Dragonfly Thrift Boutique

DRAGONFLY IS TURNING ONE!

We can’t believe it has already been a whole year since Dragonfly opened. We are so happy with the community we have built. Thank you to everyone who has donated, shopped, and visited our store. We will be celebrating our one year anniversary Saturday March 23, 2019 with music, games, limited edition Dragonfly t-shirts and, of course, cake!

REMEMBER Every Saturday is 25% off the entire store. In honor of our anniversary and to thank our supporters and shoppers; there will be a Flash Sale that Saturday (03/23.) Everything will be 30% off from 12pm to 4pm. You don’t want to miss out!

Follow us on Instagram to keep up with our latest merchandise
This month our Community Connection event was a celebration of Black History Month with a discussion on "Being Black in Miami" Speaker Series! Panelists Leoni Hermantin, Rosibel Mejia, Dr. Mitzi Carter, and Eliott Jones shared their experiences of what it meant to be Black in Miami versus other cities. They spoke about the many labels people had given them in the past: black, mulatta, Haitian, mixed, and even white. Members of the audience also shared their experiences growing up in Miami, the South, and how traveling broadened their perspective.

Rosi challenged the members of audience to call privilege by its name and not stand idly by when people are being treated differently because of their race or ethnicity. She dared us all to be brave enough to ask uncomfortable questions such as "What did you mean by that?"

We are grateful to our speakers and guests for sharing and listening— that's what the LEAP Community Connection Series is all about. Next month we celebrate Women's History Month with book discussion of Bad Feminist. See you then!

Speakers
Leoni Hermantin

Leoni Hermantin has her Juris Doctorate from the University of California, Berkley. She was born in Haiti and grew up in New York City. She has spent the past 20 years working in varying aspects of community Development. She has served as the Director of the Haitian American Foundation, The Executive Director of the Lambi Fund focusing on the needs of the rural poor. She currently works in both Hiati and the US providing poor children with a quality education.

Rosibel Mejia

Rosibel Mejia is an Afro Latina poet, story writer and actress. She was born in the Dominican Republic and grew up in New York City. She graduated with a degree in Theater Arts from Scripps College. She runs a family business selling luxury goods in Latin America while teaching, mothering two children and appearing in local productions.

Mitzi Carter

Dr. Mitzi Carter is a Black/Okinawan and a cultural anthropologist who teaches East Asian Studies, Anthropology and on race and ethnicity at FIU. She received her doctorate from The University of California, Berkley and was featured in the New York Times series "Unpublished Black History." She has been a several time invited speaker to the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity.

Eliott Jones

Elliott Jones is a community leader and a graduate of St. John's University. He is the director of Community Engagement for the Annie Willis Scholarship which awards scholarships to students with disabilities to Historically Black Colleges, a foundation begun by his grandmother, Dr. Maya Angelou.
LEAP Ambassador Program

Are you a college or high school student interested in prison and criminal justice reform? women's empowerment? social justice?

If so, LEAP invites you to apply to the LEAP Ambassador Program.

The aim of the Ambassador Program is engagement and advocacy on South Florida campuses around LEAP’s mission of empowering women transition from prison.

Through this program, students will have the chance to make new friends, build their professional network, learn about the non profit sector and, of course, help make a positive impact in our community.

If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador for LEAP, please fill out the form below and plan to attend our next Volunteer and Ambassador Information Night March 14 @ 6:30 PM.

In the News

Last month’s newsletter introduced the First Step Act that was passed at the federal level. We called for similar legislation to pass at the state level and our calls were answered. Senator Brandes has filed the Florida First Step Act (SB642) which incorporates many of the same
components as the federal bill. A handful of criminal justice bills have been introduced for the 2019 session. This reform is long overdue, so please let your representatives know you support the efforts to reform the criminal justice and corrections system!

The Florida Senate Committee of Criminal Justice approved The Dignity for Incarcerated Women (SB332). The bill will guarantee hygiene products to women in prison. It is a small change but has a tremendous effect!

Advocacy Day. The Florida Rights Coalition’s Day of Advocacy is fast approaching! They are scheduled to leave for Tallahassee on March 12th. Advocates will specifically be speaking to representatives about the implementation of Amendment 4, easier access to re-entry employment and licensing, and raising the felony-theft threshold. We invite LEAP supporters to join our graduates. Let FRRC know you are interested in attending before March 1st, as they are organizing a bus from South Florida.

Sign up for Advocacy Day

Graduate Spotlight

Jackie Santos Baez graduated LEAP with Class 13. She currently lives in LaBelle, Florida with her family and her 13-year-old daughter and is just 3 short months away from graduating from cosmetology school! Upon graduation, Jackie plans on moving to Miami with her daughter, get a job at a salon and fully invest herself in LEAP. She wants to begin a support group where LEAP graduates can come together and lean on each other when needed. She wants to ensure that the family and love that was built during the in-prison program continues on the outside, despite the distance.

Of all of LEAP’s curriculum, Thinking for a Change, impacted Jackie the most by opening her mind and helping her see things in a different light. Her objective is to change society’s perceptions of women who have been in prison and guide them to start asking the questions that truly matter. Jackie is one of stars of The Compassion Project; so make sure to set a day in the summer to go see the exhibit and learn more about Jackie’s story and how she is changing people’s hearts and minds!

Photo taken by: Erika Blanca

Volunteer Spotlight

Joanie Gordon is a proud Miami native. She worked 37 years in the Miami-Dade Public Transit System and retired in 2017 as a bus traffic controller. Joanie lives by the philosophy that ‘before you leave this Earth, you need to do something for someone,’ and so she had been looking for a place to volunteer and "grow her wings." Then, three months ago, she came across LEAP on Channel 10 news and knew it was where she wanted to volunteer her time. She strongly believes that everyone deserves multiple chances to find themselves and better themselves. She loves the work she does and the positive impact she has on the lives of the graduates she helps.
here and interacting with the customers and staff. She feels at Dragonfly she is able to impart wisdom and give insight on ideas when the graduates are searching for input. We love her honest input and willingness to complete whatever task is needed.

Joanie will be taking a well deserved vacation to Japan in May! We can't wait to see the pictures. Thanks so much Joanie!

### Upcoming Events

Volunteer Information Nights are held the second Thursday of every month! Join us to learn more about LEAP and how you can volunteer to help out the ladies of LEAP.

The next Volunteer and Ambassador Information Night will be held on **Thursday, March 14 @ 630 PM**.

Join us for LEAP Community Connection Speaker Series on **Thursday, March 28 @ 6:30PM**.

The event will take place at Dragonfly Thrift Boutique:
3141 SW 8th Street
Miami, FL 33135

**PARKING IN REAR** of Value Storage Facility: code to gate is *7575327# and street parking is available on SW 7th.

**Save The Date!** LEAP Class 17 will be graduating Friday March 29, 2019! This group has worked so hard and we are so excited to see what the future has in store for them. If you wish to be a part of graduation, please reach out to us so we can put you on the invitation list!

**The Compassion Project** is a photography project which aims to upend the preconceptions our society has about incarcerated women. Who are they? How did they become incarcerated? Who and what have they left behind? What is possible for them now?

The show, **scheduled to debut at the Coral Gables Museum June 7, 2019**, will also feature an audio tour component for listening to the women speak of their lives for a more intimate experience of the narratives. The project will be up for exhibit for a period of nine weeks starting June 2019 and open to the community and school groups. Reach out to us for more information and **Sponsorship Opportunities!**

[www.thecompassionprojectmiami.com](http://www.thecompassionprojectmiami.com)
Thank you to our generous supporters!

Over the past 10 years working with women in prison, we at LEAP have learned that if given tools to succeed, most will remain crime free. Those tools include education, access to jobs, mental health and addiction services and housing. Thanks to the support of our community, over the past 2 years LEAP has expanded from an in-prison program, to one that includes housing, employment and other support post release. We have been able to expand our services thanks to community support.

We are proud to announce that the Denise Moon Fund of the Miami Foundation, Capital One Bank and the Miami Foundation Community Grants Program recently awarded LEAP grants to expand our post release services, and to develop a comprehensive paid retail internship for LEAP graduates at the Dragonfly Thrift Boutique.

LEAP is 100% dependent on the generosity of our community. Please consider donating today.

Donate to LEAP