



Participants engaged in discussion during a session of *Raising My Voice*.

## Raising My Voice

The Reentry Faith and Family Circles of Support launched a Speaker's Bureau of formerly incarcerated individuals, *Raising My Voice*, in July 2014. The Bureau offers individuals who have returned from prison and transformed their lives the opportunity to share their personal narrative to:

1. **Inspire communities** to mobilize around effective reentry policies and practices
2. **Give back** to communities they have harmed by deterring others from walking in their shoes
3. **Develop** critical work and leadership skills

Members receive 22 hours of an intensive public speaking training utilizing an 11 session, highly interactive curriculum. Upon graduation, *Raising My Voice* members present to faith groups, community organizations, and students, as well as non-traditional audiences such as employers, prosecutors, and law enforcement.

If you are interested in booking a speaking engagement, please contact Linda Steele at 212.360.4117 or [lsteele@nycourts.gov](mailto:lsteele@nycourts.gov).

## Circles of Support Partners



**The Harlem Parole Reentry Court**  
– located at the Harlem Community Justice Center -- helps parolees from the Harlem

community make the transition from life in prison to responsible citizenship in the first nine months of their release. The Reentry Court works in cooperation with the N.Y.S Division of Criminal Justice Services, Manhattan District Attorney's Office, the N.Y.S Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, N.Y.C Mayor's Office, Center for Employment Opportunities and other local service providers.



**The Interfaith Center of New York** is a nationally-recognized non-profit organization that catalyzes

collaborations among hundreds of grassroots and immigrant religious leaders and civic officials to address New York's most pressing social problems. ICNY seeks to make New York City and the world safe for religious differences by increasing respect and mutual understanding among people of different faith, ethnic, and cultural traditions and by fostering cooperation among religious communities and civic organizations.



A leader in prisoner rehabilitation for more than three decades, the Network Program's **Network in the Community**,

the program's reentry arm, provides employment services, therapeutic support, substance-abuse prevention services, anger management training and a wide range of reentry services in-house and by referral to over 500 parolees per year. The Network programs offer an integrated community-based approach that combines reentry planning with group and individualized therapeutic support services that break the cycle of criminal behavior and alcohol and/or drug abuse leading to incarceration.

Supported by the J.C. Flowers Foundation

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PARTNERS FOR THE LAST MILE



# REENTRY FAITH AND FAMILIES CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

*Mobilizing Faith Communities  
and Families*



*Faith volunteers, parolees, and Harlem Community Justice Center staff came together to beautify our courthouse.*

With support from the J.C. Flowers Foundation, the Harlem Community Justice Center, the Interfaith Center of New York, and Network in the Community, recently launched the Reentry Faith and Family Circles of Support, an initiative that seeks to support young adults and their families, as they reunite post-incarceration and face the challenges of reentry.

A family case manager and family engagement specialist, with the support of an entire reentry team of parole officers, reentry court judge, community partners, and volunteers, provide intensive family and one on one support to young men and women aged 18-26 and their families as they reunite after prison. Beginning with prison in-in reach and home visits, the Circles of Support staff provides intensive case management, clinical interventions, family involvement and support, and linkages to young adult employment and education programming to prevent recidivism and strengthen the family unit.

Harlem congregations and houses of worship are invited to engage clients and their families in family-oriented activities and support.

## Why Harlem?

- ❖ Manhattan has the highest number of parolees of any county in the country.
- ❖ Upper Manhattan receives more than 2,200 parolees each year.
- ❖ One seven block stretch in Harlem in known as a "re-entry corridor" where one in 20 men has been incarcerated.
- ❖ The existence of strong grassroots, community players, willing to partner on a solution to this urgent, endemic problem.
- ❖ In Harlem, 30% of parolees are re-incarcerated within a year of release, 42% within three years
- ❖ Most parolees, predominantly young men of color, are released into an environment of poverty, unemployment and unstable housing which leads to high re-incarceration rates.

### Volunteer Opportunities:

Accompany parolees to appointments, job interviews

Assist with job-readiness: mock interviews, resumes, networking

Hold support groups for reentrants, parents or partners of returning parolees

Organize outings for families or host a community meal

Welcome parolees to the Harlem Reentry Court with refreshments and friendship



*A faith volunteer serving a parolee at Thursday Hospitality at the Harlem Community Justice Center.*

The Reentry Faith & Family Circles of Support uses proven practices, family involvement and a “ministry of presence” approach. By involving the parole clients’ family members and faith based volunteers in the reentry process we foster informal social networks to support successful reintegration from prison.

To learn more about the work the Circles of Support is doing, read the Harlem Community Justice Center’s blog, Rethinking Reentry: <http://www.rethinkingreentry.blogspot.com>

### CONTACT US:

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Theo Harris at [theo@interfaithcenter.org](mailto:theo@interfaithcenter.org), or Anisah Sabur at 212.360.8747 or [asabur@nycourts.gov](mailto:asabur@nycourts.gov).

If you are interested in booking a speaking engagement or becoming a speaker, please contact Linda Steele at 212.360.4117 or [lsteele@nvcourts.gov](mailto:lsteele@nvcourts.gov)