

LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED  
THE APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup> VIGIL AT SANTA RITA JAIL  
By Aswad Syed and Gale Sanders

“My mom said error on the side of love. I'd rather be wrong for being too loving than being wrong for being judgmental. There needs to be effort on both sides of every debate to learn the why.” This quote is by Katie Sowers, former coach for the Atlanta Falcons, former Kansas City Chiefs' coach, former San Francisco 49ers offensive assistant coach, and first woman and openly gay coach in the NFL Superbowl history.

For those who know me, they can bear witness that I include subliminal messages in my writings for specific individuals in organizations. However, today, I want to be straightforward and direct in my messaging. I am so very thankful and grateful for the tremendous turnout on April 1st during the vigil for those who lost their lives here at Santa Rita Jail. I asked John Lindsay-Poland of the American Friends Service Committee if he could provide me with three words which described this event. John said, “Illuminating, beautiful, and wonderful.” I am so very impressed and inspired by this community. I'd like to send a “shout-out” to the formerly incarcerated who came out to support us as well as the numerous members from various communities of faith and activists who participated. I pray that this will be the beginning of something special. I would like for us to continue to strive to create a culture where everyone is valued. I send a special “shout out” to Alameda County Board of Supervisors' President, Nate Miley. I am pleased to hear that Mr. Miley had a couple of his people in attendance. I end this part of my message with a quote from Emily Harris of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. This is something that Emily said after the passing of our sister in struggle, Jen Angel. Emily said, “Jen and those of us who loved her want a world for everyone who experiences harm to experience support and healing, and people who cause harm are supported to have what they need to change instead of getting locked away. On April 1st we were provided some of the support that Emily spoke of. I end by saying this that there can be no healing without forgiveness.

First of all, I wish I would have been able to be in attendance Saturday; unfortunately, that was not possible. It would have been my pleasure and honor to meet all those individuals at Santa Rita Jail vigil who came out to support the families and those individuals who lost their lives at Santa Rita Jail. This was an extremely important event and showing of support for

those currently incarcerated and locked inside those cement cages at Santa Rita Jail.

I would like to ask those family members of the incarcerated individuals who lost their lives and those who are currently incarcerated, and the formerly incarcerated to provide Destination Freedom with their contact information so we can keep you updated on our work and help make your voices heard. If you would like to have a short Memorial and picture of your loved one on the SRJ Freedom Collective's page, please contact us.

We welcome all the civil rights, faith-based, and activist organizations involved in this movement to **PLEASE** reach out to us so that we can support each other and work together.

Thank you to John Lindsay-Poland and the American Friends Service Committee for orchestrating this event.