



**"No More Victims"**  
**Spring 2022**

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Without Parole For  
Children And  
Emerging Adults**

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# **COALITION TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM**

## **Inside/Out**

**a Coalition to Reduce Recidivism Publication**

**"A word from the Inside" - by Leo Cardez (pen name)**

### **TINY MIRACLES**

There are less than a handful of jobs those with sex offenses qualify for in prison: janitor and kitchen work. All the good jobs I'd like, tutor, law library, general library, teacher's asst. etc., are beyond my reach...and it's beyond frustrating. I do what I can: I pray, I network, I even wrote letters to the Warden, Director of the Dept. of Prisons and Governor; but the answer is always the same: "According to department regulations you do not qualify." Then COVID hit and all the rules went out the window.

Inmates were dropping like flies, getting sick, being sent to the hospital, even dying -- the prison could no longer be so picky about who deserved what job if they wanted to keep the prison running (FYI-inmates essentially run the prison, the officers are "supervisors"). And so it came to pass that I started working as a essential worker in the prison's quarantine hospital wing.

A job few others wanted and was especially physically and emotionally taxing. I spent 8-12 hours in full PPE, sweating pounds of water weight daily, transporting and caring for sick COVID positive inmates all over the prison facility. It was a gut wrenching experience as I literally carried one friend's limp dead body to a waiting ambulance and then watched another take his last breath while sitting on his cot in his cell...waiting for medical attention that would not arrive in time. Eventually, we would peak and reach herd immunity. They no longer needed me.

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### **Repatriate Journey - by Alex Roman**



**How did you change your life for the better?**

The Coalition group were tremendously helpful in assisting me with any questions or concerns in regards to my felony and they were able to help me felony conviction sealed.

**What have you done or are you doing to help others?**

I did some charity work to helping Rehab homes for Veterans and numerous other volunteer events.

**Any advice for individuals who may be going through what you did?**

My advised is never to give up. There is hope out there and people and groups that are willing to help out. There are also employment opportunities and companies that are willing to hire individuals with previous convictions.

**How has the Coalition helped you?**

It opened up the doors for me to be able to seek better employment opportunities.

**"A conviction does not have to be a life sentence."**

# HB 1064: Abolish Life Without Parole For Children And Emerging Adults

HB 1064 would prevent life without parole sentences for most people 20 and younger. It creates an opportunity for people younger than 21 when convicted and sentenced to first-degree murder or a term of natural life imprisonment to be eligible for parole review. People could petition the Prisoner Review Board for parole consideration after serving 40 years or more of their sentences.



**HB 1064**

**HOUSE SPONSER: Representative Rita Mayfield (D)**



## Why We Need to Abolish Juvenile Life Without Parole Sentences in Illinois:

When imposing a sentence of life without parole (LWOP), a judge decides a child is beyond rehabilitation. Consider the following.

- **SCIENCE:** Both scientific and actuarial studies have proven the brain continues developing until a person is around 25 years old.
- **SCOTUS:** The US Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasized children are “categorically less culpable” than adults and are **more capable of rehabilitation**.
- **ILLINOIS COURTS:** Illinois courts have affirmed SCOTUS and now face the difficult task of untangling decades of excessive sentencing.
- We have found **no research that demonstrates juvenile life without parole sentences (JLWOP) have a deterrent effect on crime**.
- **INTERNATIONAL LAW:** The practice of sentencing children to LWOP violates Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- Research shows a **recidivism rate of just 1.14%** among people sentenced to JLWOP and then subsequently released.

## Solution:

**We can build on recent legislative progress in Illinois to align our state with science, court decisions, and international standards.** This bill would prohibit LWOP sentences for most youth who were under the age of 21 when their crimes were committed. **Juveniles could still serve life in prison.** This bill simply ensures they have a limited opportunity to be considered for parole. **The legislation would not be retroactive.** Here’s what it would do:

- Most youth given long terms of incarceration would have the opportunity to go before the Prisoner Review Board after 10 years and would then be allowed to seek parole two more times—unless they’ve been convicted of one of a handful of crimes (exceptions outlined below).
- Youth convicted of predatory criminal sexual assault of a child would not be eligible for parole under this bill.
- Youth convicted of aggravated criminal sexual assault and most forms of first-degree murder would be eligible for parole after 20 years, and once more after another 10 years.
- Youth with life sentences would be eligible for review after 40 years.

The Youthful Parole Bill, HB 531, now Public Act 100-1182, is one of the most significant accomplishments of the General Assembly and Governor’s Office. HB 1064 is a natural progression to ensure no children are sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

Springfield Contact: Dan Johnson at 312-933-4890 (call or text)

## Upcoming Coalition Meetings

Coalition to Reduce Recidivism Public Meetings are held every third Monday, 8:30am - 10:00am via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 851 6885 5041 - Passcode: 257717

Please consider joining the growing movement in support of the formerly incarcerated. Annual membership dues go directly to toward supportive services on their behalf. Membership dues are as follows:

### 2022 Coalition Members:

The Coalition to Reduce Recidivism is a collective unit of social service agencies, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, medical institutions, criminal justice institutions, entrepreneurs, community advocates, governmental entities and repatriates; all geared to work with returning prisoners and help them become productive members of society.

- Corporate Membership \$500
- Faith Base Membership \$500 (Level 3) 301+
- Faith Base Membership \$250 (Level 2) 101 - 300
- Faith Base Membership \$150 (Level 1) 1 - 100
- Agency Membership \$150
- Board of Directors \$100
- Individual Membership \$50
- Seniors (65+)
- Student & Other \$20

#### Chairperson

- ◆ Marc L. Jones  
Waukegan Township Supervisor

#### Founder

- ◆ Patricia Jones, M. Ed.  
Waukegan Township Supervisor

#### Coalition Officers:

- ◆ Dr. Mary Roberson, EdD., President  
Executive Director, NIRCO
- ◆ Mary Turley, Immediate Past  
President, UMMA Center
- ◆ Stella Jones, Vice President  
Community Renewal Society
- ◆ Warren Thomas, 2nd VP  
College of Lake County
- ◆ Dr. Sylvia Johnson Jones, 2nd VP  
College of Lake County
- ◆ Kathryn Vanden Berk, Esq.,  
Secretary & Treasurer, Coalition  
Legal, LLC.
- ◆ Dr. Gary Oltmans, Legislative Chair,  
Rosalind Franklin University  
(Retired)

#### Honorary Chairman:

Il. State Representative Rita Mayfield

#### Executive Committee Members:

- Gwen Beckwith, Principal (Retired)
- Arlene Day, Teacher (Retired)
- Jacqueline Small, Catholic Charities
- Demar A. Harris, Lake County  
Workforce Development
- Erin Cartwright Weinstein, Clerk of  
the Circuit Court, Lake County IL

#### Agencies Members:

- Lake County Veterans & Family  
Services
- Tenth Congressional District  
Democrats
- UMMA Center
- Community Partners for Affordable  
Housing
- Community Renewal Society
- Community Action Partnership of LC
- Southwire
- Faith in Place
- Building Families Together
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
- Warren Township Democrats
- Indivisible Western Lake County

#### Municipal Members:

- Waukegan Township
- Zion Township
- City of North Chicago
- Shields Township
- Libertyville Township
- Benton Township
- Grant Township
- Vernon Township
- West Deerfield Township

#### Faith Base Members:

- First Baptist Church of Lake Forest
- Mt. Sinai Baptist Church

#### Corporate Members:

- ◆ Harris & Harris



“Inside/Out” is a publication of the Coalition to Reduce Recidivism, which is based in Lake County, IL. The newsletter intends to raise awareness and discuss issues that affect the lives of men, women and children who are currently incarcerated and/or have been released from incarceration.

The views and opinions included herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Coalition’s Executive Board or its individual members. If you have news or updates for our newsletter, you can send them to: [coalition2rr@waukegantownship.com](mailto:coalition2rr@waukegantownship.com).

Reach Us; By Phone: (847) 244-4900, Fax: (874) 244-5185, or email: [coalition2rr@waukegantownship.com](mailto:coalition2rr@waukegantownship.com). Our website is [www.reducerecidivism.org](http://www.reducerecidivism.org). The mailing address is Coalition to Reduce Recidivism, 149 S. Genesee St. Waukegan, IL 60085.





Throughout 2021, the Coalition to Reduce Recidivism sought to bring awareness to the needs of women after incarceration. When a woman is incarcerated it not only affects her as an individual, but the entire family unit as well as the community in which she resides. Our goal was to provide a sense of empowerment and a source of encouragement and to let women know that support is readily available. As issues are addressed, healing takes place and communities are strengthened. By presenting our series of Virtual Women's Round Table events, designed to not only bring awareness to the plight women face, but offer solutions, through peer-to-peer discussions - we were able to do just that.

**February 2021:** our inaugural event, featuring Dr. Michelle Vaughn, our dynamic keynote speaker; along with moderator, Dr. Mary Roberson (Executive Director, NIRCO) and four panelists. Each woman on the panel, Denise Acevedo, Tina Arnold, Johnnie Jenkins and Carrie Panos allowed us to peer inside of aspects of their personal journey before, during and after incarceration. Each story was uniquely powerful, leaving the audience speechless and yearning to understand each individual story.

**May 2021:** the second Virtual Women's Round Table, moderated by Coalition Board President, Dr. Mary Roberson, coincided with Mother's Day weekend. A focused discussion on Adult-Children Relationships of women after incarceration, with the staggering and heart-breaking statistics regarding the children of incarcerated mothers. The Coalition received the support of the Lake County Sheriff's Office, and as a special treat, each detainee was the recipient of a handmade Mother's Day card, created by the fifth-grade students at Waukegan's Clearview Elementary School. The women were also gifted with copies of the book, *"A Knock at Midnight: A Story of Hope Justice, and Freedom"* written by Brittney K. Barnett, Esq., one of the event panelists. The remaining panelists, mother and daughter groups Ms. Celia Colon and daughter Amanda Avila; Ms. Evelyn Fulbright (mother of Brittany K. Barnett) and Elizabeth Taylor and her daughter Angie Gustosson. Our Keynote speaker, Ms. Tiffiney Ross, Minister and Funding Development Coordinator for R.I.S.E. Re-entry Prison Ministries, shared her

# Women's Virtual Round Table

experience of being incarcerated and pregnant, as well as how her environment impacted her choices.

**September 2021:** was the third segment of Virtual Women's Round Table series with its emphasis on the unspoken yet pressing issue of Domestic Violence. Ms. Rebecca Weinger, North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic shared with the audience in very discrete, non-descriptive ways of how women are aided. "Domestic violence is not always obvious and takes on several forms and methods". Our panelists, Takesha Newsome Tyra Randle, Tara Evans, Chantel Marie and our dynamic keynote speaker, Willette Benford of Live Free Illinois, participated as and shared candidly their respective journeys of domestic violence survival and, in the case of Ms. Bedford, being incarcerated for over 2 decades. Willette has turned her pain into power and speaks up for the needs of women currently imprisoned. "A person who asks the question why she doesn't just leave, really does not understand what a woman goes through while living this horrible experience".





## COALITION LEGAL, LLC.

This is one example of why Coalition Legal's mission is so important: Client JM has had a clean record for 30 years. He has not been arrested since 1992, however, he just lost a good job because in 1992 he was convicted of theft. He was given probation rather than jail time. He paid his fine and his probation terminated satisfactorily. Yet, 30 years later, that one case was used by a prospective employer to deny JM a job.

Not everyone has this trouble. We understand that many local employers are overlooking criminal backgrounds because they need the help – now! But that job may be temporary and when the current tight labor market loosens up, it too, may disappear.

For many reasons, this is the perfect time to get your criminal record expunged or sealed. If you are looking for a job, you can respond “no” to the question of “have you ever been convicted of a crime?” If you have a job, your job will help a judge decide that you are a good candidate to have your records expunged or sealed.

We have worked with almost 500 people in the past five years. Most of them live in Lake County, however, we have had clients from Texas, Florida, California, Georgia and Indiana, all of whom can appear in court remotely, via Zoom, as easily as if they lived in Waukegan. We do not charge for our legal services and if you qualify for a fee waiver, we can file petitions at no cost to you. If you need a drug test because of a drug conviction, we can obtain a drug test for you at no cost. Please go to our website at [www.coalitionlegal.org](http://www.coalitionlegal.org) to sign up for services.

Non-convictions (nolle pros, successful supervisions, acquittals) are expungable. Convictions (fines, probation, jail/prison) can be sealed, but not expunged.

Virtual interviews are available. For further information, please call 847-244-4900 or visit [www.coalitionlegal.org](http://www.coalitionlegal.org).

### Coalition Legal Services:

- Coalition Legal helps people expunge or seal eligible criminal records as authorized by Illinois law. We also assist with Clemency Filings to the Governor.
- Collaboration with Waukegan Township for workforce referrals and job placement.
- FBI Background checks and fingerprinting services.

**Fingerprinting services are provided at the Supervisor's Office**, located at 149 S. Genesee Street, Waukegan, IL. Individuals needing fingerprint records for the expungement or sealing process would need to first begin the initial sealing process and the attorney will arrange for them to come for fingerprints if needed. There is a fee of \$18 for these services.

Attention: The Lake County Court offers Zoom conference court appearances. Please contact the Coalition Legal, LLC. at 847-244-4900 for more information regarding court dates and other services.



## C2RR Virtual Fundraiser

Although society is now, for the most part, “re-opened” that was not yet the case on October 8, 2021, when we held our second virtual fundraising event. 2021's fundraiser was one of our highest attended (virtual) events with participants spanning all sectors of society. First Lady of Illinois, MK Pritzker opened with an outstanding welcome address, sharing her passion for incarcerated women and their families. Several Elected Officials graced our virtual stage: U.S. Congressman Brad Schneider, Lake County Sheriff John Idleburg, Mayor Nancy Rotering (Highland Park) all shared their perspectives based on our theme, **“Ripples of Hope”**

derived from a quote by the late Robert F. Kennedy: **“Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.”**

Miss USA 2020, Asya Branch, shared how her family dynamic was affected by her father's 10 + years of incarceration. Our guest speaker Yaacov Delaney, Director of Justice & Fairness, Lieutenant for Lt. Governor Stratton's Office, shared a portion of his journey after over seventeen years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The highlight of the entire program was Dr. Reuben Miller, University of Chicago Professor, Sociologist and Chaplain for Cook County jail, as he shared his incredible experiences along with alarming data, on the disproportionate number of people of color that are detained, simply because of the zip code where they reside. His book, **“Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration”** will forever change the way we look at life after prison in America. The 19th Annual Coalition Fundraiser Event will take place on October 7, 2022, more details to come.

**“A conviction does not have to be a life sentence.”**



## "A word from the Inside" - by Leo Cardez (pen name)

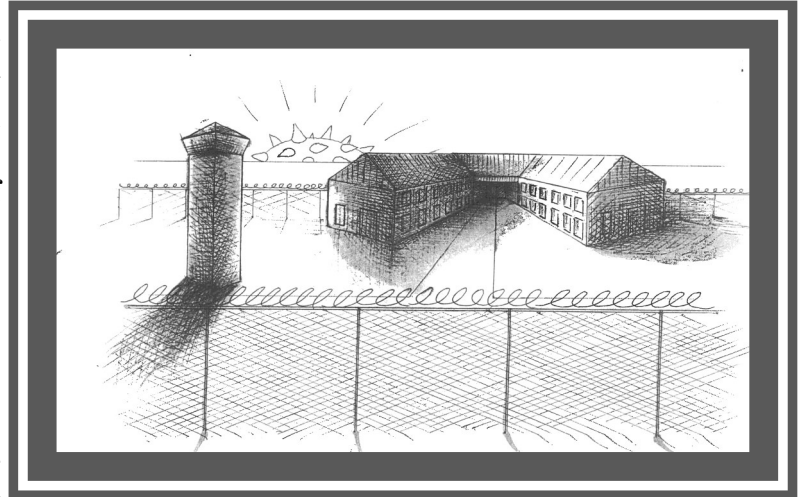
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I heard about a newly created "clerk" role running the warehouse/general store. In prison, "clerks" are the top of the food chain; another way of saying manager. There are only 3 clerk roles that essentially run all the departments. Although I knew what the answer would be, I sent in my application and request slip. You can imagine my surprise when I received a notice that I had been submitted for a vote sheet. A vote sheet is where the dept. heads vote on whether they approve of you in the role: they check your job history, disciplinary background; your case and sentencing, etc.

I was sure I would be denied, but was thrilled to even be considered. I saw this as progress. This particular role was especially unique as it was technically off-grounds, on the outside of the inner perimeter fence - only a VERY select few qualify for "outside clearance" and I had way too much time left before I would ever even be considered. So, I didn't even give it a second thought.

And then lightning struck, the stars aligned, and God smiled on His humble son. I got the job! During the height of our virus outbreak, when we were averaging up to 200 positive cases a day and everyone else was locked down. I was crisscrossing the prison in my white gown, blue gloves and footies, face shield and hair net moving inmates (and all their belongings) from one building to another. From their housing building to the quarantine building, then sometimes to the hospital building, and then eventually back to their housing units (the lucky ones anyway). I worked 7 days a week, double shifts, often forgetting to eat as I was overwhelmed with work. The prison was literally a ghost town, except for yours truly hoofing it to and fro. It seems the officers, warden, and even a visiting State Rep. noticed that one random guy working his tail off without complaint and they remembered my name when the time came to vote. Once unbreakable rules, they had made an exception.

# TINY MIRACLES




NIRCO  
Northern Illinois  
Recovery Community  
Organization

Promoting Principles of Recovery

**SOMETHING DIFFERENT**  
**ALL RECOVERY MEETING**  
**EVERY TUESDAY @ 6PM**



**All Are Welcome!**  
**Individual and Families Impacted By**  
**Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health**  
Virtual Recovery Meeting via ZOOM  
Join URL: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/807367112>  
Meeting ID: 730-223-943  
Passcode: 038490  
Prefer to Call In? Dial: 312-626-6799






## ADULT EDUCATION TESTING IS NOW HIRING!

# Work at a college whose vision matches yours.

We are a community college in the far northern suburbs of Chicago, with a diverse student population averaging 15,000 full- and part-time students from all backgrounds and financial circumstances. Over half of our credit students are minorities and of those 73% are Hispanic/Latino.

**We are committed to a culture of equity that values EVERY member of our college community.**

If you share our vision of a welcoming, encouraging and excellence-seeking institution, we want to hear from you.

Apply online at [jobs.clcillinois.edu](https://jobs.clcillinois.edu)



The College of Lake County is an equal opportunity employer and has a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, it seeks a broad spectrum of candidates including minorities, women and people with disabilities. EOE/AA/M/F/D

### SPECIALIST POSITION OPENINGS (2 Positions Available)

- [Enrollment Services Specialist](#)
- [Enrollment Services Specialist](#)

### CLASSIFIED POSITION OPENING

- [Enrollment Services Assistant](#)

### Why Work at CLC?

The College of Lake County (CLC) is a comprehensive community college located in northeastern Illinois committed to being an innovative educational institution providing life-changing paths for our students by offering exceptional learning experiences.

The college is widely recognized for student success, business and community partnerships and for the achievements of our faculty, staff and alumni. Long-known as an employer of choice in Lake County, CLC was ranked #15 on the Forbes list of Top 100 Employers in the State of Illinois for 2019.

### Who Works at CLC?

A GREAT TEAM OF EMPLOYEES!

### Contact

Human Resources  
[jobs@clcillinois.edu](mailto:jobs@clcillinois.edu)  
 (847) 543-2065  
<https://jobs.clcillinois.edu>

#### GRAYSLAKE CAMPUS

19351 W. Washington St., Grayslake, IL 60030

#### SOUTHLAKE CAMPUS

1120 S. Milwaukee Ave., Vernon Hills, IL 60061

#### LAKESHORE CAMPUS

33 N. Genesee St., Waukegan, IL 60085

#### ONLINE

[www.clcillinois.edu](http://www.clcillinois.edu)





Marc L. Jones, Chair  
Waukegan Township  
Supervisor

## Message From the Chairman of C2RR:

The Coalition to Reduce Recidivism continues to offer help, healing, and hope to those who have experienced incarceration. This is accomplished in a variety of ways, including but not limited to providing employment opportunities to returning citizens. Becoming gainfully employed after incarceration allows an individual the opportunity to reclaim a sense of dignity and worth. However, this process presents many obstacles:

- ◆ Individual lack of job skills
- ◆ Employment readiness
- ◆ Employer reluctance due to the stigma associated with past criminal activity

Waukegan Township seeks to alleviate both barriers with the programs and services provided through the Coalition to Reduce Recidivism and Coalition Legal, LLC.

In 2022, the Coalition is anticipating expanding its reach through its programs and services.

### Scheduled Events:

- ◆ Steps Towards Overcoming Homelessness - May 6, 2022
- ◆ Men's Round Table: #RealTalkForMen - June 17, 2022 - A multi-general discussion of men's issues.
- ◆ Youth Summit: July 2022 (day TBD)
- ◆ Expungement Workshop - August 2022 (day TBD)
- ◆ Staying Clean: Substance Abuse and Incarceration - Sept. 2022 (day TBD)
- ◆ Women's Round Table Event: Women After Incarceration (Series)



## Criminal Justice Scholarship Application

### Attention:

- ◆ *Students graduating from Lake County's regional high schools or current Illinois college students (must be a resident of Lake County).*
- ◆ *Students continuing education at any accredited institution of higher learning (not applicable to online universities).*
- ◆ *Students pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice or a related field of study.*

\$500.00 awarded  
to the  
scholarship recipient!

Apply online at [www.waukegantownship.com](http://www.waukegantownship.com)

For more information, call 847-244-4900 or email [coalition2rr@waukegantownship.com](mailto:coalition2rr@waukegantownship.com).



## From the Desk of the President of C2RR:

As we continue the work of the Coalition to Reduce Recidivism I am honored to be in this role for another term. Our communities have endured quite a bit over the last two years, however, our resiliency has shone through some dark times. Through it all we have made it to this point. Let's push full steam ahead and soar to our highest point!!!

All the best,

Dr. Mary Roberson, Ed. D.