



# PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

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## The Magic City Advocate

December 2019



### THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF Human Rights

**Article 1** Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of justice, peace and good will in the world.

**Article 2** Everyone has duties and everyone has responsibilities. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom from any coercion that may impair his freedom to have, in his own religion, such freedom as is necessary for its worship.

**Article 3** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 5** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Article 6** Everyone has the right to recognition as a person before the law.

**Article 7** All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are equal before the law whether they be of any race, ethnic origin, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**Article 8** Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**Article 9** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**Article 10** Everyone has the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

**Article 11** Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to the law. The rights and obligations of any accused person shall be determined by law.

**Article 12** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13** Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

**Article 14** Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 15** Everyone has the right to a nationality.

**Article 16** Everyone has the right to acquire and to change his nationality.

**Article 17** Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

**Article 18** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom from any coercion that may impair his freedom to have, in his own religion, such freedom as is necessary for its worship.

**Article 19** Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authorities, national or international.

**Article 20** Everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and to associate with others in any form, and to join or form trade unions for the protection of his interests.

**Article 21** Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

**Article 22** Everyone has the right to social security.

**Article 23** Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to a reasonable leisure time, and to other benefits and conditions of work consistent with this Declaration.

**Article 24** Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, and to other benefits and conditions of work consistent with this Declaration.

**Article 25** Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, old age, sickness or incapacity, and in other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

**Article 26** Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and technical schools. Technical and vocational education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be open to all on the basis of merit.

**Article 27** Everyone has the right to take part in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, and to participate in the benefits of culture.

**Article 28** Everyone has the right to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29** Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

**Article 30** Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as authorizing any state, group or individual to engage in any activity aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.



On this month

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On December 10, 1948, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was entered into the United Nations General Assembly. This moment marks a shift in how we globally discuss the legal protections of persons. Its very existence is a radical declaration that the quality of human life is a conversation that the law can and should address. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights forged definitions, aspirations, and enforcement bodies in the name of human dignity. You can see the aspirational nature of the document in the opening.

Excerpt from the Preamble:

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law."

## Community Spotlight



**Name:** Yaikinsha Coles (she/her/hers)

**Community Organization/Group/Affiliations:** Joná's Way

**Please give a brief summary of your organization and its cause.**

Joná's Way is an organization that was birthed through pain and purpose was revealed. My daughter Nya Joná Hodoh, passed from a pulmonary embolism on June 15, 2018. She was 18 years old. Headed to Tuskegee University on an academic scholarship, she was set out to becoming a hematologist and possibly change the world. With Joná's Way, a growing non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the awareness of blood clots and blood disorders to our community, we will carry on that torch by connecting with our community and sharing our knowledge and advocating for change.

**How do you define freedom?**

I describe FREEDOM as the ability to live as you were created, unapologetically. To be, not according to any one's definition of WHO you should be or HOW you should be. FREEDOM is happiness, wholeness, lightness (if that's a descriptor, lol), and the connection you have with God and His DIVINE purpose on your life.



**You have been nominated by community members for this spotlight, how would you describe your work with the community?**

My goal is to have a connection within our community that will enable Joná's Way to bring an authentic insight and awareness to a health issue that we don't talk about and should. A health issue that's only discussed once it's happened to a loved one. My goal is to educate our people so that we live longer and have a healthier outlook on life. Awareness and education is key to longevity and wellness.

**How would you define the social issue that you are working to address?**

I would define THIS social issue as a SOCIAL PROBLEM, period. Over 270 people die from blood clots on a daily basis and we don't hear about this. A "social problem" is a social condition that undermines the well-being of a significant number of people. That needs to change.

**How can we, the greater community, contribute to addressing this issue?**

We can contribute by being informed, sharing our knowledge, encouraging advocacy for those that don't have a voice. Our young girls are being administered birth control methods without testing for hereditary clotting issues. This needs to change.

**What's one thing that you would like the community to know?**

I would like the community to know that Joná's Way is here and will only thrive with the support and activity of our community. We have to encourage inclusion. We so often talk about what we're not aware of but we MUST be involved to be aware –participate in discussions, attend health fairs, support initiatives. Susan G. Komen didn't become what it is with a lack of support. It takes a village and with us, this needs to change.

**SJRE Op-Ed: Notes from Governor Ivey's Study Group on Criminal Justice Reform**



*On December 4, 2019, Brandon Johnson, director of the Office of P.E.A.C.E. & Policy, offered the following remarks to Governor Ivey's Study Group on Criminal Justice reform:*

My name is Brandon Johnson; I serve as Mayor Randall L. Woodfin's Director of the City of Birmingham's Office of PEACE and Policy. I would like to thank Gov. Ivey, Chairman Justice Lyons, and the study group for the opportunity to present today.

P.E.A.C.E. in the City of Birmingham is an acronym that stands for Policy informed by rigorous research, Empathy for victims and perpetrators, Alignment of resources, Capital investment in prevention and reentry, and Evaluation and improvement of programs and initiatives. Every year approximately 1500 formerly incarcerated people return home to Jefferson County from the Alabama Department of Corrections, a majority of whom will settle in the City of Birmingham. In a state that is 69.1% White and 26.8% Black according to the US Census Bureau, the population of Alabama Department of Corrections population is 51.8% Black according to the August 2019 Monthly Statistical Report of

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As the largest city in the state of Alabama, with a population that is approximately 71.6% Black according to the US Census Bureau, the impact of the criminal justice system of the State of Alabama has a significant and profound effect on the City of Birmingham with subsequent effects of other areas of import to the city such as public safety, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization.

The City of Birmingham would like to play a leading role in assisting the State of Alabama in reducing its prison population.

One of the best ways to assist in this effort is to reduce recidivism, to this end, the City of Birmingham is standing up its Office of Reentry with the following key components:

- 1) Expanding peer support groups;
- 2) Case management and benefits navigation;
- 3) Incorporation of permanent supportive housing into the city's overall affordable housing plan;
- 4) Workforce development and employer incentives to stimulate full employment of the formerly incarcerated;
- 5) Programming to support family reunification; and
- 6) A "welcoming center" to facilitate the orderly transition of formerly incarcerated persons into the Birmingham community.

We can no longer leave the successful return of persons, that have paid their debt to society, to chance or charity. The City of Birmingham's Office of P.E.A.C.E and Policy is working to build an innovative reentry model that can be replicated throughout the State of Alabama. This proposal ultimately seeks to do this in partnership with the state for the good of Alabama as a whole.

## **SJRE Op-Ed: Supporting the Arts in Birmingham and Surrounding Areas**



My name is Kat Files, an alumna of the Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA) and graduate of the Fordham University/Alvin Ailey BFA Program in Dance in New York City. During my years at ASFA, I was a member of the dance community outreach team, which traveled to local schools, taught dance classes, and performed. We were always greeted with an



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In 2014, after holding my Dance Master Class at the Carver Theatre, I founded TFAP, anchored with a mission to strengthen traditionally under-served communities through arts education, thereby bridging the gap between all communities. For the past seven years, my siblings and I have returned to Birmingham to host a free one-week community dance and music workshop, culminating with a showcase for participants in 3 levels (ages 6-9, ages 10-13, ages 14+).

It is my belief that all communities will become stronger through a significant investment in youth arts education. Arts education celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, and acknowledges the cultural contributions and experiences of all communities through the arts. I truly have a strong village that supports my vision of making arts education inclusive, available and accessible to all students who desire to create and perform. I have a huge team of supporters, from my family members to other professional dancers and musicians who have traveled with me from NYC to teach.

Recently, I have begun to expand TFAP beyond the Summer Dance & Music Workshop/Showcase through Master Classes and an open invitation to dancers to perform in Dance Across Birmingham hosted by the Alabama Dance Council. This is our second year participating in Dance Across Birmingham, and we have approximately 20 dancers currently preparing to perform on January 11, 2020 at the BJCC Theater. Additionally, I am offering a Holiday Master Class on Friday, December 27, 2019 at Birmingham-Southern College. To register for the Master Class, visit: [here](#)

My desire is to share all that I have learned with other aspiring art students, provide training in various dance/music techniques and offer performance opportunities through the Showcase, which opens the experience to the entire community. I especially want to reach those students who have an interest but may not have the income or resources for studio training or private lessons. Additionally, arts education inspires an appreciation of the arts thus fostering a life-long interest. This interest, if cultivated as students develop a relationship with the arts, will lead to building audiences among future generations.

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## Shout It Out: World AIDS Awareness Week



In December, voices around the world gather to amplify the awareness around HIV, AIDS, and the needs of community members living with HIV. This month, the Office of Social Justice & Racial Equity and the Office of Human Resources for the City of Birmingham provided residents and city employees with a week of awareness programs. In partnership with the UAB 1917 Clinic, Birmingham AIDS Outreach, and the Jefferson County HIV Prevention Network, Pack Health, we were able to continue a much-needed conversation with Birmingham residents.

“It is important for us to keep going, to continue to send a message of the importance of just knowing your status so that you can do the work to remain negative if you test HIV negative, or be engaged in care so you can live a long, healthy, happy and productive life,” said Tommy Williams, HIV Coalition Member.

On December 2, we invited the community to gather at the [Tuscaloosa Institute](#), for a Lunch and Learn led by Michael Fordham. Michael is a member of the PrEP Coalition here in Birmingham.

The UAB PrEP Clinic provides us with this definition of PrEP:

**“What is PrEP?”** PrEP is a new HIV prevention method that involves HIV-negative people taking anti-HIV medications daily to help prevent HIV infection. Several studies have shown that PrEP can reduce the risk of becoming HIV-infected when taken as part of a package of prevention services. These studies showed that PrEP was safe and effective for people over 18 years old who are sexually active. Truvada ® is the medication currently approved by the FDA for use as PrEP.”

Learning, dialoguing, and sharing about PrEP with others is one way that we can bring awareness to the Magic City. We were honored to have Michael as a guest and subject matter expert.

On December 4, city employees gathered in the Distinguished Gallery of Citizens to discuss HIV/AIDS Stigma & Prevention. Jefferson County Health Department's Dr. Willeford led us in this dialogue. We concluded our week with an Awareness Block Party. Our community partners provided free, confidential HIV testing, informational materials. The Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity looks forward to continuing support around this social challenge. For more information, please look to the following organizations for more on resources, services, and access.

- [AIDS Alabama](#)
- [AIDS Alabama South](#)



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- [Birmingham AIDS Outreach](#)
- [Central Alabama AIDS Resource & Advocacy Center, Inc.](#)
- [Five Horizons Health Services](#)
- [Franklin Primary Health Center](#)
- [Health Services Center of Alabama](#)
- [Medical AIDS Outreach of Alabama](#)
- [Mobile County Health Department](#)
- [Selma AIR](#)
- [Southern AIDS Coalition](#)
- [Thrive Alabama](#)
- [UAB 1917 Clinic](#)
- [Unity Wellness Center](#)
- [Whatley Health Services, Inc. \(Tuscaloosa County\)](#)

## Upcoming Events

**Event Name:** [Trauma and Domestic Violence Training](#)

**Date:** January 23, 2020

**Location:** Sheriff's Training Center

[543 McDow Road](#)  
[Columbiana, Alabama 35051](#)

**Event Name:** [Alabama Human Trafficking Summit](#)

**Date:** January 31, 2020

**Location:** Renaissance Montgomery Hotel

[201 Tallapoosa Street](#)  
[Montgomery, AL 36104](#)

## Social Justice in the News

**Team member:** Denise E. Gilmore

**Title:** Senior Director of the Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity

**Suggested reading:** [Why LeBron James's hometown philanthropy is powering forward on supportive housing.](#)

This nonprofit is letting the needs of the community it serves guide its mission. I'm intrigued because they are flexible. They are changing their initial vision to a comprehensive, holistic approach. The foundation embraces the complete educational needs of third and fourth-grade urban students, understanding that stable housing is key to a good education.

**Team member:** Ayo Ayokanmbi

**Title:** Community Health Researcher of the Office of Peace and Policy

**Suggested reading:** [Climate Change Protesters Disrupt Yale-Harvard Football Game](#)

I am a little surprised by this protest because it was during a sporting event that was being televised and delayed the game. This is one of many protests on social issues led by young adults in the past couple of years. It will be interesting what other issues young activists continue to stand up for and what type of methods they will take to do so.

**Team member:** Brandon Fontenot Johnson

**Title:** Director, Office of P.E.A.C.E. & Policy

**Suggested reading:** [Prison Behind Bars](#)

Boasting a less than 4% recidivism rate and savings to the state, New York State and Bard College have partnered to not only invest in rehabilitation but a four-year education for incarcerated persons in their correctional facility at no cost to the state. Imagine 4% recidivism and substantive education in Alabama's prisons?

**Team member:** Jasmyn Elise Story

**Title:** Deputy Director, Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity

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**Suggested reading:** [Sexual Assault Survivors Who Want Restorative Justice Have Limited Options](#)

I believe that it is important for all members of society to watch and observe how we treat those who've survived violence against their bodies. We can measure our society on how we treat the most vulnerable among us.

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