



IDVAAC
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Institute on Domestic Violence In
The African American Community

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
University of Minnesota
School of Social Work
1404 Gortner Avenue
290 Peters Hall
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: 612.624-5357
Toll Free: 1.877.NIDVAAC (643.8222)
Fax: 612.624.9201
www.idvaac.org

MEDIA CONTACT:

LYNNE P. MATTHEWS

410.365.2751

lpmatthews@idvaac.org

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2009

Safe Return Initiative to Address Prisoner Re-entry and Domestic Violence

St. Paul, MN -- Each year, more than 650,000 prisoners nationwide are released from state and federal correctional institutions. These individuals face myriad challenges post-release, including finding housing, maintaining employment, complying with parole stipulations, re-connecting with family members, and completing treatment programs for various issues. While such issues are essential to ex-offenders' successful re-entry, one concern remains largely unaddressed among this population: the potential for domestic violence among intimate partners.

To address various topics related to prisoner re-entry and domestic violence, the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention & Treatment Board and the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) will host two gatherings in Detroit, Michigan.

The first convening, *Getting Out, or Coming Home?*, is a one-day symposium scheduled for August 19th. The daylong conference will address the following:

- Understanding the issue of domestic violence and prisoner re-entry, including perspectives offered by victims and perpetrators;
- Developing domestic violence programming in prison;
- Developing domestic violence programming for community supervision and parole populations;
- Developing support systems for victims of domestic violence;
- Developing community partners to address domestic violence, including batterer intervention programs, battered women's advocates and programs, and faith-based institutions; and

- Developing a collaborative model to address domestic violence from the prison to the community.

Presenters will include experts in criminal justice, corrections, prisoner re-entry, domestic violence, community supervision, batterer intervention, battered women's advocacy, and faith-based domestic violence support services. Also speaking at this conference is noted criminal justice activist Dr. Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who was portrayed by actor Denzel Washington in the 1999 biographical film *The Hurricane*.

The second convening, a two-day invitation only roundtable discussion with representatives from fourteen states across the country, is scheduled for August 20-21. The roundtable will engage domestic violence forerunners in discussions on promising practices aimed at protecting battered women whose partners are on parole or about to be released from prison. The convening will showcase successful re-entry, release, and parole programs, as well as model programs for victim services and batterer intervention. Field professionals will share solutions that have worked in their states and give invited guests a blueprint for developing successful programs in their own states. In addition, the roundtable will feature research findings from focus groups and interviews with incarcerated men and men on parole with a history of domestic abuse, as well as battered women in relationships with men who are in prison or on parole.

Dr. Oliver J. Williams, IDVAAC Executive Director, will serve as the event moderator. During this roundtable, the following panels will be convened:

- Lessons Learned from the Safe Return Initiative;
- Prisons and Domestic Violence Programming;
- Men, Re-entry, and Domestic Violence;
- Women in Relationships with Men on Parole; and
- Parole, Domestic Violence, and Victim Services.

The end-product of the two-day roundtable will be a targeted report that showcases best practices on a national level and outlines solutions and recommendations for successful re-entry programming. For more information on these two events or to register for the August 19th conference, please visit IDVAAC's web site at www.idvaac.org.



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