

# CHANGE COMES NOW!

First Quarter 2020

Reimagining Florida communities, inside- and outside- of the fences.

WE raise public awareness about why a jail or a prison will never be the place for a woman or girl to heal and advance her life as we advocate for significant decarceration of women and girls in Florida

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CHANGE COMES NOW grew from an advocacy group called SOLDIERS on the INSIDE a FORCE on the OUTSIDE. We saw the abuses that occur daily on the other side of the fence. WE came home, kissed freedom, and WE remember.

CHANGE COMES NOW is an organizational member of The National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls.

CHANGE COMES NOW is part of a movement with other organizing spaces within our country doing work led by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and girls. WE fight for OUR SISTERS still inside. WE fight for the SISTERS who arrive in the tomorrows.



## Lobby Day 2020

We were in Tallahassee for LOBBY DAY! With numbers greater than last year, WE are fighting for change on every level. WE want new laws. WE want body cameras on ALL staff.

WE want staff accountability. WE want an independent abuse reporting committee.

WE do Participatory defense to help people in OUR community to fight for the best outcome in court.

February 22 & 23- The National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls are sending trainers to Florida to train Debra and volunteers in Participatory Defense.

March 4- Participatory Defense meetings begin. Meetings will be every Wednesday from 6PM-8PM. We are confident this will eventually grow to 3 or 4 classes a week.

So far, we are planning on making the office available for an AA or NA meeting once a week.

CHANGE COMES NOW has a clothing closet. We hope to include shoes & hygiene ASAP. We are also anticipating cell phones. These items will be provided to the women and girls returning to their communities after incarceration.

CHANGE COMES NOW does Court Support. Court Support serves to be supportive of someone faced with the pressure of a court date. Court Support also shows a Judge that the Defendant standing before them does NOT stand alone.



## **Protest at Lowell Correctional**

SOLDIERS had their 3rd protest outside of LOWELL on January 26, 2020.

We had over 130 participants, five media outlets and three Florida State Representatives including Dianne Hart, Susan Lopez-Valdes, and Anika Omphroy.

CHANGE COMES NOW is currently organizing a massive event for June 1st, 2020. There are 67 counties in Florida. WE will have

representation at a courthouse in every county.

In a coordinated effort, WE, for one hour, will have over 2 dozen states committed- as well as SOLDIERS in Canada, Cuba and the United Kingdom. WE will be wearing the same shirts and holding the same banners. Our message: DEPOPULATION of the prisons that house our women and girls. PRISON IS NOT THE ONLY OPTION.

CHANGE COMES NOW is part of the national state clemency campaign #ClemencyWorks. We are encouraging Governor Desantis to use his clemency power on behalf of women who are elderly, sick, survived and punished and long-timers who deserve a second look to come home.

With the guidance and support of The National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, the CHANGE COMES NOW office will be completed by February 24, 2020.

Welcome YOUR Board of Directors:

Debra Bennet-Austin, Chair

Aniesha Austin, Vice-Chair

Kathryn Eno, Treasurer

Crystal Chapa, Clerk

Crystal Chisholm

April Henderson

Amber Boland

Lisa Lewis

Tyra Amos

Toni Mosely

Stephanie Huff

Tonia Sutton

The Board of Directors is 100% comprised of women released from the Florida Department of Corrections. OUR time served totals 169 years.