with Dr. Ariana Gonzalez from Life After Incarceration: Transition and Reentry (LAITR). The goal of occupational therapy is to provide justice-involved individuals with life skills and habit-building opportunities during/after reentry that improves health and well-being.

**Please text YJF at (734) 800-1612 to RSVP and receive a Zoom link to attend the group.**

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## MISSED PROJECT REENTRY'S APRIL WORKSHOP? HERE ARE THE MAIN TAKEAWAYS



Reconnect is a last-dollar program, which means that any Pell grant funds you receive are applied to your tuition and fees bill first, with Reconnect paying what's not covered by Pell. If you don't qualify for a Pell grant, Reconnect will pay the full cost of tuition, mandatory fees, and contact hours. There are no income limits for Reconnect eligibility.

- Who is eligible? Michigan residents 25 years or older who have not obtained an associates or bachelors degree and have a high school diploma or G.E.D
- Upon receiving the scholarship you have 4 years to complete your degree
- The Skills Scholarship program is currently closed but may reopen because of high demand
- You can visit [michigan.gov/reconnect](https://michigan.gov/reconnect) and/or email Reconnect Coordinator Steve Do directly at [dos@michigan.gov](mailto:dos@michigan.gov) for more information



READ

## TRAUMA SENSITIVE MINDFULNESS

BY DAVID A. TRELEAVEN

Mindfulness sounds good but what is it and how do you use it? This book takes an in depth look at the history of mindfulness and explains why practitioners should account for trauma when implementing this therapeutic tool.



WATCH

## 2021 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS

Have trouble sustaining attention these days? Watch the 2021 Oscar nominated shorts and experience a number of entertaining, thought provoking, and good vibe films that only require 30 minutes of time. Available on iTunes, Amazon, Verizon and Google Play.



LISTEN

## THE AFTERLIFE OF MASS INCARCERATION

NPR FRESH AIR INTERVIEW WITH REUBEN JONATHAN MILLER

NPR's Terry Gross interviews sociologist Reuben Miller about his book Halfway Home. During the interview Miller speaks about the barriers people encounter when getting out of prison with regard to housing, employment, and other vital resources, making the case for why we need do better at supporting men and women coming home.



# EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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## CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Hiring immediately, felony friendly no matter the convictions, parole eligibility flexible. Transportation to work site from central location.

**Contact** SADO Reentry or email Maggie Hall at [mhall@ceoworks.org](mailto:mhall@ceoworks.org)

7310 Woodward Ave #701b  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313-752-0768

## NATION OUTSIDE: REGIONAL COORDINATOR DETROIT

The regional coordinator is responsible for building a base of critical messengers of formerly incarcerated people and their loved ones through various educational and outreach activities.

**Visit** [www.nationoutside.org/employment](http://www.nationoutside.org/employment) for full job description and how to apply

## NATION OUTSIDE: PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The program director is the key management leader of Nation Outside. In partnership with the Board of Directors (Board) and SJM, the program director is responsible for overseeing the administration, programs, and strategic plan of the organization. Other key duties include fundraising, marketing, and community outreach.

**Visit** [www.nationoutside.org/employment](http://www.nationoutside.org/employment) for full job description and how to apply

## SAFE AND JUST MICHIGAN: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

The community engagement specialist is responsible for cultivating strategic partnerships with organizations and people across Michigan. The core activities of this position include bringing people and organizations together through various outreach strategies to educate them on SJM's policy issues and build coalitions for criminal justice reform.

**Visit:** [www.safeandjustmi.org/about/staff/](http://www.safeandjustmi.org/about/staff/) and find the link to the job posting at the bottom of the page to apply

## MICHIGAN JUSTICE FUND: PROGRAM ASSISTANT

The Program Assistant provides a full range of administrative support to the Michigan Justice Fund. This position is central to the flow of key information between program staff and external grantees as well as internal departments.

**Visit:** [cfsem.org/careers/](http://cfsem.org/careers/) to apply

## MAGNA LIGHTING

Magna lighting is a global manufacturing company with factories throughout Michigan including Plymouth, Shelby, Sterling Heights, and Hyland Park. They offer competitive wages and benefits.

**Contact** SADO Reentry or visit [magna.com](http://magna.com) to learn more about the company and available find available job openings near you

**FOR ASSISTANCE APPLYING TO JOBS OR TO BE CONNECTED TO EVENTS AND RESOURCES IN YOUR AREA, PLEASE REACH OUT TO PROJECT REENTRY.**

## CONEY ISLAND KETCHUPS WITH JUNE WALKER

Sometimes you have to step away from the office and make room for Coney Island, of course only when safe and fully vaccinated. For the last 3 years I've met June Walker at Coney Islands throughout the city of Detroit, MI to discuss criminal justice issues, plan how to best assist individuals coming home, vent about things that just don't make sense, and simply laugh. June Walker is a reentry specialist, community activist, Chaplin, mentor, recovery coach, and lay counselor. She writes and visits incarcerated people, especially with persons with limited resources and family support. She is also the Executive Director of Unlocked Doors Inc, which facilitates family support groups, transports families to correctional facilities to visit loved ones, and provides care packages to those coming home. I met June when she was hired as a reentry mentor to assist a client on my caseload. Over the years we worked together coordinating with this individual's family, providing transportation to the parole office, medical, and mental health appointments, and eventually securing supportive housing. June has always been passionate about battling injustice and advocating for equality. This stems from lived experience and family values. As June described "if it's something I can change, I am going to work to change it...to me helping others is what life is all about, I feel like God takes care of me, so I don't need to ask for anything". Thank you June for all the meals shared, your work in the community and being a mentor to me too!

-Allison Gorine, SADO Reentry Coordinator

To connect with June Walker, call 313-828-8936 or email [corps.unlockeddoorspm@gmail.com](mailto:corps.unlockeddoorspm@gmail.com)



To see past versions of The Drum, visit

[www.sado.org/go/drum](http://www.sado.org/go/drum)

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@sadoreentry and @sadowich

Have QUESTIONS OR something to contribute?

Email [\*\*reentry@sado.org\*\*](mailto:reentry@sado.org)

**313-256-9833**