

MEDIA ALERT



The Parole & Probation Accountability Project
8 W 126th Street New York, New York 10027
646-820-0011 * ppap@thelohm.org * www.theppaproject.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Delisa Morris, public affairs representative

Email: dmorris@thelohm.org

MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAROLE & PROBATION ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT KNOW YOUR RIGHTS GUIDE LAUNCH

NEW YORK, N.Y., July 28, 2019 – The Parole and Probation Accountability Project will celebrate the launch of its first volume of the Know Your Rights Guide.

What: A launch party introducing the first volume of the Know Your Rights Guide centered on parole and probation rules and procedures with entertainment and light refreshments.

Who: The Parole and Probation Accountability Project

When: Sunday, July 28, 2019, 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Where: Loft29, 525 W 29th St, New York, NY 10001

RSVP to Delisa Morris at dmorris@thelohm.org.

The Parole & Probation Accountability Project (PPAP) is empowering previously incarcerated individuals and their families and loved ones with knowledge and solutions to lead successful lives following release. PPAP is a project under the umbrella of The Ladies of Hope Ministries.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAROLE & PROBATION ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT LAUNCHES VOLUME I OF THE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS GUIDE SERIES

NEW YORK, N.Y. – The Parole and Probation Accountability Project (PPAP) will celebrate the launch of its first volume of the Know Your Rights Guide (KYRG) on July 28th in New York City, to mark the book’s completion and availability for distribution.

The KYRG will be a multi-volumed guide series that assists people in navigating the justice system. The first volume of the guide is centered on parole and probation at the federal and state levels.

Mercedez Walker, program director for PPAP believes the first volume of the guide will provide an invaluable resource to everyone impacted by the parole and probation arms of the justice system.

“We noticed a wide gap between the rules that people on parole and probation have to follow versus the education that they receive before they are released. This guide is a necessary resource that will provide accurate, vital information to people on parole or probation and their families.” said Walker.

Topeka K. Sam, founder and executive director of The Ladies of Hope Ministries, PPAP’s umbrella organization, sees the KYRG series playing a major role in decarceration across the globe.

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“Reducing recidivism is a key part of ending mass incarceration. The first Know Your Rights Guide focused on parole and probation, will help people come home and stay home by giving them essential information to help them navigate the hundreds of rules they’re expected to follow to maintain their freedom,” said Sam.

KYRG books will be available for purchase and donation to a correctional institution onsite. Register for the launch and find more information here: <https://theppaproject.org/events/>.

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OVERVIEW

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OUR VISION

When an incarcerated individual is released on parole or probation it is often seen as a happy ending. However, people who committed technical probation and parole violations have been one of the few groups to see an increase in incarceration since the start of modern prison reform initiatives. Since our inception in 2016, we have conducted outreach and sought to educate persons from all walks of life on the strict requirements of probation and parole. We have also worked to tell the story of persons impacted by mass incarceration generally, and probation and parole specifically.

Through our work we plan to incite large-scale reforms to the systems of parole and probation at the federal and state levels. We believe that parole and probation reform will lead to a significant decrease in recidivism rates and prison populations across the nation. Furthermore, we believe that by illustrating the sometimes tragic and cyclical stories of persons affected by probation and parole we can begin to dismantle the bureaucracy around the justice system that fails to maintain or improve public well-being.

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

1. **The Know Your Rights Guide Series** – An extensive explanatory series on topics that concern people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. The first iteration of the guide is a deep dive into the area of parole and probation. The parole and probation Know Your Rights Guide is available for purchase [here](#).
2. **The Digital March** – An opportunity to hear from those who have been impacted by mass incarceration, parole and probation and “stand” in solidarity.

3. **Early Termination Assistance** – An ongoing project to assist certain candidates in filing for early termination from parole or probation.
4. **Parole and Probation Workshops** – In-depth workshops targeted towards people involved with the oversight and administration of parole and probation systems.

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Topeka K. Sam, *Executive Director*

Mercedes Walker, *Program Director*

Patricia Lewis, *Program Associate*

LaQuin Alexander, *Digital Producer*

Delisa Morris, *Public Affairs Representative*

Karen Morrison, *Data Analyst*

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FACT SHEET: *THE PAROLE & PROBATION ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT*

Parole & Probation Accountability Project Mission

Our mission is to reduce recidivism by providing mentorship, counseling, support and services to reformed citizens while campaigning to change the current parole and probation system.

Mass Incarceration Epidemic

- The U.S. has 25% of the world's incarcerated people, but only 5% of the population
- There are 5 million Americans on parole or probation
- Incarceration in the U.S. costs American tax-payers over \$64 billion per year
- An estimated one in 55 adults in the U.S. were under community supervision at year-end 2016, 81% of whom were on parole
- An estimated 115,000 adults exited parole in 2016 and returned to incarceration

Parole & Probation Shortcomings

- Reformed adults and families are poorly educated and not supported in their attempts to achieve a successful transition to civilian life
- Parole officers are often distrusted by those on parole and their families, which increases the likelihood of recidivism
- Often with no income, persons on probation and parole are burdened to pay court fees, restitution, and other probation and parole fees

Parole & Probation Accountability Project Offers Solutions

- Provides post-release services including informational sessions, family reunification, resume writing/job placement assistance and financial literacy
- Spearheads mentor programs by creating a peer-to-peer mentee/mentor support system with structured curriculum that includes relevant topics to formerly incarcerated individuals
- Promotes holistic counseling

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Topeka K. Sam

Founder & Executive Director

Topeka K. Sam is the Founder and Executive Director of The Ladies of Hope Ministries – [The LOHM](#) – whose mission is to help disenfranchised and marginalized women and girls transition back into society through resources and access to high-quality education, entrepreneurship, spiritual empowerment, advocacy and housing. She is also the co-founder of [HOPE HOUSE NYC](#) – a safe housing space for women and girls. Topeka serves on the board of directors for [Grassroots Leadership](#) and is now the first formerly incarcerated person on the board of [The Marshall Project](#). She is a [Beyond the Bars 2015 Fellow](#) and a [2016 Justice-In-Education Scholar](#) both from Columbia University, a [2017 Soros Justice Advocacy Fellow](#) working on Probation and Parole Accountability, a [2018 Unlocked Futures Inaugural Cohort Member](#), [2018 Opportunity Agenda Communications Institute Fellow](#), [Director of #Dignity Campaign for](#)

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[#cut50](#), [Host of “The Topeka K. Sam Show” on SiriusXM UrbanView Channel 126 Sundays 9am est.](#) and has recently signed a development deal as Executive Producer for a scripted and unscripted series inspired by her fight to change the many problems that plague female incarceration with [44 blue productions](#).

Topeka has been featured in [Vogue](#), [SalonTV](#), [Vice](#), [New York Times](#), CNN and [MSNBC](#). She has been featured in [Glamour Magazine](#) and [Black Enterprise](#) for being “The black woman behind the video that led to the Trump clemency of Alice Johnson.” She has spoken at the 2018 United States of the Woman Conference, [2018 Women in the World Conference](#), [2018 White House Prison Reform Summit](#) and is a [TedxMidAtlantic Superheros Presenter](#).

She has worked and continues to work selflessly and relentlessly in her fight for the dignity, decriminalization and decarceration of women and girls. Topeka has accomplished this and more since her release from Federal Prison May 2015.

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Revised: July 2019