

Mend

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Introduction - Mend, v.1

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first issue of *Mend*, an online and print journal devoted to celebrating the lives and creative works of justice-impacted people. This annual publication showcases writing of all types, including poetry, research reports, and creative nonfiction. *Mend* presents an array of topics ranging from imprisonment to reentry, trauma to recovery, and despair to hope.

This is not simply another publication about incarceration, reentry, or even the criminal justice system; it is a publication that recognizes the humanity of those impacted by mass incarceration. Our authors celebrate, explore, and interrogate various aspects of life. Some seek to provide a platform from which justice-impacted people's voices can be heard in hopes of stimulating conversations and, perhaps, advocacy. Others seek to interpret the world through writing that has nothing to do with prison.

Mend seeks to help reimagine who a returning citizen is and can be with access to requisite resources. It also takes into consideration the renegotiations that take place between families, communities, and societies. As a formerly incarcerated person and editor, I have had the pleasure of learning a variety of publishing-related skills from editing to page design. Having worked alongside Professor Patrick W. Berry, two Syracuse University students—Fátima Bings Martínez and Luke Hardy—and three other justice-involved colleagues—Karl Deans, Cherise Hunter Titus, and Troy White—I now possess a cursory understanding of what it takes to create a professional publication from start to finish.

Since November 2022, we have laughed, cried, celebrated and become a family in pursuit of creating something meaningful. The journey was not easy. We lost Cherise Hunter Titus, a member of our team, on Valentine's Day. She was a ray of sunshine who helped us reconsider some of the more empathetically inspiring creative works. Additionally, another member of our team could not continue due to health complications. With their spirits and initial contributions in mind, we have put together a compilation of creative works that will pull at heartstrings, ignite conversations, and address what it means to be human. But none of this could have been possible without the talented contributors who were absent yet in the room with us.

Mend is made possible through collaboration with the Center for Community Alternatives and HNY's Post-Incarceration Humanities Partnership, which is generously supported by the Mellon Foundation. Also, the project has been supported by the Engaged Humanities Network, the Humanities Center, and a CUSE Research Grant.

Special thanks to Benay Bubar for offering insight into copyediting, Wendy Mansfield for offering suggestions on layouts, and to the judges—Brice Nordquist, Johnny Page, Zakery R. Muñoz, and Michaela Thorley—who helped us select the winner of the award for best writing in this issue.

We want to thank the contributing authors and artists for making this inaugural issue so powerful.

—Brian T. Shaw