



seeds of change

lutheran metropolitan ministry

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Special Reentry Edition



Removing Barriers to Restorative Justice

This Special Edition of LMM's Seeds of Change newsletter is dedicated to reentry and its importance to those we walk with in their time of transition back to community.

April is National Fair Housing Month, bringing awareness to housing barriers, including history with the criminal justice system. April is also Cuyahoga County's Reentry Awareness Week, which takes place from April 25th to April 29th. The theme of this year's Reentry Week is *The power of believing, investing, and creating a new story together.*

The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry (OOR) has a mission to remove the stigma and social burdens that challenge returning citizens by launching and sustaining a reentry movement that provides the full range of comprehensive services, support, and monitoring opportunities needed for a successful reintegration. OOR works with a coalition of partners, like LMM on reentry programs, including our Chopping for Change (C4C) program that launched in 2016.

LMM's Participation in Reentry Week:

April 25

Screening of *Apart* documentary with Office of Reentry at LMM Main Building

April 26

Malika Kidd (LMM) hosts a public presentation on Chopping for Change (C4C) program

April 26

LMM Workforce Development attends a Reentry Week Job and Resource Fair at Oriana House

April 27

Ms. Susan Burton, Charles R. See Forum on Reentry speaker, participates in special engagement with C4C Class(es)

April 28

Special edition of LMM e-newsletter focused on reentry

April 29

LMM's annual Charles R. See Forum on Reentry, in partnership with The City Club of Cleveland

April 30

The People's Reentry Assembly – gathering of returning citizens and those indirectly impacted for a half day conference on housing barriers and proposed policy solutions

Annual Charles R. See Forum on Reentry

LMM's Annual Charles R. See Forum on Reentry is held at The City Club of Cleveland this year.

The 2022 forum speaker is Ms. Susan Burton, the founder of A New Way of Life (ANWOL). ANWOL works to break the cycle of incarceration by providing housing, case management, employment, legal services, leadership development and community organization on behalf of, and along with people who struggle to rebuild their lives after incarceration. Ms. Burton is an advocate, activist, and author of *Becoming Ms. Burton* where she shares her own experiences with addiction, incarceration, and trauma. Visit cityclub.org to check ticket availability.

Charles R. See Forum on Reentry

Featuring Speaker

Susan Burton

Founder, A New Way of Life
Author, *Becoming Ms. Burton*

Friday, April 29, 2022

11:30 am at The City Club of Cleveland

Tickets and livestream can be found at www.cityclub.org



Friend-to-Friend

Friend-to-Friend (F2F) is a program that matches volunteers with woman residents of Northeast Reintegration Center and with men at Grafton Correctional Institution. The purpose of the match is to establish a friendship. The volunteers commit to visiting once a month and writing a letter or card once a month. Volunteers are matched with residents that receive few or no visits and are in need of a friend to communicate with as they navigate the criminal justice system.

Judy, a F2F volunteer for seven years, has been paired with three women. All three women have been incarcerated as a

result of drug charges. I've learned a lot about our criminal justice system and how the scourge of drugs has profound effects on those who become incarcerated and on their families. My task with my matches is to be a friend, to listen, to encourage, to help them dream about new possibilities. It requires emotional energy and some time and results in surprisingly hopeful human interaction."

F2F is currently in need of volunteers. Please email Lynn Schlessman at lschlessman@lutheranmetro.org to volunteer or find out more.



Fair Housing is a Human Right

We recognize Fair Housing Month each April to reflect on the history of fair housing in the United States, and acknowledge the work that remains.

Past involvement with the criminal legal system remains a major barrier to safe and affordable housing. At LMM, we serve many individuals affected by the legal system and collateral sanctions, which makes finding a place to live difficult. This is especially problematic as someone with access to stable housing is less likely to reoffend, and more likely to achieve financial and personal stability.

Across the country, cities and states are adopting Fair Chance Housing Ordinances, which take additional steps to prevent landlords from using criminal background to deny housing opportunities.

Second Chance Housing

Individuals with sexually oriented offenses are excluded from many public and private market housing opportunities due to HUD mandates, state and local residence restrictions, and social stigma, which severely limits housing options. While we are aware of the seriousness of the crimes, we as an agency uphold our mission to help all, and believe in aiding in rehabilitation and second chances as people reenter the community and find a place to live. For more than 15 years, LMM has operated Ohio’s largest emergency shelter at 2100 Lakeside Avenue. We are acutely aware of the mounting housing burden faced by individuals with such offenses. In comparison to all other shelter populations, this group has the least housing resources available, and consequently the longest shelter stays.

To better serve these residents during the pandemic and beyond, LMM launched the LMM Transition in Place (LMM

TIP) program in early 2021. This program is based upon the effective U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Transition in Place (VA TIP) program, with LMM adapting the model to serve individuals with sexually oriented offenses. LMM began the process in 2019. This type of leasing reduces risk regarding rental obligation and opportunity for high barrier individuals to obtain housing in verified, allowable areas from property owners who might not directly rent to individuals with eviction history, a low credit score or criminal backgrounds. The success of this pilot may mean expansion of the TIP concept to other populations who have high barriers to housing.

Once the person has been successful, the property owner and individual create an occupancy agreement between them, and LMM is able to find another unit to help another person.

Bringing Families Home, By Breaking New Ground

LMM’s affordable housing initiative, Breaking New Ground (BNG), is an innovative solution to the challenge of family homelessness. Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population in the United States. LMM is purchasing and renovating homes in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood, with the goal of renting the units to families leaving homelessness. If you would like to help bring families experiencing homelessness home, by bringing the campaign home, contact Marcella Brown, Vice President of Development & Communications, at 216.658.7208 or mbrown@lutheranmetro.org.

Fair Housing Timeline

1934

The National Housing Act of 1934 is passed and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) is established. The FHA furthers housing segregation and redlining throughout the country.

1948

The Supreme Court rules that “racially restrictive covenants” in property deeds are unenforceable, but race-based housing patterns remain common.

1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed into law.

1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is signed into law.

Seek Justice, Support a Second Chance

LMM is a social justice organization that fulfills its mission with the provision of social services and a commitment to advocacy. Many of the people we serve have been impacted by or involved with the criminal justice system. It is our hope that the community will continue to support and believe in restorative justice.

For people who are returning citizens, discrimination in employment opportunities, affordable housing and family restoration is a battle they must fight post release. LMM provides opportunities to grant second chances to people who need a fresh start. Fair chance hiring, fair chance housing and fairness in family law will enable returning citizens to be fully reintegrated into society.

We ask you to consider a gift to LMM's reentry programs and advocacy initiatives. The Chopping for Change program in our Workforce Development department, the Affordable Housing Initiative Breaking New Ground and our Fair Chance Advocacy initiatives are areas that need your support to empower those who seek restorative justice with a second chance.

You can support the work of LMM with a charitable donation. Here are a few ways to give that you may find helpful:

- Send your donation to LMM in the enclosed envelope.
- Give online at lutheranmetro.org, or search "Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry" in Cleveland, OH on Givelify or Benevity.

- Donate stock to LMM by way of Merrill Lynch. Contact Marcella Brown, Vice President of Development & Communications, at 216.658.7208 to confirm transfer information.
- Make an in-kind donation of goods for our clients and shelter residents by way of our Amazon Wish List.

Your support will enable someone who needs a fresh start to finally have a second chance. Thank you!



1966

Civil Rights legislation fails. Racial unrest is rampant throughout the country, with rebellion occurring in cities across the nation, including Cleveland.

1967

1968

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated. President Lyndon B. Johnson uses this national tragedy to pressure Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Fair Housing Act. It is signed into law just days after King's funeral.

1969

LMM is founded. HUD celebrates the one-year anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act.

Documentary Premier on PBS

The documentary *Apart* aired nationally on PBS's Independent Lens series on January 21. The film follows three women who participated in LMM's Chopping for Change program, from their time incarcerated at Northeast Reintegration



Center through their release. If you missed the television premier, we hope you will watch the film on the PBS website.



Listen to the Sound of Ideas interview with filmmaker Tim Metzger and LMM's Malika Kidd.



The Women of *Apart*

Returning to Society and the Workforce

An excerpt from the Plain Dealer and Cleveland.com opinion article by LMM's Director of Workforce Development, Malika Kidd.

When C4C launched in 2016, we intentionally picked culinary training, as the restaurant industry is one of the few industries that is accepting of individuals with records. However, for the women who want to work in a different sector, their past decisions – and the debt they paid to society – are often barriers to employment. This is partially because, in Ohio, there are about 850 laws and administrative rules that Policy Matters Ohio identified in 2018 as restricting hiring in some form.

Read the entire Op-Ed



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Our Mission:

To promote shalom (peace, well-being) and justice (right relationships) through a Christian ministry of service and advocacy with those who are oppressed, forgotten and hurting.

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To add, delete or change your address, contact 216.696.1882 or mail@lutheranmetro.org.

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