



Happy Holidays



*"If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"...John E. Lewis*

### BE A MENTOR

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# Engaged for Change

QUARTERLY VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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## DOC/ HOPE RISES FAMILY REUNIFICATION DAY



Thinking back to August 1, 2019 sitting in the kitchen of Hope Rises Reentry Facility with the Residents explaining what was being planned for November, I am so humbled and thankful that this day was a success for them.

The event was held at St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Little Rock, Saturday, November 16th.

The day started with breakfast refreshments and a gracious welcome by Tamiae Gardner, member of SJMBC. The Invocation was led by Steve Wright Sr., of SJMBC. The Residents from Hope Rises expressed what a Family is to them. Carrie Williams, ACC Assistant Reentry Director took us down memory lane explaining the steps that led to this day. Lindsey Gant, former Resident of Hope Rises, gave a brief overview of a day in the life at Hope Rises. There was a break for more refreshments and then the room was divided into Break Out Sessions. Family members and guest attended an Al-Anon session which was facilitated by Claude Riffin. Ardella Bearden, ACC Reentry hosted the Residents with a brief class on Cognitive Behavioral Education. The class reconvened and had an intensive family therapy session led by Christina Hopson-Allen, Passion Unlimited Counseling and Consulting.

After all of this knowledge was gained, it was time for a feast. The attendees dined on chicken, potatoes and gravy, corn, green beans, yeast rolls, carrot cake and tea. The lunch was sponsored by Dumas First Baptist Church.

After lunch, family members were able to just sit, talk and relax with their loved ones. The day wrapped up with a game called the "Responsibility Ball," and door prizes were distributed. Ardella Bearden and Carrie Williams thanked everyone for attending and wished them the best on their second chance at life.

# FAMILY REUNIFICATION DAY

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The below email appears with the permission of Helen Jones, Reentry Coach, at Hope Rises.

Hi Ms. Ardella,

Thank You so much for including me in the Hope Rises Family Reunification Day today. This was a very special event. Honestly, I was blown away! This was a fantastic day of family, respect, grace, learning, love, and hope.

I learned a lot, enjoyed the program, the venue, all of the participants/speakers and the wonderful meal too. I was also totally not expecting goodies and a gift. Wow - So nice.

This event was so well thought out. I can tell a lot of planning, organizing, brainpower and expertise, work and heart went into this day. Everything was so Professionally and nicely done.

It was so neat for me to meet the ladies family members and the ACC folks.

Seeing the ACC Team give their entire Saturday to host and lead this event was also very neat and heartfelt.

I salute and congratulate You and Your Colleagues and the folks at St. John's for making this event happen and making it so special and awesome. You all are Pros!

Very Well Done. Congratulations to You and Your team and Colleagues and Thank You so much.

Thank You and I appreciate all that you all at ACC do.

All the Best,

Helen

## Help is Available

Although May is the highest month for suicide, the holidays can be very depressing for many.

The storms of life can be dark and frightening and appear to never end. Some find themselves stuck and can not seem to find their way out. For those, suicide seem to be the only solution.



According to the CDC suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US for all ages. Every day, approximately 123 Americans die by suicide. There is one death by suicide in the U.S. every 12 minutes. Suicide takes the lives of over 44, 965 Americans every year. Arkansas is ranked at 14 with 18.2% reported suicides every year

Some warning signs of suicide include:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.

If you or someone you know are experiencing any of the signs listed above, please know that there is hope. They can help you find the rainbow after the storm. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255; [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” - Benjamin Franklin  
On Tuesday, October 22nd a group of volunteer coordinators and committee members met at the Criminal Justice Institute in Little Rock to gain wisdom from Shana Chaplin and she did not disappoint. Shana Chaplin is the director of Engage AR.



### *Shana Chaplin*

Shana's presentation really started weeks in advance of the 22nd. It started with a series of emails back and forth to determine the audience she would be addressing and what areas needed to be addressed. The emails culminated with a meeting in her office.

Learning the difference between civic engagement and volunteering was a real eye opener. Shana defined that engaged citizens are knowledgeable, mission driven, problem solvers, long term and set high expectations. These qualities are not always present in volunteers.

She then had each table work as a group. Each group communicated their barriers for not having a successful volunteer program. A representative was selected from each group was asked to place their paper on the wall and read the barriers. One of the most common denominators was time.

After a short break Shana talked about the old volunteer management model which included locate, train and launch. The old model paled in comparison to the civic engagement process. The old model represented steps that led to open space, where as the civic engagement process in a continuing cycle.

The closing of the presentation had us back on our feet again. It involved writing a mission statement for our volunteer program. Shana reiterated that we must identify our client in the mission statement. There were plenty of good statements. Shana selected the entry from Nakeisha Willingham as the overall winner. “Improving lives with the help of the community, One offender at a time.”

There was so much knowledge gained from Shana Chaplin's presentation. Shana was more than thoughtful by giving door prizes to some of the attendees.

Thank you Shana Chaplin for sharing your expertise and kindness with the Division of Community Correction volunteer coordinators/committee members!



### *This is their Story*

On August 11th of 2019, Hope Rises and Hendrix Odyssey at Hendrix College presented the 2019 Hope Rises Theatre Project: *Hurry Up and Wait*.

This project aimed to change the story of incarceration in Arkansas by changing who tells the stories about prisons: the inmates themselves.

Through telling these stories, our goal was to enrich the lives of incarcerated women at Hope Rises Re-entry facility through theatre arts, as well as provide a raw, honest account of life in prison for those who have never been incarcerated.

Project facilitators used group discussion, individual interviews, voice work, and movement work to write a performance piece based on the experiences that Hope Rises residents have in prison and reentry. The performance was held at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre Education Annex.





# SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON: HOPE RISES REENTRY FACILITY



Graduation Day!



Exit stage door left...



...And let the Rehearsals commence



Reentry Staff and Residents of Hope Rises enjoying  
Family Reunification Day