

THE W.A.Y.

Newsletter of Woman II Woman, Inc



WE'RE
HERE
FOR
YOU

ABOUT WIIW

Woman II Woman is a small non profit organization made by formerly incarcerated women for incarcerated women. We are deeply connected to the community and strive to maintain those connections to keep our work authentic. There are 3 things we feel are vital to reaching freedom before you even get a parole date: encouragement, education, and empowerment. We remember being in your position. We slept and cried in the same bunks, in the same rooms, in the same units as you. We want to encourage each of you with messages of faith, hope and love. We want you to know that even on your worst day that you are not alone. You are not your paperwork. You are and have the ability to be a new creation through a relationship with Jesus Christ. We want to educate you in new legislation that impacts you, women's rights, emotional well-being through self-help tools, along with resourceful reentry skills and knowledge, like tech literacy and financial responsibility. We want to equip you with the tools you need to build a strong foundation for a healthy life and transition with real life skills that you can use forever. These steps are all moves towards empowering you to be independent and self reliant. We want to give you what you need to be free inside and out.

OUR MISSION IS TO ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, AND EMPOWER OUR SISTERS.

It's time for you to start valuing yourself and exercising your rights. You DO have rights.

- THE RIGHT TO HUMANE CONDITIONS.
- THE RIGHT TO MENTAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE.
- THE RIGHT TO NUTRITION.
- FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT.
- THE PROTECTION AGAINST THE USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE AND ASSAULT, INCLUDING SEXUAL ASSAULT .
- THE PROTECTION AGAINST CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT.
- THE RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS.
- THE RIGHT TO ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

We believe in you and want to help you reach a place in your life where you are confident advocating for yourself. You have to be your own biggest supporter. Your rehabilitation, recovery, and road to success are depending on you.

OUR SERVICES

Before we begin...

Availability of services will vary depending on the current workload volume. Please contact us for more details.

We require a signed partnership packet before starting any actions for assistance from legal strategizing to realistic parole planning. Forms include:

- ✓ NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT
- ✓ AGREEMENT TO GIVE US ACCESS TO ANY AND ALL PAPERWORK, RVRs and ALLEGATIONS (if help is needed in an area this would be relevant in)
- ✓ PROTECTED PARTNERSHIP FORM: we promise to cease and desist from usage of any intellectual property or images of you if for any reason you leave the organization on bad terms. We will never exploit our relationship with you for profit.
- ✓ A BRIEF PERSONAL LETTER from you sharing a little about yourself and explaining to us what you need help with.

BPH & COMMUTATION SUPPORT

Parole board hearings & submitting commutations are a roller coaster of emotions. We are here to offer peer support through the process and support letters. If you need help connecting with programs to add to parole plans we can try and connect you with appropriate programs and housing.

ADVOCACY

When ever policies are in place that negatively impact one's well being and safety in prison we will do all we can to help. We will work with families, reach out to lawyers, contact media, etc. WITHIN REASON.

VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

When a story needs to be told, we will tell it. Women are welcome to send us articles and experiences they want the public to know about. We will share on our blog and the appropriate social media platforms.

SELF-CARE POSTCARDS

Our Self-Care postcards provide helpful emotional-wellness techniques. Topics include Grounding Techniques, Positive Self-Talk, Boundaries, and more.

COMING SOON!

We are working on a handbook that we plan to have in print in 2024 .

If you are interested in any of our services, send us a letter!

A LETTER FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMIE ICHIKAWA...

I decided it was best for me to address the most recent issues directly. For those of you who don't know me personally, my name is Amie. I did a little stretch in CCWF and I left a big piece of my heart in there. I am not an academic advocate who came out of some ivy league indoctrination camp with a passion to help poor victims of systemic oppression. I am an ex con. I paroled from 510, room 9 ,3 up. I am the executive director of Woman II Woman and honestly, half the time if not more, I am trying to figure out how to make this work. I got into this non profit industrial complex game not knowing how controversial it was going to be to say people with opposite mentalities should not be housed together or that sex offenders should not be allowed to transfer from men's to women's prisons. These are my own beliefs based on my Christian conservative values.

There's a lot of organizations that have different beliefs, values and practices and as a staunch advocate for freedom I am in full support of people being able to express themselves and work however they want. The differences we share should not ever stop us from being able to share a space and those differences should not ever be a reason to try and silence me. Due to the recent wake up call, we will be shifting gears. We are a team of 3. We cannot help the whole population but we can and will continue to help individuals who want to partner with us in their true rehabilitation and freedom. We will continue our Faith based organizing and we will continue to grow at our own pace. You are welcome to join us on this journey.

BE TRUE: IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

By: Liz Stroder, Assistant Director of Operations (WIIW) & Former LWOP

It took me a while to understand accountability. When I started doing my time, I believed that I wasn't responsible for murder because I didn't pull the trigger. I didn't understand how my actions sealed Diana's fate. I was still deeply emotionally rooted in the unhealthy beliefs that landed me in prison with a LWOP sentence in the first place. I was angry with my parents for my horrible life and my abusive relationships, even blaming them for me being in prison. I was a victim damnit.

Even in my "I'm a victim" mindset I still knew, deep down, what really happened that day. I knew I was breaking the law, but I didn't care. I was laser focused on getting my desperate need to be loved met, and I would do anything to get it, including putting another human being in mortal danger. It wasn't until doing some deep emotional work and self-reflection that it dawned on me, "I'm responsible for Diana's murder because I got her in the car. I'm the one that kidnapped her. If I wouldn't have done that, she would be alive." I finally admitted to myself that I had so many opportunities to help her or stop what we were doing. That's when I acknowledged my responsibility, my first step to accountability.

Accountability isn't just taking responsibility for actions; it's also making amends and doing the necessary heart work to ensure that another ugly won't happen. Accountability doesn't mean that you didn't have a traumatic life either. What it does is acknowledge the trauma in a healthy and responsible way by addressing the underlying issues. For me it was relationships, anger, boundaries, and self-worth. Did I grow up in a violent home? Yes. Was I in violent relationships as a teenager? Yes. Was I considered a battered woman? Yes. You know what all of that is? It's an understanding. It's not an excuse; it doesn't condone actions.

I chose to be accountable and admit the ugly truth of my crimes. That truth inevitably set me free, emotionally and physically. I pray that you find your truth as well, and that it sets you free.



"Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." John 8:32



A LETTER FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, TIASHA CROSLIN...

My name is Tiasha Croslin, most know me as Tee or Tish. I did a 15 year term, 6 of those years were in Los Angeles County Jail fighting a LWOP sentence. During those 6 years I developed long lasting family-ships with plenty of women who were sentenced to LWOP or Life sentences. A good majority have paroled now. While in Los Angeles County Jail and in CCWF I vowed to never forget where I came from and who I was sharing a spread with or crying with.

I shadowed a few organizations upon my release but I really felt as if I do not fit with the needs or wants of these organizations. I cannot and will not forget where I come from or my family. Nor will I dummy down for a paycheck. My trauma nor my families trauma is NOT for sale.

Due to recent events I will be stepping back from trying to be a Super-HERO and take on so many tasks. I am only one person and I work a Full Time job. Everything myself and my two sisters in this organization do are out of our own pockets and our personal lives. I will assist where I can and when I can, I want to see my Family succeed inside and outside. If you would like to be a part of our faith based organization and rehabilitate yourself, please feel free to reach out.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

L.A. CARE HEALTH PLAN

The L.A. Care/Blue Shield promise Community Resource Centers are located throughout L.A. County. They offer many classes and events that are free and open to everyone, including:

- Dance & Fitness
- Health & Wellness
- Kids & Families
- Nutrition & Healthy Cooking
- Skills & Leadership
- Rewards Program



Their Community Resource Centers also distribute free grocery items.

For more information on L.A. Care Health Plan's services and locations, have your loved ones visit their website at:

www.lacare.org

THE W.A.Y.

OUR LOVE LETTER TO YOU...

W.A.Y. is an acronym for We Are You, because that is literally what we are. We. Are. You.

We have been where you are and know how it feels. This newsletter is our way of showing you all how much we love you and support you in your journey of healing and overcoming.

We will be adding sections to the newsletter as it grows, including topics such as legislation & recent case law highlights that impact you, health & wellness information, tips on successful board hearings, and inspirational stories.

If you have any suggestions for content or would like to submit an article, please reach out to us at our P.O. Box provided below.

ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT



LIFE SUPPORT ALLIANCE (LSA)

LSA is a non-profit social advocacy organization, focused on life-term inmates in California prisons and their families. Life Support Alliance's primary mission is to help life-term inmates and their families understand a life sentence, what life changes must be made to be suitable for parole, and to help them find the resources to do so.

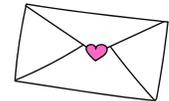
LSA offers many services including in-person workshops for inmates and seminars for families, along with public outreach and publishing the California Lifer Newsletter and the Lifer-Line email publication.

For more information, you can write directly to LSA at:
P.O. Box 277
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Ask your loved ones to visit their website & sign up for their free monthly email publication at:
www.lifesupportalliance.org

Reach out to us! Send us a letter to:

Woman II Woman, Inc.
P.O. Box 465
Harbor City, CA 90710



Have your loved ones visit our website at:

www.womaniiwoman.org

Woman II Woman, Inc is a service and a community for incarcerated women, created by formerly incarcerated women. Woman II Woman, Inc is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit registered in the US under EIN: 86-3146535.

