



The **CAMPAIGN** for the
FAIR SENTENCING
of **YOUTH**



Laura Nicks

Laura Nicks was sent to prison as a child at age 17 and served 32 years before her release in 2017. Her past ignited a passion in her, and she has spent more than 5 years giving back to improve the future.

Today, Laura is a proud mother and an active and dedicated volunteer with numerous organizations and initiatives in her community, designed to support women, children, and families. Through this work she has helped establish housing programs, run gift drives, and support children of incarcerated parents.



Jose Burgos



Jose Burgos was just 16 years old when he participated in a drug deal turned robbery, which left one man dead, and another seriously injured. A year after his arrest and conviction, Jose would learn his fate, a life without parole sentence with no hope in sight.

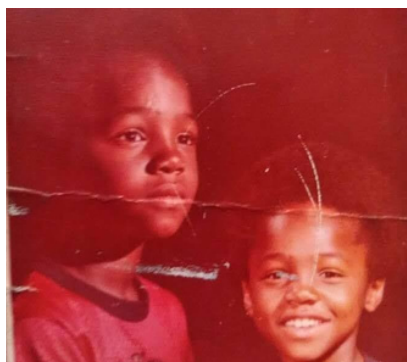
Having dropped out of school in the 7th grade, Jose began educating himself, which led him to earn his G.E.D. and a certificate in Custodial Maintenance Technology. Jose played an instrumental role in creating two youth mentoring programs, which are still up and running today. He trained service dogs, created a book club, mentored other prisoners, and got involved in as many programs as possible. In 2020 Jose was appointed by Governor Whitmer to the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice and became a non-attorney member of the SBM (State Bar of Michigan) Prisons & Corrections Section.

In 2018, after 27 years of incarceration, Jose's sentence was reduced, earning him his release. Just a year after his release in 2019, he was hired by Michigan's SADO's (State Appellate Defenders Office) Project Reentry, where he serves as a Reentry Specialist assisting those coming home after decades of incarceration.

Carissa McGee

At the age of 16, Carissa McGee was one of New Mexico's up-and-coming star student-athletes. She had won 5 state championships, 2 Gatorade Player of the Year awards, and maintained a 3.5 GPA. At the end of her Junior year, she committed her first criminal offense, attempted murder against 2 household members, and it resulted in a 21-year prison sentence. Carissa served 9 years and was released in May 2014.

Carissa used her incarcerated time to redeem herself. She actively engaged in therapy learning to understand and manage her mental health disorders, she joined a health-based peer education program from the University of New Mexico (NMPEP), she enrolled in college, and she also trained rescue dogs (Healing Hearts). Since her release, she has worked with NMPEP at the University where she routinely goes back into the prisons to provide training, education, and hope to the same population she was once a part of, she co-founded a non-profit that supports women impacted by the criminal justice system and she also found her way back to sports through officiating. Carissa advocates for youthful offenders and works with the ACLU-NM to end life sentences for youthful offenders



James "Jamo" Thomas

At the age of 15, James "Jamo" Thomas was sentenced to life without parole for his involvement in a homicide. After thirty years, he was released in 2017 thanks to youth sentencing reforms.

Today, Jamo mentors youth and helps returning citizens in Detroit, Michigan transition to life after prison. He is also dedicated to tackling poverty and inequities in his community through his nonprofit Rising Sun Ink, which coordinates the distribution of fresh food as well as numerous events like backpack drives and meals for the homeless. *feeds over 700 families per week. He is driven to give back, to be "an agent of change." His life speaks to the fact that when given the opportunity, those once condemned by the legal system as children can change, grow, and lead meaningful lives as free individuals.

Dolphy Jordan

At 16, Dolphy Jordan went to an adult prison in Washington State for murder. He was released from prison in April 2010, after serving nearly 22 years. Since then, he has worked hard to build a productive life in the Seattle area.

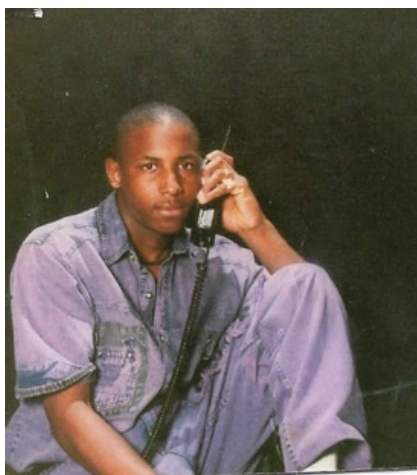
After he was released, Dolphy earned a Bachelor's degree in Applied Behavioral Science, graduating with honors. He has since been working on prison reform efforts, while working in community for different nonprofit organizations that provide a wide array of services, and has worked at the State level assisting with individuals transitioning from prison to the community. Dolphy has continued to grow as a person and continues to learn about the healing practices of restorative justice while facilitating dialogue and accountability processes in community and healing circles for formerly incarcerated people. "I'm not the same person I was at 16," Dolphy said. "I will not be defined by my worst decision. I will be defined by the person I've become"



Marshan Allen

At just 15 years of age, Marshan Allen was sentenced to two counts of mandatory life without parole in prison after stealing a van that was used in a crime that resulted in the tragic death of two people. After almost 25 years behind bars, he was released in 2016 thanks to youth sentencing reforms.

While in prison, Marshan became certified as a paralegal to fight his own case, served as a teacher's aide for computer technology courses, earned an associate's degree, and clerked in the law library, among many other activities. Today, he's a board member at the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth and a mentor in his community. He graduated from Northeastern Illinois University in August 2020 with a Bachelor's degree, and in the fall of 2022, he began attending Chicago-Kent College of Law on a full tuition scholarship to pursue his dream of becoming a lawyer. When asked about how he sees himself giving back in the future, Marshan said, "I want to be an example and show that we are not the monsters or predators that they claimed we were. That given the chance, we can [re-] integrate into society and be a [be a source of] positive change



Ashlee Sellars

Ashlee Sellars (she/they) is the Director of Restorative Justice Initiatives at Raphah Institute. Currently she is managing a diversion out of Davidson County Juvenile Court and partnering to create a diversion in Davidson County Adult Court. She is, also, in partnership with leaders in Shelby County to establish a diversion opportunity there.

As a youth Ashlee caused harm and was incarcerated for over two decades. She lives by her truth that if she doesn't do something with the information from those two decades then, she wasted those years. Working with organizations, both locally and nationally, she now supports people harmed in finding healing and defining their Justice; while, working with people who have harmed to understand impact and accountability.

She is grateful to collaborate with groups such as: The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth and FreeHearts.



Andrew Hundley



Andrew Hundley was only fifteen years old when he received a life-without-parole sentence with hard labor in Louisiana. After he served nineteen years, Andrew had his first-ever parole hearing thanks to the Supreme Court's decision in *Montgomery v. Louisiana*. The board granted him release at that hearing in June 2016.

Hundley has been helping fellow returning citizens in Louisiana ever since. As Executive Director of the Louisiana Parole Project, Hundley helps people sentenced to extreme terms as children prepare for release and parole hearings, implements their release plans, and provides reentry coaching.

