

W P A T O D A Y



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WOMEN'S PRISON ASSOCIATION
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Message from the Executive Director, Georgia Lerner

Every day, I have conversations with people who are interested in learning about the work that we do at the Women's Prison Association (WPA). I tell them that our women need what we all need: a place to live, a way to support themselves, positive relationships, and access to health care. WPA helps women at all stages of criminal justice involvement by providing an alternative to incarceration, and supporting them during incarceration and in the critical weeks and months after release. WPA is also there to help women create and take advantage of an expanded realm of opportunities for growth and development long after their contact with the criminal justice system has ended.

Some of our most exciting work is happening in East New York, Brooklyn. There, we recently launched the Parent Child Home Program, bringing our staff to women's homes to help them improve their children's literacy and readiness for school. Our Family Preservation Program, now in its eighth year, provides home-based assistance to mothers who are at risk of both criminal justice involvement and of having their children removed to foster care.

Through our work, we are keeping families together and helping to prevent incarceration. I am very pleased to share that in the past year, WPA has helped over 2,500 women and 400 children, in their homes and communities, to live self-sufficient, law-abiding lives. In these uncertain economic times, WPA needs your help more than ever. Thank you for your ongoing generosity and future support.

WPA honors Brick Church

The Brick Presbyterian Church of New York City was the recipient of WPA's 2008 Sarah Powell Huntington Leadership Award. The award was presented at WPA's Annual Benefit Dinner at the Yale Club on June 4th. A long-time supporter of WPA, Brick Church was recognized for its vision, compassion, and commitment to public welfare



(Above): WPA Board Member Valerie S. Mason and WPA Board President Gena Lovett present the Sarah Powell Huntington Leadership Award to Rev. Michael L. Lindvall of Brick Church.

Singing, Testifying, and Walking for Women



Spoken word, heartfelt song, and powerful testimony rang out at two recent events held by The Fish and The Lion Productions, a NYC-based art collaborative. These two benefits for WPA, staged in the East Village and Bedford Stuyvesant, were organized to celebrate female artists and raise awareness about women in prison. WPA staff member Dwanika Bryant (left) spoke to a packed house at both events. Check the WPA website for information about future events and community partnerships.

WPA was represented proud and strong at this year's New York City AIDS Walk. WPA's team was among the 45,000 walkers who raised a record-breaking \$7,058,497. Many of the women who come through the doors of WPA are affected by HIV/AIDS, and the annual walk is an opportunity for our clients, staff, and supporters to contribute to eradication of the epidemic.



Juggling Act: Reentry, Employment, and Everyday Life

After coming home from prison, how do women juggle having to care for children, maintain sobriety, and report to parole – all while looking for work? WPA's latest research publication, *Women, Reentry, and Everyday Life: Time to Work?* tries to answer this question. The study examines women's efforts to find and keep employment after incarceration, as they navigate the time demands imposed upon them by multiple public systems. The authors suggest ways that service providers can be more responsive to women's real needs in reentry, and offer strategies for helping women better manage their time in the critical period following release from incarceration. Download the full report at: www.wpaonline.org/resources/publications



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Back on "The Island", With a Positive Message to Share

"Incarcerated women listen to other women who've been there; they take what we say to heart", a member of WPA's Women's Advocacy Project (WAP) explains the group's recent speaking engagement at Riker's Island.

The WAP's visit marked the first time that the group had spoken to women who are currently incarcerated. Presenting before an audience of nearly 40 women, the WAP members shared the challenges they had faced during reentry, and spoke of the positive impact that advocating for others had made in their lives. "It is important for us to talk to the women still inside. Our encouragement can make a difference", said a WAP member. The women are planning to return to Rikers on a regular basis starting later this fall.

WAP is a year-long public policy and advocacy course for formerly incarcerated women. WAP members learn about policy issues and then create their own policy recommendations, which they share with public officials and community members. Over the past five years, WAP members have lobbied in Albany, met with City commissioners, and appeared in such media outlets as the *Wall Street Journal*, WNYC's *Brian Lehrer Show* and NPR's *Talk of the Nation*. WAP is a project of the Institute on Women & Criminal Justice, WPA's national public policy center.

YOUR DONATION TO WPA MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Your support makes a real difference in the lives of those we are privileged to serve!

- * **\$15** pays for an educational/recreational outing or a birthday party for one child in residence at our Sarah Powell Huntington House (SPHH).
- * **\$20** per night provides a safe place to stay at the YWCA for a woman returning from jail or prison.
- * **\$45** underwrites one peer escort trip from the prison gate. An escort meets a woman at release, takes her out for a hot meal, and accompanies her to WPA's office to enroll in our programs.
- * **\$75** pays for a kitchen or a bedding kit, which includes the necessary materials for a woman to prepare meals in her own kitchen and have fresh, new linen for her bed.

To donate online, go to <https://www.wpaonline.org>

For more information about WPA's events and programs, please contact the Development Department at (646) 292-7753 or via email at development@wpaonline.org.

The Women's Prison Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Financial contributions are tax-deductible.