

# Building up People not Prisons



## We're Still Mothers

**F**or most of you all who know me, I am a **Mother** of a 19 year old daughter, Nadya. When I went to prison in 2010 she was 7 years old. My heart can't express the loss, the heartache, the pain I felt leaving her to go give the State of Georgia 10 years of my life. We were best friends, my little mini-me, my ride or die! Doing my time in prison, I quickly learned that I had to let go of the outside world to survive in there mentally. You have to forget you are a daughter, a sister, an Auntie and yes even a **Mother**. Yeah, I know that is terrible to say but the effects of prison is so stressful on your soul you do what you have to do to make it through. At least that's what worked for me.

Don't get me wrong, I still talked to her, I still wrote to her, gave her motherly advice and support the best I could. That helped us to be where we are now. Today she is a 19 year old beautiful person inside and out. We have had our stumbling blocks where we had to confront those demons we didn't want to acknowledge, but you have to be able to move forward.

Just because you're away from your children and can't be there in their day to day activities, doesn't mean you can't be a good Mother. Write them and call them if you can. Nadya told me that those letters meant a lot, that words in the mail though she didn't every day, even respond. I remember thinking those letters didn't mean anything because I didn't get a response, but we all know being a Mother is selfless and our children look to us for so much.

This month is carved out for us, but we all know being a Mother is an everyday event. Cherish it and do all you can to be present.

*~Robyn Hasan*



## Women on the Rise is Staffing up!

2022 brought new changes within our organization, we've promoted and grown in staff... Welcome our new staff!



**Marilynn Winn**  
Co-Founder & Senior Fellow



**Robyn Hasan**  
Executive Director



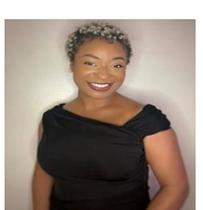
**Denise Ruben**  
Membership Organizer



**Indy Easley**  
Campaign Organizer



**Destini Taylor**  
Digital Organizer



**Aleeyah Nichols**  
Development Associate



# Women on the Rise has a group inside!

Ronnie Fuller at Lee Arrendale State Prison brought to us a great idea to help spread the word to women inside about what Women on the Rise is doing to bring about change concerning all of us who are currently and formerly incarcerated. With Ronnie's help we have created "Women on the Rise Inside."

Ronnie Fuller  
Facilitator

Victoria Gainers

Windy Scott

Tiara Smith

This group will consist of learning about laws that Women on the Rise (WoR) has passed and our national known current campaign to close and repurpose the Atlanta City Detention Center. This will get those inside to learn how they can help bring about change and get the world to see how resources is the answer and not cages. This action can help get your family involved in criminal justice reform and you active in helping to change the environment that affects you.

WoR Inside group will also be learning about the importance of language, forgiveness, Business Planning, public speaking, domestic violence, legal resources, updated technology information, counseling resources for their children who is having a hard time coping with their mothers being incarcerated, healing for victims, and restorative justice.

Demetre Evans

Rhonda Vinings

Tangin Alexander

Stacy Singleton

Baretta Pierce

Cornelis Richardson

Danielle Hart

Alison Gresham

Laura Payne

We are so proud to involve everyone's lived experiences and understanding that no one who hasn't spent time behind the fence can truly understand the need to inform the world of who we really are!

Ameshia Ervin

Antonia Lowe

Castro Canelo Jesus

Quantitta Turner

Elisabeth Joyner

Brandy Boyd

Comeika Turner

Karen Echman

Falicia Blakely

Jessica Brown

Judy Washington

Kimberly Sailen

Lacey Paty

Crystal Johnson

Racquel Phillips

Latoya Dickens

Paulette Pippens

Mekeba Thomas

Ronya Crankshaw

Cassandra Bjorge

Shuntae Battles

Vernessa Marshall



# Laws in Legislation we Support

**Raising the age:** [HB 272](#), raising the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 17, was passed by the House in 2021 but stalled in the Senate. A week before Sine Die this year, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed an amended version of the bill that would have established a committee to study the possibility of raising the age in the future. Unfortunately, HB 272 was never scheduled for a final vote in the Senate.

**Improving indigent defense:** [HB 478](#) will raise the standard for admitting scientific evidence during criminal trials. This bill, authored by GACDL, will increase the likelihood that criminal proceedings are based on reliable evidence and not junk science. HB 478 was passed by the Senate on March 30 and is now awaiting the governor's signature.



**Ending prison birth:** [HB 1092](#), brought forth by RestoreHER, would have created a path for pregnant women who have been sentenced to incarceration to begin their prison sentences only after giving birth. This important policy change acknowledges the trauma experienced by women who are forced to give birth while incarcerated and seeks to end the practice.



## My Story ~ Karen Segura

I was in prison for 4 years at Pulaski and Lee Arrendale State Prison. My detail was re-entry aide. When I was told I was getting paroled I felt excitement, happiness, joy, anxiousness and honestly slightly nervous but I was ready. When I was walking out those gates I felt an adrenaline rush, of course I was overly joyous and very determined, also overwhelmed with my reality as a whole. The first thing I did upon release was go out to eat with my family, renewed my driver's license and met my parole officer, of course later I went shopping.



The most challenging thing I experienced in being free was rejection, I had to get used to people not accepting me because of my incarceration. Right now, I am

working for an attorney's office in Atlanta and Tennessee as well as a full time mommy!

After experiencing everything, I want to encourage you all to acquire as much knowledge, skills, and education as your mind would allow. Utilize your time as a time to rehabilitate your mind, body, and soul. Set goals – short term and long term. You should truly learn yourself and start a blue print towards your future.

Keep your head up ladies and trust GOD. I also pray everyone finds peace behind those walls.



# I Am A Mother

I was chosen from a source above and beyond anything you could quite imagine To instill the words of wisdom, to articulate the vision

Of love and light Strength to know when it's time to fight The battles of this thing we all know as life

And the life that I give is not mine, it's just my gift That I extend to you freely, openly willing, and completely

To a sacrificial status you couldn't quite understand until I pass the torch and you become a woman or man

Designed to intellectually intertwine with the thoughts that shape your mind So you can recognize what's only invisible to the blind

Equipped with the tools to help you see the ability For me to learn from you and you to learn from me Because it's important to constantly be a student remain consciously and subconsciously fluent



# I Am A Mother

Groomer of your thoughts to comprehend the difference between right and wrong, durable and thin, family ties, and fake friends

There are no handbooks or study guides to steer me in a direction of perfection So excuse the typos that I make when I deliver you the lesson I truly view you as a blessing

Nurturer of your tears, the disinfectant for any fears that prevent you from taking your position, I am the example of focusing with intention

What you have is what you need

Who you are is what you speak

What you say is what you think And that is all I have to teach..

I Am A Mother

Written By, Destini Taylor

## Welcome Home Package

In our continued efforts to support incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women transition, our Welcome Home package is given to you upon being released from jail or prison and to formerly incarcerated women who are struggling due to job loss, medical issues, or other life events. It contains a \$100 Gift Card, Gas Card or a 30 Day Marta Pass, Hygiene box and a Job referral to First Step Staffing.

To obtain this support, we will need you to provide us a copy of your release papers or prison ID, sign up for membership on our website [womenontherisega.org](http://womenontherisega.org) and attend at least 3 meetings which provides resources to help you maintain a productive lifestyle such as Housing, Credit, how to purchase a home, investing, saving as well as Mentally dealing with freedom and the effects prison had on you.

Upon returning home email for more information to [Robyn@Womenontherisega.org](mailto:Robyn@Womenontherisega.org)



*When a mother is incarcerated, it doesn't change the fact that she is a mother. A mother that deserves a day to be honored for her strength in the face of incarceration. A mother that deserves freedom, safety, and independence.*



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