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In the News



Amendment 4. We are thrilled that Amendment 4, which extends the right to vote to most people in Florida with past felonies, and its overwhelming support! But our work is not done; it is now time to register to vote the 1.7 million Floridians whose rights have been restored!

The First Step Act. Congress recently passed the much heralded First Step Act, which aims to improve conditions in prisons with measures that include banning the shackling of women during childbirth and requiring that inmates be placed closer to their families. It also provides earned good time credit for inmates with good behavior who participate in educational programs and eases some aspects of draconian minimum mandatory sentencing.

While the First Step Act is welcome, it is indeed just a "first" step. its impact is limited. For example, The First Step Act fails to address the hundreds of thousands of people imprisoned for non-violent drug offenses. People who suffer from addiction -- a disease that goes mostly untreated in our prison system. In addition, it is federal legislation that only affects the 180,000 imprisoned in the federal system. The First Step Act does NOT benefit the 2.1 million people in County jails and State prisons.

Next Steps. The next step is to pass meaningful criminal justice and prison reform right here in Florida. To that end, The Florida Rights Coalition is organizing a Day of Advocacy in Tallahassee on March 12th to build on the momentum created by the passage of Amendment 4. Floridians who believe that too many tax dollars are spent and too many lives ruined in the name of criminal justice, will meet with Florida lawmakers to discuss reforms. LEAP graduates Nancy Weaver and Zo Horton are planning to attend. We invite LEAP supporters to join them. If you can't make it, be sure to let your representatives know that you do not believe our current system of punishment is working and that you want to see real change.

REGISTER to VOTE

SIGN UP for ADVOCACY DAY

Dragonfly Thrift Boutique

Thanks to our new store manager, Aelana Curran, LEAP's Dragonfly Thrift Boutique has the look and feel of a high end retail store. The only difference is that at Dragonfly you will always find bargain prices and exceptional service.

Aelana was a set designer and stylist before starting with us in October, and her

impeccable style is mirrored throughout Dragonfly. Dragonfly donors: don't be surprised if you find yourself buying your stuff back after you see what Aelana has worked her magic with it.

Every Saturday is 25% off the entire store. But beware -- the best merchandise goes fast so you may not want to wait for sale to make your purchase. Aelana posts frequently on Dragonfly's Instagram to highlight new merchandise. Follow us @Dragonflythriftboutique to get a jump on the new inventory.



DRAGONFLY THRIFT BOUTIQUE



Graduate Spotlight

Nancy Weaver graduated from LEAP Class 16 in 2018. Through LEAP she built a strong support system that she has maintained in the four months since her release, and has made her transition from prison much smoother. She was able to find a place to live and was able to get the resources she needed. The LEAP staff has served as her personal cheerleaders and she feels confident she is not alone in the world. Nancy has also found her passion: helping others heal. She has been chairing 12 step meetings and speaking with women battling substance abuse: she has become their hope, their support, and their face of redemption. Her heart breaks for people struggling but is certain her calling is to help them, and through this her own wounds will continue to heal. She will also be joining the LEAP Volunteer Team, preparing the resources needed for the business plans of the current class, so they may have a plan of action to put their dreams in place. Nancy is grateful for all she has and the chance to do what is right. Stop by LEAP's Dragonfly Thrift Boutique to meet Nancy and other LEAP graduates and, of course shop!



Volunteer Spotlight

Karma discovered LEAP six months ago while looking for a place to donate treasured belongings. She instantly fell in love with LEAP's Dragonfly Thrift Boutique and LEAP's mission and knew she wanted to get involved in some way. Since then, Karma has helped LEAP however she can, whether it be polishing silverware before it is shelved at Dragonfly or writing grant proposals.

An engineer by profession, Karma believes deeply in the importance of supporting and supplying necessary tools to women transitioning from prison and is happy she can



give her time to the effort. Having volunteered at the store for six months, Karma has had the chance to see first hand as LEAP graduates begin working at the store out of prison and then move on to other careers. She is constantly impressed by their ambitious attitudes and finds volunteering with LEAP to be uplifting.

“From a very young age I had empathy for people that were in prison... not being close to their families; it weighs on my heart. Society so often has their back to these people and LEAP instills hope.”

Thanks so much for all your hard work Karma!

Staff Changes

We are pleased to welcome new team members to the LEAP Staff!

Yulissa Muñoz started working with us in October and is our new office manager! After working 15 years in the luxury travel industry she has switched lanes and is now supporting the LEAP team and pursuing a Yoga career!

Dr. Shed Boren has been a part of the LEAP board for some time, and we are excited to announce he will be teaching the business component of our re-entry program beginning in February!

Isa Díez is a Social Work and Political Science student at FSU and will be interning with us until May. She has a passion for social issues and policy with a strong focus on the criminal justice system.

Thanks to Barry University business professor, **Dr. Anthony Sadler**, for teaching entrepreneurship to LEAP students for the past two years. We will miss you!



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 Information Night will be held on **Thursday, February 14 @ 630 PM**

Join us for LEAP Community Connection Speaker Series on **Thursday, February 21.**

Miami is the home of the 6th largest black community in the US. But what does that even mean?

LEAP celebrates Black History Month Miami style with a lively discussion about what it means to be black in our multi-cultural community.

Panelists

Dr. Mitzi Carter, Cultural Anthropologist

Elliott Jones, Community Organizer

Leonie Hermantin, Esq., Attorney & Community Development Activist

Rosibel Mejia, Afro-Latina Writer/Actress



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 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 September, 2019 and open to the community and school groups. Reach out to us for more information and **Sponsorship Opportunities!**

Engage With Us on Social Media

LADIES EMPOWERMENT AND ACTION
PROGRAM



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.

Thank You

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



THE JOSEPH H. & FLORENCE A. ROBLEE FOUNDATION



Ladies Empowerment and Action Program | Dragonfly Thrift Boutique | (833) 757 - 5327 |
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