Letter from the Executive Director

Barbara Martinsons had an idea in the year 2000. She wanted women who had been introduced to college while incarcerated to finish the degrees they had started. It was just a handful of women. Barbara didn’t imagine that it would become hundreds.

Twenty years later, women still rely on CCF to help them reach educational goals, find a pathway to interrelated careers, and connect to advocacy campaigns that improve the quality of life in their communities.

Not only is CCF still here, it is thriving. Even as the world navigates a pandemic, CCF’s talented and dedicated team consistently supports hundreds of women and families. While some people are only beginning to understand structural and systemic racism, CCF is doubling down on work it has always done to address issues at the intersection of racial justice, economic equity, and decarceration.

This year, shortly before COVID-19 hit New York, CCF expanded eligibility requirements. Now women with any direct criminal justice involvement can access our College & Career Programs.

The women of CCF have a relentless thirst for a better future. Engaging in higher education while battling the complications of criminal justice involvement, family life, and work, requires CCF’s constituents to overcome every imaginable obstacle. The erasure caused by gender and racial bias is not new to CCF women. The light of truth is revealing the unique struggles of Black women as they seek to cross the borders created to contain them.

CCF’s Policy & Advocacy team expanded its focus to respond to urgent needs at the height of the pandemic. Alignments with several coalitions and organizations have helped get women released from jails and assisted with housing and other basic needs.

To protect incarcerated people from future exposure, CCF co-created draft legislation and an organizing tool kit to formalize correctional responses to emergency situations. Allied organizations have started campaigns to adopt the legislation in several states. Access to education remains CCF’s primary advocacy issue. We know that higher education is historically tied to race and class in America. People whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system know best that failures in social systems exclude people from access to high-quality education. CCF elevates their voices, highlights their expertise, and centers their stories. A commitment to increase educational opportunities in prisons and ensure that the doors to colleges and universities are open for people when released is at the heart of CCF’s collaborative advocacy.

This report exemplifies the power of a community that is relentless in its refusal to accept erasure and its ability to be effective in times of great adversity. The work CCF does comes with a great deal of personal sacrifice. We appreciate the sacrifice every member of the CCF team has made in choosing a career that lends their potential, talent, and energy on behalf of CCF’s extraordinarily resilient women.

Many thanks to all our supporters, new and old. You have demonstrated extraordinary commitment by offering your support in the midst of your own challenges. Because of you, we were able to expand our reach, grow programs, and launch new initiatives. Your confidence in our multidimensional approach fuels our success. For that, we are grateful!

Warm Regards,

Vivian Nixon
Executive Director

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"This report exemplifies the power of a community that is relentless in its refusal to accept erasure and its ability to be effective in times of great adversity."
What We Do

COLLEGE & CAREER

We work with more than 400 women with criminal justice involvement through our Academic Support Program, Uplift Mentoring Program, and Career Advancement Program.

We know that access to education has immediate and long-term effects on one’s overall wellbeing and has significant ripple effects for multiple generations.

We also know that as the labor market continues to change, it is critical that the women we serve continuously update their learning and have the resources they need to navigate a complicated and evolving economy.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

To build the movement for criminal justice reform, we prioritize two strategies:

1. Campaigns to increase access to higher education and civic engagement, and
2. Training women impacted by incarceration to be leaders in their communities.

Throughout this work, we center the voices of the women we serve and are committed to integrating the arts into advocacy and education.

THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

THRIVE supports the successful reintegration of criminal justice-affected people nationwide through two training tracks:

1. For institutions that work with or serve justice-involved people.
2. For employers that want to tap into an under-utilized workforce.

THRIVE is a training program grounded in evidence-based and promising practices that are at the core of what has made CCF’s College & Career Programs successful over the last 20 years.
COLLEGE & CAREER PROGRAMS

WHY WOMEN
Contact with the criminal justice system often leaves people stigmatized and economically disadvantaged. Our high-touch, gender-specific approach combines individual guidance with community support to partner with our students on their pathway to a college degree and meaningful career. We follow the suggested strategies outlined in the evidence-based research conducted by Bloom, Owens, and Convington called Gender-Responsive Strategies for Women Offenders. The report identified the different pathways to criminal justice involvement between men and women and the need for distinct services for women.

This year, all CCF staff received training from the Connecticut Women’s Consortium on “Creating a Culture of Trauma-Informed Care” and “Differentiating and Demystifying Gender & Sexual Identity.”

CF is one of 11 members of the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI)/Reentry Coalition. Its mission is to reduce crime and bring opportunity to NYC communities with complex needs and issues by providing a spectrum of services for justice-involved people.

EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY
For 20 years, we have been committed to serving women with criminal convictions. Throughout the years, we have recognized the need to serve women not only with a conviction but with any direct criminal justice involvement.

This year, our College & Career Programs became available to women with any direct criminal justice involvement. That includes women with arrest histories, adjournments in contemplation of dismissal, or alternative to incarceration participation that led to the dismissal of charge.

UPLIFT MENTORING
Mentors (women with criminal justice histories and a college degree) support mentees (women impacted by the criminal justice system) as they build higher education into their reentry plans.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP)
Our oldest and largest program, ASP, provides individual and community support to help women earn their college degrees.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (CAP)
Designed in response to the needs of current students & alumnae from our Academic Support Program, CAP works with women at any point on their career pathway.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL PROGRAM
We know that our students’ educational achievements have a positive impact on the educational aspirations and achievement of their families. This year, we officially launched our Multi-Generational Program. We supported ten women pursuing a degree while also serving as caregivers to school-age children (whether as a parent, grandparent, or other).

Ebony Maher and daughter Ivy at the 2011 and 2018 family day

CCF is part of the Formerly Incarcerated Convicted People and Families Movement (FICPFM), a network of over 50 civil and human rights organizations led by people who have conviction histories and their family members. Vivian Nixon, Executive Director of CCF, sits on their Steering Committee.

Vivian Nixon, Executive Director of CCF, sits on their Steering Committee.
ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP)
Women with criminal justice histories can enroll in our Academic Support Program and receive support as they apply for, enroll in, and complete their degree at a college or university. If a woman is not yet ready for college, she can join Community Sisters.

UPLIFT MENTORING
Relationships rooted in shared experiences often lead to more meaningful connections. CCF’s peer mentoring program thoughtfully matches mentors (women with criminal justice histories and a college degree) with mentees (women impacted by the criminal justice system) to build higher education into their reentry plans.

LOOKING AHEAD
In the coming year, we will be launching two community-based peer mentoring cohorts. The community model will deliver intensive group mentoring sessions using a virtual interactive curriculum that fosters a sense of sisterhood and self-efficacy.

Partner Facilities:
- Taconic Correctional Facility
- Bedford Hills Correctional Facility
- Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island

With tenacity and perseverance, our students earned their college degrees despite any barriers in their way. As our Valedictorian, Chermaine Black said, “We are the current leading women of color who happen to share a history of being involved in a system that is unfair, unjust, and inhumane. We are creating opportunities for others who come after us.”

Graduates:
- 3 Associate Degrees
- 6 Bachelor’s Degrees
- 4 Master’s Degrees
- 3 Earned Career Certifications

[The financial support I received from CCF has] helped me tremendously. Now that my past school balance has been paid off, I can register for classes and complete my bachelor’s degree. Without this support, I wouldn’t have been able to go back to school.”
—Community Sister

Trained mentors

Number of women who received a College & Career Awareness Workshop

Number of women working toward a college degree

Number of women working towards Career Certification

Number of women getting ready or have applied to college

Community Sisters enrolled

Over $100,000 in financial support

11

270

41

17

68

18

100k+

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020 | CCF 20 YEARS
MIMI PASCUAL
BA in Theater from City College, Class of 2020

Minerva “Mimi” Pascual will graduate from City College this year with a Bachelor’s degree in Theater. Mimi, with her huge smile, has a bubbly personality and an incredibly positive outlook on life. She came to CCF immediately after her release from prison in 2019 and has since taken every opportunity we offer to develop her educational, career, and activism goals.

“I had gone to college before prison, but where I was incarcerated, they only offered vocational training — and I had to fight for that,” says Mimi.

“I always knew I wanted to go back to school, but I just didn’t know how,” she remembers. While incarcerated, Mimi enrolled in a vocational cosmetology program in prison, which she finished with the support of CCF once released as a stepping stone to a 4-year Bachelor’s degree in Theater.

“When I joined CCF, I just thought I would get some help with my college application and then do everything else on my own. I didn’t know about the financial help or mentoring, or other programs,” Mimi says. Since then, Mimi has taken advantage of all that CCF has to offer.

“I joined the Wish program because I wanted the chance to meet other women and develop my advocacy. I learned that there are so many ways to elevate your advocacy, including presenting it through my theater, writing, and presentation. I want to elevate what I stand for and what I want to fight for.”

“Then I joined the Career Advancement Program. My career coach Janelle has been helping me grow and find my true self. And my academic counselor Angela has always been there for me, and she’s doing more than just helping me get my Master’s Degree too — so she can relate to me and guide me in my next steps. Now, Mimi is combining everything she’s learned from her time in CCF’s academic, career, and advocacy programs to plan her next steps.

“I’m sure that I want to incorporate my activism into what I’ve learned in my degree,” she’s decided.

“I’ve been doing work with the group Educate Don’t Incarcerate to record interviews about criminal justice reform, and learning to do media editing and producing. Moving forward, I don’t want to be the hair and makeup artist. I want to be the one who coordinates the entire aspect of the project. I want to shoot PSAs, produce activist theater work, and write about my activism work, and that’s how I want to marry my two passions.”

So what’s next for Mimi? She’s taking advantage of the COVID-19 social distancing measures to plan for her future.

“I’ve been confined before, but this time I have gadgets!” She exclaims. “This pandemic is a starting ground for the whole world, and since I just came home, this is a good chance to restart with everyone else. I’ve been spending my time recording content with Educate Don’t Incarcerate, so it’s making me think about a Master’s Degree in film, and I’d like to stay at City College and work with CCF. I want to produce, record, and put my work out there to fight for prison reform.”

In the meantime, Mimi is sharing her experiences with others through the same things we went through, and I want to extend the help that’s been given to me to our kids. I want to fight for the kids the way CCF fights for us.”

Mimi and her son both feel passionate about providing support to families like their own. “I am offering my services and my son’s services to anyone who needs help or to vent,” she says with a smile. And for women thinking about pursuing their education, Mimi’s advice is:

“For you’re going to have rough days and you want to quit, but there are ways to get assistance and lighten your load to make sure you can finish. Just ask for the help you need. When I came to CCF, I didn’t know how to work a computer or anything, but we can all figure these things out. If I can do it, you can do it!”

CAP supports women with criminal justice involvement at any point on their career pathway. The program was designed in response to the needs of women in our Academic Support Program who struggled to find work reflective of their educational levels and interests. Through a flexible module-based program, we meet this need and provide our students with adaptive support to attain their goals.

CCF Alumnae from our Academic Support Program said they would recommend CCF to someone they know.
PELL RESTORATION

Education is a bedrock of a healthy, civically engaged society. It is a proven key component of movement-building. Pell Grants help provide greater access to higher education regardless of income and socioeconomic status. Higher education opens doors to opportunity, helps people transform their lives, and gives them a sense of value and purpose. That is why we must restore Pell for ALL people in prison.

RAPID RESPONSE

CCF joined the Vera Institute, Safer Foundation, and Drug Policy Alliance to monitor the House Committee Education and Labor mark-up on Pell legislation. The goal was to prevent carve outs on Pell restoration that would exclude people based on the nature of the crime or length of the sentence. We fended off more than 10 legislative offices that intended to vote on a negative amendment. As a result, a clean lift of Pell passed through that committee.

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

Together with #UnlockHigherEd, CCF hosted a congressional briefing sponsored by Representatives David Trone and Danny Davis. The briefing exclusively featured formerly incarcerated advocates for higher education, flown in from all over the country. Currently incarcerated individuals who could not attend in person participated by way of pre-recorded interviews. CCF partnered with the Association for State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) for a congressional briefing on restoring Pell and key legislative meetings, resulting in ASCA President and Secretary of Corrections in Pennsylvania John Wetzel sending a powerful message to Congress on the importance of this policy change.

ADVOCACY DAYS

In collaboration with Law Enforcement Leaders (LEL), the Brennan Center for Justice, and #UnlockHigherEd Coalition, CCF organized a series of Advocacy Days on Capitol Hill.

- Number of formerly incarcerated advocates representing 11+ states who met with 90+ legislative offices on Capitol Hill in partnership with LEL and the Brennan Center.
- Number of congressional staffers and representatives in attendance at a briefing held by CCF on the urgent need to restore Pell.
- Cosponsors of the REAL Act, which would permanently restore Pell Grant eligibility to incarcerated students. Many signed on after hearing our advocates (who have direct experience) speak at our advocacy days.

PELL RESTORATION

College-in-prison programs operated successfully for decades. Then in 1994, the crime bill banned incarcerated people from receiving Pell Grants.

We are fighting relentlessly on this issue so that all incarcerated people can access Pell Grants, even if they have long sentences or are incarcerated for life.

STATE TRIBUNAL

State financial assistance is a key component to creating access to higher education for incarcerated people. Nineteen states currently provide this. New York is not one of them. We see the restoration of TAP as an essential means to uplift communities devastated by mass incarceration.

WOMEN INFLUENCING SYSTEMS & HISTORY (WISH)

CCF has a 20-year history of centering the voices of those impacted by the criminal legal system. WISH provides the leadership skills and resources that promote long-term self-efficacy and civic engagement. WISH alumnae have and continue to play a crucial role in strengthening strategic relationships with ally organizations through their participation and leadership in campaigns across the city.

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CCF travels to albany

CCF Community Organizer, Ivelisse Gilestra, was invited to give testimony before the Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education in the New York State Legislature to restore TAP funding for incarcerated people.

The roughly 2.3 million people in prison, 95 percent of whom will be released, should be given access to the tools required to build a life post-incarceration. More importantly, they must be allowed the dignity that comes with the pursuit of opportunities to self-improve and grow and learn — a right which our founding documents suggest all humans deserve.

—Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director

There are now many potential legislative vehicles that could reinstate Pell.

CCF has also supported the Expanding Educational Opportunities for Justice-Impacted Communities Act and the current version of a clean Pell lift that appears in the fiscal year 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill. It is a great sign that Pell has continued to move when other high priority bills have dropped off.

Because I was able to earn my Bachelor’s degree in prison, I returned to my community not only personally transformed by the education but also empowered and better equipped to promulgate sustainable change. In our state motto, “excelsior,” we commit ourselves to the idea that we are forever moving upward. If that remains true, then the same educational opportunities guaranteed for some must be provided to all.

—Ivelisse Gilestra, CCF Community Organizer

Looking forward

CCF will produce a short educational video of narratives from the writing workshop with Liza Jessie Peterson, demonstrating how education builds power.

Writing Workshop in Collaboration with Liza Jessie Peterson

To raise awareness about the barriers that formerly and currently incarcerated students face in accessing higher education, we teamed up with Liza Jessie Peterson for a writing workshop. Ten formerly incarcerated women from CCF and Operation Restoration participated in the workshop. Participants shared their personal stories related to access to higher education and Pell Grants and examined how artistic responses are used to transform communities.
WOMEN INFLUENCING SYSTEMS & HISTORY (WISH)

Movement building requires education, skill-building, and civic engagement. WISH is an eight-week advocacy training program for women who have felt the impacts of the criminal legal system.

Women in our program learn:
- Issue Identification
- Forms of Advocacy
- Government & Policy Making Process
- Building Power in Community
- Storytelling for Effective & Persuasive Communication
- Digital Organizing

18 Participants

Number of WISH participants who spoke at legislative hearings or lobby days.

16

WISH participants who indicated they felt part of a community.

87%

WISH alumnae who want to work on a CCF-led campaign.

91%

Women trained this year (82 women trained since 2018).

29

Alumnae who participate and lead the following campaigns:
- #CLOSErikers
- #HALTsolitary
- Release Aging People in Prison
- #BEYONDdioses
- COVID Behind Bars
- Black Lives Matter

56%

WISH alumnae who want to work on a CCF-led campaign.

WISH participants who indicated they felt part of a community.

Number of WISH participants who spoke at legislative hearings or lobby days.

16

As a result of the WISH training, I feel that I am more informed and better able to share with others in the community that they have the power to advocate on behalf of themselves, their families, and their communities. Our votes matter, and we have the power to make our votes work for us.

—WISH Alumnae

Our Policy & Advocacy Team + WISH alumnae Attended the following legislative education events
- Restore the Vote NY Meeting (National Action Network)
- Rally with CAIC #HALTsolitary confinement

Our Policy & Advocacy Team Presented at more than six national Conferences, including the National Council for Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls (The Council), #FreeHer Conference, and The Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People’s Family Movement FICPFM National Convenings.
THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

THRIVE is the only program of its kind geared towards institutional change for the betterment of justice-impacted individuals; bringing together evidence-based and promising practices and grounded in CCF’s 20 years of working with women with criminal convictions.

In the last year, THRIVE trained the following organizations:
- North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- Fortune Society
- Tennessee Higher Education Initiative (THEI)

CURRICULUM EVALUATION
THRIVE was evaluated by the Joyfields Institute, an expert in evidence-based practices. Joyfields found that the THRIVE curriculum effectively uses existing research, empirical assessment, and data-driven decision-making to enhance client success, improve staff performance, and promote a culture of learning and collaboration.

THRIVE EVIDENCE-BASED AND PROMISING PRACTICES
- Postsecondary Education:
  - Sites learn about the importance of higher education for the people they serve to gain a competitive edge in the workforce and overcome generational poverty. Promising practice.
- Financial Education:
  - Sites are trained by a certified financial health counselor with a concentration in credit and debt repair. Additionally, trainees can access our Financial Education Train-the-Trainer curriculum to pass on knowledge to clients or employees. Promising practice.
- Trauma Awareness:
  - Trainees learn about the various causes and effects of trauma and how it relates to all people, specifically criminal justice-affected people. Certified evidence-based practice.
- Motivational Interviewing:
  - Trainees learn about the long-standing, strength-based conversational techniques that support better outcomes among CJ-impacted people. Certified evidence-based practice.
- Asset-Based Community Development:
  - Trainees learn the importance of identifying the skills and assets that exist in the people they serve and how CCF successfully utilizes asset-focused leadership development in its service delivery. Evidence-based practice.
- Organizational Learning and Development:
  - Sites learn key organizational learning and development components including change management, data management/analysis, basics of fundraising, and capacity-building to ensure successful implementation of training modules.

LOOKING FORWARD
In the coming year, we will provide training to Exchange for Change in Miami. Exchange for Change offers writing courses in prisons and runs letter exchanges between incarcerated students and writers studying on the outside. By preparing incarcerated people for reentry and preparing the community for their return, Exchange for Change provides vision and understanding on both sides of the fence.
Organizational Timeline

2000
- CCF Founded by Barbara Martinsons

2001
- CCF commemorates its first graduation ceremony

2002
- Vivian Nixon takes part in the Soros Justice Fellowship, expanding her vision of possibilities for CCF

2003
- Professor Patricia F. Claugh, Director of the Center for the Study of Women and Society at CUNY Graduate Center, starts a seminar for select CCF students known as Community, Leadership, and Education after Reentry (CLEAR). The group publishes Life Capacity Beyond Reentry in the Journal of Race and Ethnicity.

2004
- CCF collaborates with others to take on college access for incarcerated students and bans the box for college applicants.

2005
- CCF hosts a regional conference in collaboration with national partners. Several members of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council attended to speak to directly impacted people in the Northeast.
- Under the leadership of Melanie Steinhardt, CCF enhances its development and communications capacity.

2006
- Vivian Nixon becomes a Fellow of the Aspen Institutes Ascend Program, where she gains insight on bringing a multi-generational lens to CCF’s work.

2007
- The work of CCF gains momentum, attracting grants for examples, the New York Women’s Foundation and the Helena Rubenstein Foundation.
- The New York Times does a full profile on CCF student Mickey Hidalgo.
- The Daily News does a profile on Vivian Nixon.

2008
- Public discourse about the relationship between access to education and the rise in prison populations begins to take shape.
- The importance of education enters the reentry space.
- CCF collaborates with others to take on college access for incarcerated students and bans the box for college applicants.

2009
- CCF receives its first six-figure multi-year grant from the Robin Hood Foundation. This grant helps CCF move into its own office space and install a state-of-the-art data collection system. Other foundations, including the David Rockefeller Foundation, followed.

2010
- Under the leadership of Maria Santangelo, the academic support team fine-tunes the program model, increases capacity, and offers even more tools to help students succeed.
- Vivian Nixon becomes a fellow of the Aspen Institutes Ascend Program, where she gains insight on bringing a multi-generational lens to CCF’s work.

2011
- The Ford Foundation makes a generous donation, increasing CCF’s capacity and reach nationally.
- Vivian Nixon joins a national steering committee of directly impacted leaders who worked with the Obama Administration’s Interagency Reentry Council, directly influencing several initiatives, including Second Chance Pell.

2012
- CCF receives a Second Chance grant from the Department of Justice to pilot a Peer Mentoring Program.
- Vivian Nixon receives the John Jay Medal of Justice alongside Harry Belafonte and Dr. Haava Arditi.
- Theater for Social Change Ensemble gives their first full-length performance at the Imagining America Conference.

2013
- Sibusiso Ndebele, Correctional Services Minister of South Africa, visits CCF for a roundtable discussion to learn more about educational programming for individuals who have been incarcerated.

2014
- CCF’s work with multiple partners of the EIO Coalition persuades the University of New York to ban the box on its admissions applications.
- Senator Brian Schatz introduces the REAL Act, turning the Coalition’s attention toward Pell CCF begins to grow its Board of Directors, adding new energy and creativity.

2015
- CCF hosts a regional conference in collaboration with national partners. Several members of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council attended to speak to directly impacted people in the Northeast.
- Under the leadership of Melanie Steinhardt, CCF enhances its development and communications capacity.

2016
- CCF’s work with multiple partners of the EIO Coalition persuades the University of New York to ban the box on its admissions applications.
- Senator Brian Schatz introduces the REAL Act, turning the Coalition’s attention toward Pell CCF begins to grow its Board of Directors, adding new energy and creativity.

2017
- CCF launches THRIVE, a technical assistance program conceived by Lettisha Boyd while she was an Academic Counselor.
- CCF receives its first major award from the New York City Council and joins the AT! Coalition CASA.

2018
- CCF launches Women Influencing Systems & History (WISH), an organizing and legislative advocacy training program for women impacted by incarceration.
- CCF garners the attention and support of new philanthropists, including The Chan Zuckerberg initiative, Novo Foundation, and Orange is the New Black’s Poussey Washington Fund.
- CCF wins a major investment from the Justice Advocacy Team to support a criminal justice initiative of the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office to build out its Peer Mentoring, Career Advancement, and Multi-Gen Programs.
- CCF Hires Deputy Executive Director, Les Hayden to help build an operations infrastructure in line with the CCF growth.

2019
- CCF launches the Career Advancement Program.
- CCF launches a formalized Multi-Generational Program.
- Under Stephanie Bazel’s Leadership, CCF’s Policy & Advocacy team collaborates with the Brennan Center to organize a briefing on Pell Grants for incarcerated students, filling the largest room on Capitol Hill with advocates.
- In partnership with leaders from eight other organizations, Vivian Nixon helps coordinate Justice Votes, the first-ever presidential candidate town hall, before an audience composed only of people impacted by the criminal legal system.
- CCF founder, Barbara Martinsons retires from CCF’s Board of Directors after many years of devotion.

2020
- CCF expands eligibility requirements making our College & Career Programs available to women with any direct criminal legal involvement.
- CCF launches Peer Mentoring Program.
- CCF launches Justice Votes NY (powered by FICPFM) to empower justice-involved people at the polls.
- CCF creates EquityJustice as a vehicle to move our policy and advocacy work forward.
COVID-19 Emergency Response

CCF, like many, began working remotely by mid-March 2020, and although none of us know how long this health emergency will last, we remain available and committed to the women we serve.

In response to the increased challenges our women faced in light of COVID-19, we launched a COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund. With the support of our community, we provided additional support to 24 women. An additional 18 individuals were assisted with cash awards from CCF’s Executive Directors Almoner Fund. Our team also put together a list of COVID-19 resources for our students and community at large, with information and resources related to unemployment, housing rights, the federal stimulus bill, and more.

CCF’s Policy & Advocacy team has historically advocated for access to higher education for currently and formerly incarcerated people – with the advent of COVID-19, we expanded our focus to respond to our community’s urgent needs. CCF is leading coronavirus-related advocacy with our partners, which lays the groundwork for stronger services and rights for incarcerated people following the crises.

- #ConnectingFamiliesNOW Campaign (Steering Committee Member)
  to stop the cost of telecommunications as visitation has been suspended due to pandemic.

- New York Justice for Women Task Force (Steering Committee Member)
  Focused on raising awareness on every aspect of getting women out of jail and prison, including advocacy, clemency, and parole decisions. 44% of coalition members are CCF Alumnae, having been through our WISH advocacy training program and/or our Academic Support Program.

- JustLeadershipUSA.
  We have been working closely with JLUSA on their #JustUs Campaign focused on developing emergency action plans for state jails and prisons in response to natural disasters.

- Forward Justice
  (The Formerly Incarcerated, Convicted Peoples and Families Movement). Working closely with our partners to support stopgap housing and reentry for COVID-19 releases of incarcerated people.

- Provided Federal Input on multiple bills aimed at decarceration during the COVID-19 Pandemic, including:
  - Emergency Community Supervision Act (Senator Cory Booker/Representative Hakeem Jeffries)
  - COVID-19 Correctional Facility Emergency Response Act of 2020 (Representative Jerrod Nadler)
  - Dismantle Mass Incarceration For Public Health Act of 2020 (Representative Rashida Tlaib)
Letter from the Board Chair

More than two decades ago, a childhood friend, Barbara Martinsons, mentioned to me that she was mentoring women at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The women were smart, interesting, and eager to learn, she said, but when they came out, they were unlikely to be able to follow up with their education without a push and some support. Barbara created College & Community Fellowship (CCF), and today, in our 20th year, more than 350 women have earned degrees from institutions of higher learning - reaching thousands through our varied programs.

In addition to Barbara’s insight and commitment, much of the credit goes to our extraordinary Executive Director, Vivian Nixon and the terrific staff she has assembled. They’re helped by a dedicated board of directors and together form a team that is devoted to the achievement of our mission, the sust ever-widening constituency. I’m proud of all of them, particularly how they have pulled together during this past year, which clearly is the most challenging of our existence.

As you see as you read through this annual report, we now offer an expanding range of services to more women through a variety of programs. We are engaged nationally with major organizations working collaboratively to achieve a more just environment for those with criminal justice involvement. We have expanded our work geographically through our THRIVE program and our WISH program is training women to be advocates for a more just criminal justice system. And throughout this difficult time our donors have stayed with us and even increased their funding, so we start our 2021 fiscal year on a sound financial basis.

I’m optimistic about what we’ll be able to accomplish this year. We are looking forward to sharing our story with many of you this fall at a virtual gala that celebrates 20 years of growth and service.

We have a lot more to do before we’re done. We’re ready and, I believe, able.

Peter Bakstansky

Board

Peter Bakstansky, Chair
Onyekachi (Kaichi) Akoma
Cynthia Alberts
Irene Branche
Barat Dickman
Liza Eaton
Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin
Jacki Kelly
Jane Pauls
Rashida Richardson
Tony Smith
Dawn Walker
Bridget Williams
Barbara Martinsons (founder)
New York City Advocacy
We are proud to have partnered with NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams on a bill that makes access to personal information and documentation like school transcripts and government records free to people coming out of prison.

"Working closely with the Public Advocate’s office, we were able to apply our on-the-ground experience to help not only eliminate unique barriers needed to survive, but also allow directly impacted people to pursue a college degree. We call on the City Council to pass this legislation as a necessary next step in their continued efforts to decarcerate New York City." - Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director

First-ever Democratic Presidential Candidate Town Hall on Criminal Justice Reform
In October 2019, Vivian Nixon alongside Norris Henderson, Daryl Atkinson, and DeAnna Hoskins moderated the first-ever Democratic Presidential Candidate Town Hall on criminal justice reform. The event, organized by Voters Organized to Educate, took place at Eastern State Penitentiary Museum (formerly a prison) in Philadelphia with questions from impacted people and their families.

"They’re not talking to us. You certainly wouldn’t have a conversation with veterans without sitting down with veteran groups—that would be absurd. But I have never seen or heard of a candidate sitting down with people who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system."

—Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director

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—Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director
### Financials: Statement of Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets:</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$ 879,475</td>
<td>$ 581,323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions, grants and other receivables</td>
<td>861,993</td>
<td>578,783</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
<td>1,064,205</td>
<td>1,099,753</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>33,322</td>
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<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
<td>11,936</td>
<td>30,685</td>
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<td>Security deposits</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>$2,852,969</td>
<td>$2,317,018</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets:</th>
<th>June 30, 2019</th>
<th>June 30, 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$129,731</td>
<td>$117,162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>288,715</td>
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<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>418,446</td>
<td>117,162</td>
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<td>Commitments and contingencies (see notes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions</td>
<td>1,775,257</td>
<td>1,539,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With donor restrictions</td>
<td>659,266</td>
<td>660,542</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>$2,852,969</td>
<td>$2,317,018</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Financials: Statement of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and Revenues:</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without Donor Restrictions</td>
<td>With Donor Restrictions</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$819,971</td>
<td>$625,423</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government grants and contracts</td>
<td>1,069,569</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program service revenue</td>
<td>125,981</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government subcontracts</td>
<td>117,759</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special events:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: related direct costs</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net special event income</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income/(loss)</td>
<td>(30,227)</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>(252)</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restriction:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of purpose restrictions</td>
<td>405,699</td>
<td>(405,699)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expiration of time restrictions</td>
<td>221,000</td>
<td>(221,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS</strong></td>
<td>$626,699</td>
<td>($626,600)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES</strong></td>
<td>$2,729,500</td>
<td>($1,276)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program services:</td>
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<tr>
<td>College &amp; career services</td>
<td>951,435</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy &amp; advocacy</td>
<td>550,525</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total program expenses</strong></td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting services:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
<td>439,258</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>301,251</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>2,493,557</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(Decrease) in net assets</td>
<td>235,943</td>
<td>(1,276)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>1,539,314</td>
<td>660,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>$1,775,257</td>
<td>$659,266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Racial Equity

June 2020, we have witnessed years of collective trauma and pain - rooted in generations of racial discrimination and a deeply flawed criminal legal system - pour out onto our streets. As an organization committed to centering the voices of directly impacted people, advocates for trauma-informed service delivery, and a leader in the transformative power of education, we know that this is not the time for incremental change but a reimagining of the criminal legal system as we know it.

We must not only dismantle an unjust system whose origin is intrinsically tied to oppression, but set our sights further, and demand resources in its place to liberate people through education and other means of social and economic advancement. From the time of slavery to the present day, our government has denied Black people access to education time and again as a means of oppression. Instead of spending money on an outdated, ineffective penal system that dates back to the slave patrol, we must provide education to those ensnared in this system and increase access to education to communities devastated by cyclical incarceration. Only then can we empower those, who for years have been disproportionately torn apart by America’s criminal legal system, to be the changemakers.

We recognize in this moment that Black women have continued to be the invisible population. So, we say Breonna Taylor should be alive today, George Floyd and countless others before them - should be alive today. As an organization, we will continue to invest in human capital, support community engagement, and extend our reach through meaningful partnerships that lend themselves to collective efficacy - because we know that when people impacted by the system have the necessary tools and resources they will succeed. Those in power must be held accountable for the actions and inactions that brought us to this moment. To do that, we must keep the protest alive and march from the streets into our respective voting booths.

For 20 years, we have been working at the intersection of racial justice and criminal legal reform. This episode in history commands that those who have lived in the trenches, on the front lines, enduring every type of sidelining imaginable, must have a voice.
Donors

Our work is only possible because of your support! Thank you for being part of the “community” in College & Community Fellowship.

Gifts $500,000+
Ascendium Education Group
Criminal Justice Investment Initiative
New York City Council Discretionary Funds

Gifts $150,000+
Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative
Kohlberg Foundation
Novo Foundation

Gifts $50,000+
JustLeadershipUSA
Laughing Gull Foundation
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
Novo Foundation
Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Gifts $25,000+
Baskin Family Foundation
Eugene M. Lang Foundation
Forward Justice
Harry Joe Brown Foundation
New York Women’s Foundation
Roy and Patricia Disney Family Foundation
Sills Family Foundation
The Tow Foundation
Weissberg Foundation

Gifts $15,000+
AD Philanthropic
Arts for Justice Fund,
a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
The Judy Family Foundation
The Poussey Washington Fund,
a project of GoFundMe.org

Gifts $5,000+
Laura and John Arnold
Peter Bakstansky (BM)
Demos
Liza Eaton (BM)
Elias Foundation
Frances Lear Foundation
Susan Karp and Paul Haahr
New York Foundation
NEO Philanthropy, Inc. Circle for Justice Innovations Fund
Jane Pauls (BM)

Gifts $1,000+
Charles Brainard
Lisa Borodovsky
Central Synagogue
Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust
Amy Glickman
Sue Kaplan
David Karnovsky
Michael Kayser
Jacki Kelly (BM)
Chauncey Parker
Phyllis & Orlando Rodriguez
Rosalind & Alfred Berger Foundation
Anthony Smith (BM)
Dawn Walker (BM)
Bridget Williams (BM)

Gifts $500+
Anonymous
Onyekachi Akoma (BM)
Kalpana Bhandarkar
Debbie Breckenridge
Angela A. Diaz
Max Kenner and Sarah Botstein
Ralph Marash
Robert Pellegrino
Mamta Prakash
The Sal and Doris R. Swiss Foundation
MISSION STATEMENT:

College & Community Fellowship enables women with criminal justice involvement to earn their college degrees so that they, their families, and their communities can thrive. We advocate for equity and opportunity for the communities we serve.