

MOSES



Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity
for Criminal Justice Reform

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Community Conversation on Mass Supervision

By Pam Gates

On Oct. 17, EXPO, Man Up, and MOSES co-sponsored a community conversation with special guest speaker Hakim Crampton from Michigan. Crampton spent 15

years in prison for a crime he didn't commit and is still on parole. As Michigan's first formerly incarcerated person to be appointed to

a state commission, in his case the Indigent Defense Commission, Crampton reminded us of the value and importance of each of our voices.

Crampton is on a campaign to challenge laws that block access to housing, jobs, and education. If we don't give formerly incarcerated people a place in the community, we make it more likely that they'll be re-incarcerated, he said. He noted a glimmer of progress in Michigan, where a felony-expungement bill has been introduced in the Legislature and is currently in a House committee. For the first time, formerly incarcerated people have spoken before the committee, of course to support the bill. Crampton pointed out that 36 percent of former prisoners are re-incarcerated within 18 months of their release and that 40 percent of people in Corrections are there because of revocations. This despite the fact that, statistically,

a person who's been out for 10 years is less likely than the general public to commit another crime.

Crampton came of age during the crack epidemic era. His dad was a hustler, and he found himself selling dope. He came to Milwaukee at age 18, got in a fight, got arrested, and was ques-

tioned about a murder that had occurred three weeks earlier. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to 45 years.

Eventually, the Wisconsin Innocence Project took his case, and he was released on parole 13 years ago.

While still incarcerated, Crampton founded the African Mentoring and Education Network, modeled on Big Brothers Big Sisters, and continued this effort once released. Following a stint as a housing case manager in Jackson, Michigan, where 75 percent of kids live in poverty and the homicide rate is similar to Detroit's, he has taken a new position as program manager for Youth Build, which helps high school dropouts go back to school, build houses with Habitat for Humanity, and get trained in a trade. Crampton has written a book: *America's Pipeline to Prison: Mass Incarcer-*

"If we don't give formerly incarcerated people a place in the community, we make it more likely that they'll be re-incarcerated."

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ation and the Educational Crisis of Black Youth in the United States. He also brought us an anthology he'd edited, of stories and lyrics by 12-year-old boys in his program, on how to avoid that pipeline.

Asked how the 15 years in and 13 out on supervision had affected him, Crampton noted that trauma as a result of incarceration is one of the least studied mental illnesses in our country. "I began working on my mental health, so as not to be impaired by my loss of freedom... I had begun to show signs of institutionalization."

In conclusion, Crampton reminded us that legislative advocacy is essential: "We must hold our representatives accountable. We must demand community listening sessions, hold meetings like this one ... and build a coalition of community activists." ■

MOSES Meetings

Next MOSES monthly meetings

- Sunday, January 5, 2:30 pm
- Sunday, February 2, 2:30 pm

Click on the calendar link at the MOSES website for details.

MOSES Events

Transformation Celebration: MOSES Fundraising Gala

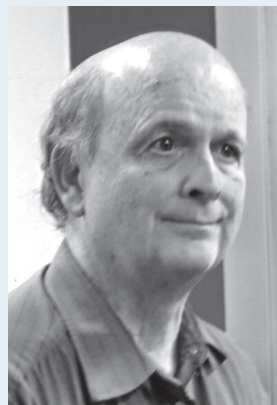
Saturday, December 14

Doors open at 5:30 pm.

6:00-7:30 Mingling and heavy hors d'oeuvres

7:30 Program, followed by music and dancing.

Watch for more details!



Thank You, Eric!

After four years of dedicated service, Eric Howland's two terms as President of MOSES will draw to a close at year's end.

We are grateful for the countless hours, wealth of knowledge, and calming presence that Eric has given to MOSES during this period of growth, progress, and organizational development.

He has led us with dignity, compassion, and a deep belief in justice. We are immensely grateful!

On January 1, 2020, the new officers will be:

Rachel Morgan, President

Sandra Brown, Designated Vice President

Alison Mix, Vice President

Ann Lacy, Treasurer

Nominations are still being sought for the position of Secretary.

State Coordinators Offer Implicit Bias Training

by Margaret Irwin

Some 35 MOSES members and friends gathered at St. Luke's Episcopal Church Nov. 23 for a workshop on Implicit Bias. Leaders Aaron Hicks of EXPO, Catoya Roberts of WISDOM and The Advancement Project, and JOSHUA organizer Rachel Westenberg (Green Bay) are part of a WISDOM team that offers such workshops around the state.

We were reminded that we all have biases, or preferences, for or against groups of people. Some of these we are aware of, such as a bias against people who are habitually late. But we're not aware of the implicit biases that



we harbor in our subconscious. Implicit biases cause us to have unexamined feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. We begin learning these at a very early age from family members, life experiences, and the media. Implicit biases can affect our behavior, even when they go against our stated beliefs. For example, some white people can believe they don't discriminate against people of other races, and yet when a black man approaches on the street they hug their belongings tightly – something they don't do if the approaching man is white.

The training used videos, short talks, reflection time, and small and large group discussions to help us uncover our own biases. One interactive exercise showed us the privilege most of us experience in different spheres of life. Rather than feel guilty about our privilege, we were challenged to question how we can use it to open the door for others.

Another exercise showed us that the people we trust the most tend to have a lot in common with us, in areas such as race, age, education, etc. In order to counteract



these biases, we need to work hard at expanding the kinds of people we connect with, so that we are exposed to a variety of life narratives.

The good news is that we can gradually unlearn our biases and contribute to creating a safe space where everyone is welcomed, valued, and heard. ■

Statewide Task Forces

WISDOM conference calls (605) 468-8012

- Old Law: Dec. 14 and Jan. 11 at 8:30 am
(code 423950)
- Solitary Confinement: Dec. 10 and Jan. 14 at 4:00 pm
(code 423950)
- Prison Prevention: Dec. 10 and Jan. 14 at 5:00 pm
(code 423950)
- Post-Release: Dec. 19 and Jan. 23 at 7:30 pm
(code 423951)

2019 Transformation Award Honorees

by Tina Hogle

Congratulations to the following individuals who will be honored at the Transformation Celebration Fundraising Gala. The honorees are people who are returning citizens and have, in spite of systems of oppression that punish the formerly incarcerated, become integral parts of their communities.

To learn more about their stories, come to the Gala on December 14th! See page 6.



Juba Moten,
Entrepreneur



Deborah Mejchar,
Chaplain



Martin Lackey, Sr.,
Business Owner & Activist

Why I Am a Sustaining Member of MOSES

by Carol Rubin

Seven long years ago, at MOSES's inception, I was its organizer, secretary, and fundraiser (and eventually president). We didn't have any money, so we didn't need a treasurer. When it was time to get a bank account, I went to Summit Credit Union, where I bank, and very politely asked them to give us free checks and a free checking account, since we had zero funds. They not only agreed, but, after I explained our purpose, also contributed \$50 to begin our fundraising. I note that Summit is again a sponsor for our December Gala.

Over the years, I've treasured the opportunity to share time with previously incarcerated individuals and their friends and families and listen to their stories. The experience, knowledge, wisdom, and commitment they have shared has been priceless and has provided a special kind of power and commitment to MOSES. We now know, deep in our hearts and minds, the unnecessary suffering imposed by Wisconsin's system of excessive incarceration, revocation, and punitive supervision.

Today, seven years after MOSES began, we have a full slate of officers, several dozen people working on operational teams, and a budget of over \$100,000. (I remember with fondness our treasurer, Ann Lacy, snorting derisively

when WISDOM Director David Liners told us, six years ago, that we would eventually have a \$100,000 budget!)

Even more important, we now have MOSES participants working hard on five different task forces that are changing the criminal justice system in Madison, Dane County, and Wisconsin; a Leadership Board of our many congregational, organizational, and individual members; and a large community that gathers with enthusiasm every month for our MOSES meetings.

WISDOM's David Liners told us repeatedly that to be powerful enough to make a difference, MOSES would need people and money. We've made enormous progress on both fronts, often due to the

very hard work of Rachel Morgan, who's been our lead fundraiser for several years. Now it's time to up our individual commitment and save some precious fundraising energy by providing a steady stream of monthly funds, so that a powerful MOSES can better plan our actions for the full coming year. I'm embarrassed that it took me a while, but I am now a proud sustaining member who adds steadiness and predictability to our crucial work. And I don't even notice the dollars that are zipped away to MOSES every month. ■



Carol Rubin



Core Team in the Spotlight: First Unitarian Society

by Alison Mix

On Aug. 18, at First Unitarian Society's annual "Service Sunday," FUS's MOSES core team focused on Old Law prisoners. The team printed out stories of 12 Wisconsin men incarcerated before the year 2000, when Truth in Sentencing came into effect. They put the sheets in plastic sleeves in three 3-ring binders and placed them on a table with chairs around it. People were invited to have a seat and look through the binder, read some of the stories, and see the photos of these men, not just the mug shots but also more personal photos of them with family members, wearing caps and gowns, etc.

Rather than asking the FUS members to write letters or cards to Gov. Evers, which would have been a more time-consuming option, the team instead invited people to sign a petition to the Governor, with a copy to Parole Commission Chair John Tate II. The petition contained the following text:

Dear Governor Evers,

Nearly 3,000 people in Wisconsin prisons who committed crimes before 2000 are eligible for parole. In recent years, the percentage of eligible people granted parole has shrunk to under 10%. The vast majority of these Old Law prisoners are serving much more time than the judges who originally sentenced them had anticipated.

We, the undersigned, members and associates of First Unitarian Society of Madison greatly appreciate

that you have appointed Mr. John Tate II as Chair of the Wisconsin Parole Commission. We now implore you to honor the commitment you made to WISDOM's Gubernatorial Candidate Forum in June of 2018 to immediately call for a complete, independent review of every parole eligible case, with the goal of expediting the release of all those who can be safely released to their families and communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

The idea was to raise awareness in the congregation of the plight of these men and women and to humanize incarcerated people in their minds, while at the same time putting pressure on elected officials.

The exercise was repeated a few weeks later, on Sept. 13, during FUS's Welcome Back and Opportunity Fair. In all, 36 signatures were obtained, and

the petition was subsequently mailed to Gov. Evers and Chairman Tate.

Contact and assistance

A pdf of the prisoner profiles and a copy of the petition can be obtained from Pat Watson at cc2ss@yahoo.com. Pat can also answer any other questions you may have. ■



Thanks to MOSES sponsors

THE EVJUE FOUNDATION
THE CAPITAL TIMES



Sinsinawa Dominicans

You're invited to the MOSES 2019 Fundraising Gala

MOSES



Transformation Celebration

December 14, 2019

5:30 p.m.

Brassworks

214 Waubesa Street • Madison 53704

Tickets: \$65

Register at:

<http://mosesmadison.org/give/2019gala/>

Celebrating work that transforms



artwork by James Morgan

Program

Gathering and food

Welcome

Emcee: Carmella Glenn, Just Bakery

Honorees

- Juba Moten, Entrepreneur
- Deborah Mejchar, Chaplain
- Martin Lackey, Sr., Business owner and activist

Dancing & Music

Music provided by Lady L from Soul Sessions on WORT 89.9 FM Radio

Sponsors



Julie Godshall's *noondays collection*



Mary Burke

Steve Goldberg



State Watch

Hopeful Signs of State Action on Crisis Restoration Centers

by Kate Mulligan

In 2017, MOSES members led an energetic effort to create a crisis restoration center in Dane County. For a person experiencing an acute mental health crisis, the center would serve as an alternative to jail or to a long trip to the Winnebago Mental Health Institute.

Crisis restoration centers are successful in many states, but so far the effort to create one here has failed. A solution to the problem appeared possible when the corporation Strategic Behavioral Health (SBH) announced plans to build a psychiatric hospital in Middleton with crisis beds. In August, however, Wisconsin State Journal reporter David Wahlberg wrote that SBH faces “serious regulatory problems” in two states and “significant violations” in other states.

It can only be good news that leadership on the issue has appeared at the state level. On Oct. 31, Attorney General Josh Kaul hosted a policy summit on emergency detention and mental health. The summit brought together nearly 300 law enforcement and health care professionals, county officials, and mental health advocates to hear personal testimony from people who had experienced emergency detention. The availability of mental health services and the results of a survey of law enforcement personnel were also discussed.

Attendees considered policy reforms in the areas of diversion, respite facilities, trauma-informed transport during detention, and access to psychiatric care. “There are resources that have to go into solving [the problem],” Kaul said, “but we’re already spending significant resources, and we’d save if we developed a solution.”

Wisconsin Eye recorded the conference, which can be watched at: <https://wiseye.org/2019/10/31/attorney-generals-summit-on-emergency-detention/>.

In September, a bipartisan group of legislators introduced a bill (AB 433-SB 392) that would establish five regional crisis-stabilization facilities. A similar effort in 2018 failed, despite attracting the support of criminal justice organizations, county governments, mental health organizations, and the League of Women Voters.



Partisan politics

On a less hopeful note, a battle between Gov. Evers (D) and legislative Republicans has prohibited the funding of \$15 million for a badly needed expansion of crisis mental health beds in northern Wisconsin. Evers vetoed the line item and transferred the funds to another mental health initiative, because of a requirement that the Republican-controlled Joint Finance Committee have a voice in the release of the funds.

Youth and women

Partisan politics are also hampering other actions in the Legislature. The Safe Haven Bill (SB 49-AB 41), which has bipartisan support, would prohibit charging a person under 18 with prostitution if she has been trafficked. It passed the Senate, but a last-minute Republican amendment jeopardizes its chances of passing in the Assembly. The “shackling” bill (SB 316-AB 398), which is directed against the practice of subjecting incarcerated women to physical restraints while they are pregnant, was also the object of a last-minute amendment. According to one of its sponsors, the bill might fail yet again.

Finally, Rep. Evan Goyke (D) is working with officials at the Department of Corrections and with staff at Gov. Evers’ office on legislation that would address the problem of excessive revocations and promote an expansion of earned release. ■

UNfair: The New Science of Criminal Justice

by Adam Benforado, 2015, 286 pages

reviewed by Pam Gates

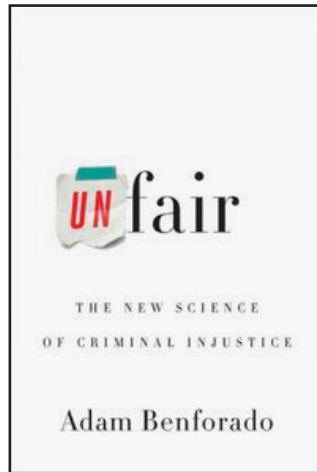
Adam Benforado is an associate professor of law at Drexel University and a graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School, so he's got plenty of credentials for his sage observations of our (in)justice system, not to mention plenty of backup: his bibliography is 73 pages long! In a nutshell, Benforado says that we and our (in)justice system are so influenced by biases we don't even know we have that it's almost impossible for that system to deliver justice, particularly for those who are "other" in this culture. Most people don't know what's really going on, he says, but the general public needs to confront the hidden unfairness in our system. In *"UNfair,"* Benforado examines every aspect of the system.

In the first three parts of the book, "Investigation," "Adjudication," and "Punishment," he details barriers to the delivery of true justice in our country. The chapters within each part – a total of 10 – each end with a summary that condenses his observations. In Part 4, "Reform," he offers hope. Chapter 11 is "What We Must Overcome: The Challenge," and Chapter 12 is "What We Can Do: The Future."

Benforado opens *"UNfair"* with a true story. An older man is found one night on a D.C. sidewalk, ill and/or injured and unable to communicate. Emergency personnel are called and the man ends up in a hospital, but all who observe him, from the initial firefighters and EMTs to the hospital personnel, conclude that he is a drunk and leave him to sleep it off. By the time someone notes his head injury and gets him to surgery, it is too late: award-winning, retired New York Times journalist David Rosenbaum dies, leaving a wife, two daughters, and two granddaughters. His head injury occurred during an armed robbery on that D.C. sidewalk, a block or so from his home.

Another terrible, much more well known story of victim mistreatment is the vicious beating of Rodney King by four Los Angeles police officers. Benforado comments on how difficult the video of that beating is to watch, but he is able to offer a plausible explanation of how, given our unfair system, a jury could have done the seemingly impossible and acquitted all four of those officers.

These are two examples of unfair treatment of victims.



What about perpetrators? How are they treated unfairly? I think MOSES members know many of the ways, from solitary confinement to excessive revocation to disrespect and threats, and much in between. But one of the most vivid ways we are unfair to prisoners, and to society as a whole, is our assumption that if we make their punishment miserable enough, people will be sufficiently cowed into avoiding crime. That's been our approach in America from the very beginning. And, Benforado says, it doesn't work.

But he shows us another way, one practiced in Europe. He describes Halden, one of Norway's highest security prisons, housing murderers and rapists. Halden was built to rehabilitate, not to intimidate, deter, or separate. There are no bars. The staff is there to help inmates change their lives and prepare them to reintegrate back into society, with special efforts to foster family ties. The prison isn't scary, and it's not designed for suffering. "It is hard," writes Benforado, "to think of a model more different from our own."

He suggests one important change we can make is to shift resources toward prevention. "The more we understand the genetic and environmental factors that shape criminal behavior, the more it looks like a disease, and the less our current framework of ascribing moral responsibility appears justifiable," he says. As far as determining what actually happened at a crime scene, eyewitness accounts, police lineups, and even lie detectors are subject to hidden bias. We need to rely on modern tools, like electronic recordings.

I heartily recommend *"UNfair."* If the detail gets a bit much at any point, you can just read the excellent summary at the end of each chapter. The book is engagingly written, reinforces a lot of what MOSES thinks is wrong with our criminal (in)justice system, and adds even more to our concerns.

In conclusion, Benforado writes, "we enjoy magnificent advantages over our forebears in the quest to remedy unfairness ... But for it to matter, we must act. The arc of history does not bend toward justice unless we bend it." ■