



MOTHERS

FOR JUSTICE & EQUALITY

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FOR JUSTICE

Impact Report 2024

Mothers Against Violence Learning Community

WWW.MAVCONFERENCE.ORG



What is the Mothers Against Violence National Conference?

"The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman."

-Malcolm X

Civil rights activist and advocate for Black empowerment

Today, we are seeing an escalation in violence in urban communities, with the majority of the **victims being our black and brown children**. This loss impacts not only the health and well-being of the mothers, but the entire family and community.

Center for Disease Control research shows that **black women have an increased mortality rate compared to white women**, clearly showing that the increase in stress related to the loss of a child has an enormous effect on the livelihood of the mother. Mothers, who typically serve as the social and emotional pillars of their families, experience deep, lasting damage from such losses, with ripple effects that can permanently impact family and community well-being.

The **Mothers Against Violence National Conference (MAV)**, hosted by **Mothers for Justice and Equality (MJE)**, addresses tragic losses from community violence while promoting peace. Over the past **10 years**, we've heard inspiring stories from mothers and leaders nationwide who make a difference everyday, **offering hope to underserved families**. We've also honored many mothers with the **MAV Courage and Conviction Awards** for their outstanding advocacy in protecting at-risk children from street violence.

This year's conference on **October 17th-18th, 2024**, provided essential training, mentoring, and support for women nationwide affected by loss and violence for over **310 guests**. Over the years we've seen over **700 attendees** take their learnings home to positively influence **thousands of lives**. Together, we make a difference and bring hope to communities nationwide, and will continue this tradition for the 11th time in 2025.

Why We Do This Work



Across America, our **black and brown youth are losing their lives to senseless street violence**. Mothers, fathers, and siblings are left hopeless, trying to manage the pain of losing their loved one. We are seeing an increase in poverty, mental health illnesses, and gun violence in our neighborhoods, all fostering a continuation of loss of life. We at **MJE** aim to be a source of **strength, resolution, and support**. We know that by lifting our community's mothers, we are lifting the communities as a whole.

As a united front, we say, **"It's Not Okay"** for children to live in fear, **"It's Not Okay"** for a parent to bury their child prematurely, and **"It's Not Okay"** for a child to be incarcerated. As an **alliance**, we take action; we are **healing together**, sharing best practices, and creating a network of courageous leaders. We are positioned to help change the storyline of our communities. We publicly denounce violence as an unacceptable way of life and loss in our neighborhoods; **"It's Not Okay!"**

Collectively, we have touched **200,000** lives across the United States. We have convened workshops, organized marches and rallies, and started foundations and organizations. Through our work together, mothers who lost children to violence receive a space to **Heal, Restore, and Rebuild**; neighborhoods that lost hope received a sense of hope. Safe neighborhood parks are built to remember our children, which children are now using without fear.

Mother to Mother, neighbor to neighbor, together we can change the story of our streets and heal in the process.



Your Host

Who is Mothers for Justice and Equality?

Who We Are

Mothers for Justice and Equality (MJE) is the host of Mothers Against Violence. MJE aims to end neighborhood violence by empowering mothers and youth to challenge the normalization of violence. We believe Mothers are fierce and nurturing protectors; when given proper tools, they can channel their energy to build neighborhoods where playgrounds are safe and sidewalks are non-threatening.

Since 2010, MJE's trauma-informed services have supported the academic, workforce development, health, and wellness needs of those impacted by community violence, including single mothers, youth, and their families.

To ensure our children a promising future, they must have the support of the entire community. MJE has the vision of a world in which it is never normal or acceptable for children to be murdered. We believe that change will occur as the internalized expectations of what is acceptable in our neighborhoods change. Mothers are influential changemakers in our communities, and when given the right tools, they become advocates for transformation.

Mission Statement

The mission of MJE is to end neighborhood violence by empowering mothers and youth to challenge the normalization of violence and become effective catalysts for change in their homes, schools, and communities. We engage mothers, youth, & families by providing targeted support, educational opportunities, and the opportunity to advocate for peace as a community.

Who We Serve

We serve individuals and families in Boston and surrounding areas, and share best practices with mothers and organizations nationwide.

Violence in our communities does not just impact direct victims. Our population is struggling with the impact of trauma due to community violence, homicide, domestic violence, and related issues. Grieving mothers, siblings, and families are often left behind.

Studies have shown that this target population faces challenges in all aspects of life due to the impact of trauma and grief.

We serve Individuals & Families primarily in **Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, & Hyde Park, Massachusetts**, who are: Facing racial inequities, endangered by community violence, unemployed or at risk for job loss, living in poverty, homeless or risk of homelessness, recent or undocumented immigrants, ESL

speakers, struggling with physical and mental health needs, young parents, opportunity youth, formerly Incarcerated community members (returning citizens).



3,600

Clients Served
Annually



Adult
Education



Youth
Development



Health &
Wellness

Catalysts for Change: MAV's Founding Members

***“One must often search their human existence to beg the question,
‘what can I do to make a positive difference in the call on humanity?’”***

-Monalisa Smith

Founder, President, & CEO of Mothers for Justice and Equality

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), **gun violence** in the United States resulted in over **33,500 deaths in 2014**. Of these, approximately **2,549**, or **8%**, were **children**, highlighting the substantial impact of firearms on young lives as part of the overall toll.

Societal expectations often prevent women from prioritizing their own healing, while also compelling them to defend their children's well-being under intense media scrutiny. This dual burden leaves them navigating both personal trauma and public judgment on their roles as mothers. So, in **2014**, a group of mothers and families gathered together and started a national movement to heal families across the nation. The **Annual MAV Conference**, with its tagline **“Heal. Restore. Rebuild,”** honors and supports mothers and families from across the country who have suffered the loss of a family member to gun violence.



Monalisa Smith

Founder, President, CEO,
Mothers for Justice
and Equality
Boston, MA

Monalisa founded Mothers for Justice and Equality (MJE) following the loss of her nephew to neighborhood violence. She gathered fellow mothers, many of whom were also suffering the loss of a child to violence, to share their concerns about the gross amount of violence against children within their neighborhoods. With the goal to educate and empower like-minded individuals and families, Monalisa founded the nonprofit in 2010. She continues to advocate for those struggling and strives to create new programs to help further the cause of ending neighborhood violence and keeping our streets safe.



Rev. Jeffrey L. Brown
Founder of RECAP
Cambridge, MA

Rev. Jeffrey L. Brown is founder of RECAP (Rebuilding Every Community Around Peace) and a key community leader responsible for what the New York Times called the “Boston Miracle,” when the youth homicide rate declined from a high of 73 deaths (1990) to zero (1995-1998). The model of social responsibility Brown helped mastermind involves new roles for youth, police and courts to advance social justice and ensure the right of every young person to live in an urban community without violence.



Milagros & Rafael Burgos
Imani Dream Angel/
Rincon
Chicago, IL

Alexandria Imani was born a miracle baby on March 16, 1996. After a miscarriage, Mrs. Burgos was told she couldn't have children, but Alexandria and her younger brother were miracles. Mrs. Burgos told Alexandria she had a big role: to be a big sister. She held that role until her untimely death by gun violence on October 19, 2014. Mr. and Mrs. Burgos describe their daughter as one who loved life and whose smile lit up a room. She loved baking, the summer, the beach, basketball, holidays, and family time. She was always helping others, with a passion for working with children and dreaming of becoming a social worker. As they live each day in her heartfelt absence, they've turned tragedy into purpose by starting Imani Dream Angel, which brings awareness to prevent gun violence and advocates for safer gun legislation. Mr. and Mrs. Burgos want to prevent other families from going through the tragic absence of a child.



Merryl Eaton
Director of Advocacy &
Education, Christian
Community Action
Hamden, CT

Merryl Eaton is the Director of Advocacy and Education for Christian Community Action in New Haven. She has over thirty years of experience as a community organizer, engaging people of color to advocate for system changes in public policy. She provides leadership, technical assistance, and project management to Mothers and Others for Justice, a grassroots advocacy group. Key areas of interest include Connecticut's lack of affordable housing, healthcare reform, and voter turnout. Merryl's passions are organizing the state-wide legislative campaign to eliminate the “benefit cliff,” which happens when a rise in household income results in a disproportionate reduction in household income, and building power in New Haven to fight for housing justice. She is a proud Parent Leadership Training Institute facilitator and has helped more than 300 people become change agents in diverse communities throughout Connecticut.



Robin F. David
President, The Golden
Foundation
Nashville, TN

Robin F. David is a bestselling author, speaker, coach, and the founder of The Golden Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women through self-care and spiritual guidance. With expertise in Leadership Development, Public Speaking, and Coaching, Robin is a trailblazer in teaching women about self-love and self-care, which she calls "Sacred Balance." She has developed a reputation as a healing and wholeness activator, helping women worldwide achieve balance and fulfillment in their lives.



Rev. Dr. Janie Dowdy-Dandridge, D Min.
Tennessee Gamechangers
United for Justice and
Equality
Paris, TN

Rev. Dr. Janie Dowdy-Dandridge, D.Min., is a high-energy Narrative Leadership Coach, Certified Professional Chaplain, author, educator, and conference leader. Drawing upon over 35 years of pastoral leadership, Dr. Janie Dowdy-Dandridge's ministry style is bold, transparent, authentic, anointed, and liberating. She is the Executive Director of the nonprofit Tennessee Game Changers United for Justice and Equality and the proud pastor of Brown Chapel AME Church in Union City, TN. Additionally, Dr. Dowdy-Dandridge is a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., the American Counseling Association, the Tennessee Association of Pastoral Therapists, and is a pre-licensed Clinical Pastoral Therapist. She is happily married to Rev. Dr. John Dandridge, and together they have six children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.



The Reverend John Dandridge
Tennessee Gamechangers
United for Justice &
Equality NFP
Paris, TN

Rev. Dr. John Dandridge, D.Min., is an ordained elder in the AME Church with over 47 years of ministry experience in AME and COGIC. He serves as the Senior Pastor of Quinn Chapel AME Church in Paris, TN, and is a dedicated leader focused on preaching, teaching, and mentoring. Beyond his pastoral work, Dr. Dandridge is a committed advocate for justice and equality, co-founding Tennessee Game Changers United 4 Justice and Equality. He holds multiple degrees and certifications in theology, mental health, and leadership, alongside a distinguished 22-year military career as a Special Forces officer. A PTSD survivor and author, Dr. Dandridge also hosts the "Come and Dine" broadcast and leads the Dandridge Institute of Theological Studies. Supported by his wife, Dr. Janie Dowdy-Dandridge, he is a devoted family man with a passion for faith, service, and advocacy in the face of personal challenges and loss.



Aretha Maugé
Outreach Coordinator
Mothers for Justice
and Equality
Boston, MA

Aretha started out as a client here at MJE. She tragically lost her son to violence on New Year's Eve 2008. After losing her job for not being social enough, Aretha realized she wasn't getting the care or resources she needed after her son's death. That is until she walked into MJE. Aretha came to MJE in 2011 to find a healing space and be around people who understood her trauma. She later decided to join our nonprofit and continue her healing journey by helping other mothers and families get through their trauma and grief.



Eileen Paterson
Peer Leader & Board
Member
Mothers for Justice
and Equality
Boston, MA

Eileen, a retired Administrator, is a remarkably courageous black woman grounded in her Christian faith. She is a daughter, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Eileen has an Associate's Degree in Business Management from Fisher Junior College and a Compensation and Benefits Management certificate from Northeastern University. She has also volunteered at the Women's Shelter, Shattuck Hospital, and Missionary for Charity in Trinidad.



Nortasha Stingley
Chicago, IL

I am a woman of strong beliefs and faith in God. I am blessed to be the mother of three beautiful children: two sons and a daughter. Unfortunately, on June 25, 2013, my family, faith, and life were forever shaken by a senseless act of gun violence that ended the life of my 19-year-old daughter, Marissa Boyd Stingley. Since my daughter's death, I have become closer to God and an advocate for safer gun laws and universal background checks and to end the straw purchases of firearms. Over the last 10 years, I have held prayer vigils and marches, and spoken to various organizations, schools, churches, and national and international news media outlets. Now, I am dedicated to helping families with the after-effects of losing a child or loved one to violence by empowering and encouraging them. My passion is to work with the youth and adolescents to change their mindsets and perception of life. With God, Divine Connections, and my Vision of a thriving, innovative world, I believe we can begin to heal, rejoice, and become peaceful and stronger together.



More Photos



2024 Courage & Conviction Award Winners

"There is no greater power than that of mothers. Of the dedication and determination that you are going to do anything to build the world that our kids deserve."

- Boston Mayor Michelle Wu



The Courage & Conviction Awards are given to community leaders who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in advocating for the safety and well-being of children and at-risk populations falling victim to gun violence. Even though they've lost their own children, they've worked tirelessly to keep their communities safe and protect at-risk youth. Their resilience and dedication inspire hope and strength in all who seek a safer future for our children.



Annette Brown-Morris

Founder of
Parents Of Angel Children
Albany, NY

About Annette

Annette Brown is a Staten Island, New York native and a devoted mother of four. In 2014, her life changed forever when her son, Wayne Lamar Best, was tragically murdered in Schenectady, New York. Out of her pain, Annette became a beacon of hope, founding Let's Talk with Annette in 2019, an online forum for people facing personal hardships and dark times. In 2024, Annette founded Parent of Angel Children Inc., a nonprofit based in Albany, New York, which supports grieving parents through weekly support groups, quarterly events, and annual retreats. The organization has extended its reach beyond the U.S., including members from Canada. She is committed to organizations focused on community care, with her mission being to provide peace and comfort to those who have lost a child. Annette's motto is: "If we had more love, we would have less violence."

Parents of Angel Children - Mission Statement:

Our mission is to offer a safe and understanding environment where grieving parents can find solace and community. We provide a range of services including weekly support groups, individual counseling sessions, quarterly events, annual luncheons, and retreats. Our goal is to ensure that no parent has to navigate their grief alone.



7
months

**Company
Age**



100

**Annual Clients
Served Annually**



\$100,000

**Projected Annual
Budget***

"December 9, 2014, my life changed. That was the day my first born son, Wayne, was murdered. Took me down the darkest hole that I've ever been down and I honestly didn't think I was ever going to come out of that deep depression and grief. I learned that the only way that I can get help is by helping other people."

-Annette Brown-Morris

*The average cost to serve an individual is estimated at \$1,000





Carolyn Dixon

Where Do We Go From Here Inc
Jamaica, NY

About Carolyn

On May 5, 2014, a devastating tragedy hit home for Carolyn, a mother of three sons whom she loves dearly and cared for selflessly. Carolyn's son, Darrell Lynch, was shot in front of her over a parking incident and took his last breath in her arms in South Jamaica, Queens. Carolyn's life was forever changed. Not knowing how she would continue to live without her son, Carolyn

recalls asking her mother, "Where do we go from here?" Her mother's response was, "LIVE." Carolyn's career shifted from being a Substance Abuse Counselor to becoming a Life Camp Inc. employee, where she comforts other families affected by gun violence, helping them live their "new life" without their loved ones. In 2018, Carolyn started her own 501(c)(3) nonprofit, "Where Do We Go From Here Inc.," aimed at improving the mental health of families affected by gun violence and helping them transition from being stuck in their grieving process.

Where Do We Go From Here Inc - Mission Statement:

Where Do We Go From Here Inc. is committed to transforming the pain of violence into a path towards healing and empowerment. Through Mentorship and Relationship Building, Life Skills Workshops, and Family Strengthening Support, we aim to fortify the individuals and families we serve, guiding them towards a future defined not by their past traumas but by their resilience, strength, and unity.



9
years

**Company
Age**



100

**Annual Clients
Served Anually**



\$95,000

**Projected Annual
Budget***

*"The love and the support that you
give to the mothers that you work
with is our therapy."*

-Carolyn Dixon

*The average cost to serve an individual is estimated at \$1,000





Michelle Norris

Director of Public Relations and Co-founder of Corey's Network Inc.
Kansas City, MO

About Michelle

Michelle R. Norris has been in the fields of Social Work and Education for 35 years. She has worked with abused and battered women, adjudicated youth, non-traditional students in a post-secondary educational setting, and urban core youth. She holds a Master's in Organizational Development Psychology, and her

experience in Social Services gives her a specific skill set for developing a strong Board of Directors for a nonprofit program. Her MA in Management is focused on fundraising. Michelle is a 2017 recipient of the Woman of Distinction Award, the House of Representatives "Glory of Missouri" award, the Kindest Kansas Citian award, and is a published author. She is also a member of the National Association of Professional Women, the National Professional Honor Society, and Nonprofit Connect.

Corey's Network - Mission Statement:

The mission of Corey's Network Inc. is to provide immediate support, advocacy, and services for the surviving victims of homicide in the Kansas City metropolitan precincts without advocates.



10
years

**Company
Age**



80

**Annual Clients
Served Anually**



\$33,785

**Projected Annual
Budget***

"We've helped pay for over 430 funerals of homicide victims here in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. We will be utilizing the gift of \$1,000 to help pay for Christmas presents for our clients who have children under age 17 to help encourage them to be part of their community when they're trying to heal from such a terrible loss."

-Michelle Norris





Sherry Nolen

Founder of Saving Ourselves
Chicago, IL

About Sherry

Sherry Nolen is the CEO and founder of Saving Ourselves, an advocacy organization dedicated to addressing gun violence and supporting families affected by it. Motivated by the tragic loss of her son Akaeem Nolen, who was killed on July 7, 2021, Sherry has become a powerful voice in the fight against gun violence in Jackson, Mississippi, and beyond. Through

Saving Ourselves, she provides resources, support, and a sense of community to those who have experienced similar tragedies, striving to create safer neighborhoods and lasting change.

Saving Ourselves - Mission Statement:

Our mission is to empower and uplift families affected by gun violence, supporting them in transforming their pain into purpose. We strive to provide education, support, and inspiration to these families, enabling them to find healing, strength, and resilience in the face of unimaginable loss. Through our agency, we aim to create a global network of compassion, understanding, and advocacy, fostering communities that stand together against gun violence and its devastating impact. Together, we will raise awareness, drive change, and build a world where no mother has to endure the heartbreak of losing a child to senseless violence.



2
years

**Company
Age**



100

**Annual Clients
Served Anually**



\$100,000

**Projected Annual
Budget***

"I stand here today because of my son, Akaeem, who long before he was taken from us by gun violence, understood the heart of the work I do for our community. He saw the need for our communities to rise up and take action. Because no one else was going to save us, Akaeem was the one who named our organization 'Saving Ourselves.'"

-Sherry Nolen

*The average cost to serve an individual is estimated at \$1,000





Zanetia Henry

Operation Recovery Inc.
Marietta, GA

About Zanetia

Zanetia Henry is a beacon of light and an example of hope to all who desire to overcome the darkness of grief. Zanetia is the Chief Executive Officer of Operation Recovery Inc., Woodson Center Voices of Black Mothers United State Lead & Violence Prevention Coordinator, a Department of Justice Certified Victims' Advocate, a Grief Hope Coach, a 25+ year licensed educator, a

Trauma-Informed Responder, a Mental Health First Aid Responder, and a Motivational Speaker. Of all her titles, the two most cherished are Gee Gee and Ma, a testament to the deep love and significance of family in her life. Blessed with two beautiful children and three amazing grandchildren, Zanetia can hold her daughter and grandchildren in her arms, but there is a void in her heart left by her unforgettable 22-year-old son, DreCharles Henry. Zanetia transformed her pain into a powerful purpose, dedicating herself to supporting grieving parents, advocating for crime victims, fostering community unity, and working towards ending violence.

Operation Recovery Inc - Mission Statement:

To provide support to grieving parents, while offering non traditional opportunities for youth to develop and grow and discover their purpose. We have helped survivors by providing resources and support for healing. We've provided platforms for youth to be heard as well as gain strategies to improve their decision making.



5
years

**Company
Age**



300

**Annual Clients
Served Anually**



\$10,000

**Projected Annual
Budget***

"I didn't choose this journey; this journey chose me. However, I can choose how I travel. I choose to travel hand and heart with others who have been ChoZen, while serving along the way."

Zanetia Henry



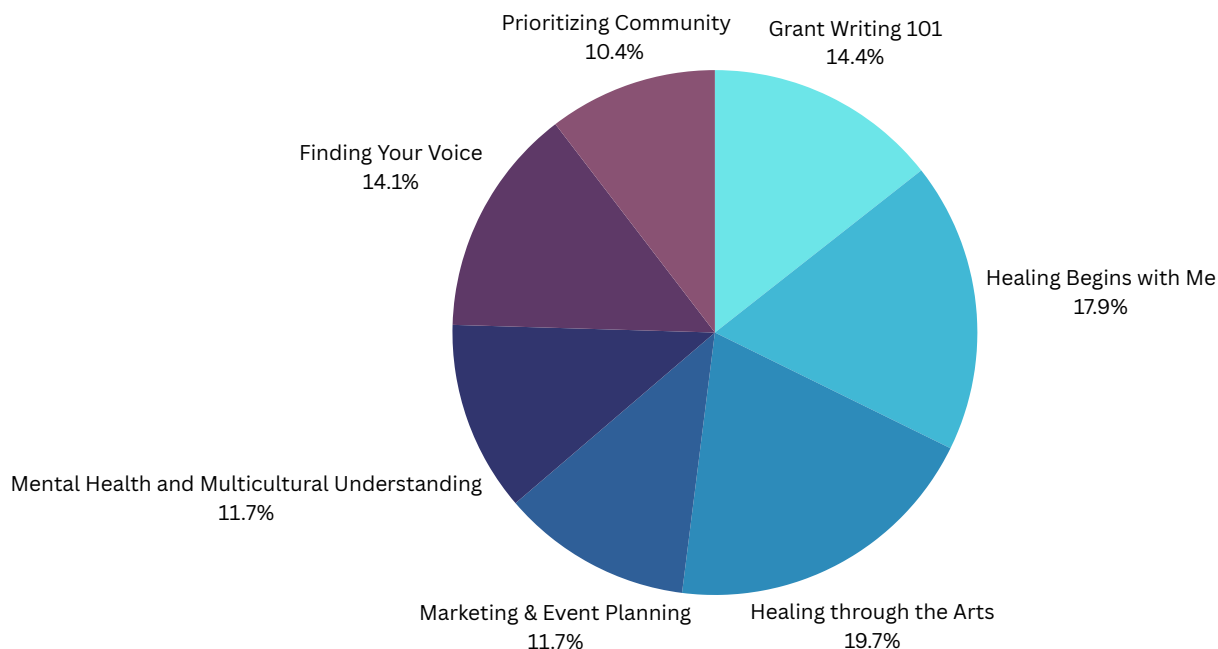
2024 Workshops

“We are trying to follow the example of MJE in building community and bringing more and more people into the responsibility and the opportunity of peace and healing in our community.”

-Boston Mayor Michelle Wu

Healing from trauma is a complex journey that involves restoring emotional well-being and rebuilding one's life, particularly through culturally sensitive therapeutic approaches. Workshops focused on multicultural counseling address the unique needs of diverse communities, facilitating healing by validating and acknowledging individual experiences shaped by cultural, racial, and historical contexts. These sessions empower participants not only to navigate their recovery but also to establish nonprofit organizations that advocate for marginalized communities. By fostering collaborative relationships, they create impactful solutions that promote mental health and resilience, emphasizing that healing is a communal effort as much as a personal one. The national participants bring home what they learned, educating and influencing thousands of lives in their communities.

Workshop Attendance



Mental Health and Multicultural Understanding

Facilitator: Nana Akomaa Kyerematen
Master's Clinician,
Roxbury Multi-Service Center
Boston, MA

This workshop discussed the multicultural perspective of mental illness, which filled the need for specific and beneficial aspects of multicultural counseling. Mental illness is not one-size-fits-all. A person's culture, including their race, ethnic tribe, values, and life experiences, mold their view and management of mental illness in a significant way. For example, the trauma from the vestiges of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation (Lindsey, 2015), and countless other traumas continue to take their toll on an individual's emotional well-being and psychological stability. The workshop examined the shared value systems among African, Asian, Haitian, and Hispanic immigrants and the African American and Native American sub-cultures. We discussed specific differences among them and appropriate methods of approach for effective therapeutic treatment.



Grant Writing & Management 101 – The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

Facilitator: Ruth Senchyna
Parents of Murdered Children
Albany, NY

Grant Writing & Management 101 was A basic introductory overview of grant writing and management for the beginner. Topics included:

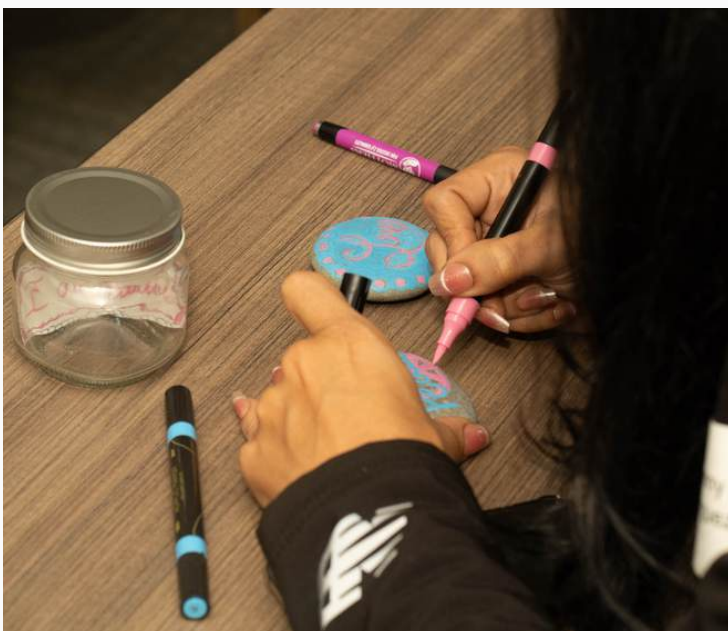
- Where the money comes from: Government vs. foundation grants
- Components of a good grant proposal
- Goals, Objectives, Indicators, Outcomes, Log Frames, Theories of Change, and all that jazz
- You got the money—now what?



Healing through the Arts

**Facilitators: Arielle Romain, Director of Health Equity &
Shreya Sankar, Family Advocate
Mothers for Justice and Equality
Boston, MA**

Healing through the Arts allowed participants to explore a variety of materials and techniques to create and reflect during the recovery journey while they developed skills to help feel grounded during the process of healing.



Prioritizing Community Partnerships and Engagement: A Crucial Approach to Empowering Communities of Color



Facilitator: Sherry Nolan
Founder of Saving Ourselves
Chicago, IL

This workshop explored the importance of building strong, collaborative relationships with local organizations and community members to address the unique challenges faced by communities of color. Participants learned strategies for effective engagement, how to foster trust and mutual respect, and the role of culturally responsive practices in creating impactful partnerships. Through interactive discussions and case studies, the workshop highlighted how prioritizing these connections could lead to more sustainable, community-driven solutions that empower and uplift marginalized communities.



Marketing, Communication, and Event Planning for Non-Profits

**Facilitators: Arielys Morales, Event Coordinator &
Mel Powsner, Marketing Communications Manager
Mothers for Justice and Equality
Boston, MA**

In the world of non-profit organizations, marketing and event planning are not just separate tasks—they are powerful tools that, when combined, significantly amplify impact and outreach. Understanding how to seamlessly integrate marketing efforts with event planning ensures that every event hosted not only raises awareness, but further the organization's goals. In this workshop, participants learned how to leverage events as a marketing tool, drive engagement, and create lasting relationships with donors, volunteers, and the community.



Healing Begins with Me: Embracing Inner Strength - A Journey of Personal Healing and Transformation



**Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Janie Dowdy-Dandridge,
D Min. - Tennessee Gamechangers
United for Justice and Equality
Paris, TN**

Participants embarked on a transformative journey with Healing Begins with Me: Embracing Inner Strength - A Journey of Personal Healing and Transformation. This workshop empowered individuals to take charge of their healing processes by tapping into their inner resilience and strength. Through interactive activities, reflective exercises, and guided discussions, participants explored various dimensions of personal well-being, including emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Whether overcoming past traumas, managing stress, or seeking personal growth, this workshop provided the tools and support needed to foster meaningful and lasting change. Healing is not a destination, but a journey; it all begins with you.



Bereavement Blocks

Facilitator: Michelle Norris

**Director of Public Relations and Co-founder
of Corey's Network Inc.**

Kansas City, MO

The "Bereavement Blocks" seminar was an interactive activity using color-coded Jenga-style blocks to represent the stages of grief. Participants rolled a dice, removed the corresponding block, and discussed how that stage manifests in their experiences. The randomness of the dice symbolizes the unpredictability of grief, while the growing tower represents how emotions are intertwined. As the tower inevitably collapsed, it prompts reflection on how to rebuild after grief overwhelms. This exercise has been well-received by clients and is designed to help both professionals and victims of homicide understand and cope with grief.



2024 Panels

"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

-Maya Angelou

American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist

The panels "Building Safe Communities through Economic Empowerment," "Healing Begins with Me: Empowering Women to Action," and "Finding Your Voice" came together to address critical themes of empowerment, healing, and advocacy. They aimed to inspired participants to recognize the profound connections between economic stability and community safety, highlighting strategies that foster inclusive growth. Additionally, they emphasized the personal journeys of healing and empowerment, particularly for women, encouraging individual action as a catalyst for broader social change. By fostering self-expression and advocacy, these panels empowered attendees to articulate their experiences and drive positive change within their communities, ultimately creating a resilient and supportive environment for all.



Building Safe Communities through Economic Empowerment

Moderator:

Nick Bates

Director, Howard Thurman
Center for Common
Ground at Boston
University
Boston, MA

Panelists:

Reverend Mark V. Scott

Boston Public Health
Commission Division of
Violence Prevention
Director
Boston, MA

The Reverend John Dandridge

Tennessee Gamechangers
United for Justice &
Equality NFP
Paris, TN

Jay Vilar

Boston Director
The Fountain Fund
Boston, MA

Donald M. Osgood Sr.

Program Director, Boston
Public Health Community
Healing Response Network
Boston, MA

Eric Leslie

Lead Organizer of
Union Capital
Cambridge, MA

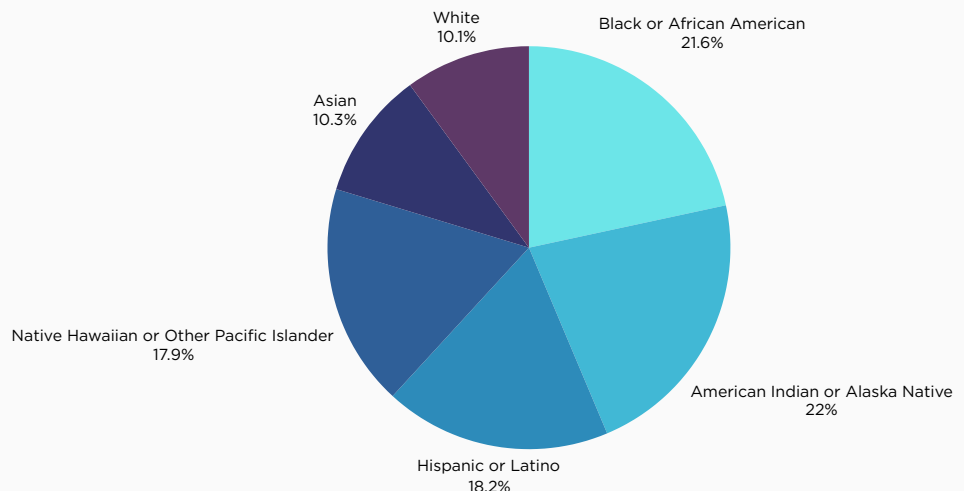


***"The only way to empower our people is to empower
our economy."***

-Barack Obama

44th President of the United States of America

Racial Demographics of Poverty in America 2023



Healing Begins with Me: Empowering Women to Action



Moderator:

**Rev. Dr. Janie Dowdy-
Dandridge, D Min.**

Tennessee Gamechangers
United for Justice and
Equality
Paris, TN

Tekesia Shields

Founder of Mother's
Against Gang Violence/
Credible Messenger of Ga.
Family Engagement
Specialist
Atlanta, GA

Zeneta B. Everhart

Council Woman
City of Buffalo Common
Council, Masten District
Buffalo, NY

Zanetia Henry

Operation Recovery Inc.
Marietta, GA

Ruth Rollins

President and Founder of
We Are Better Together
Warren Daniel Hairston
Project
Boston, MA

***"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without
knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up
for all women."***

— Maya Angelou

American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist

Finding Your Voice



Merryl Eaton

Director of Advocacy &
Education, Christian
Community Action
Hamden, CT

Myra C. Smith

Neighborhood Services
Advocate (NSA)
New Haven, CT

Holly Hackett

Mothers & Others for Justice
Branford, CT

“The level of violence we encounter in our communities is deeply troubling. So, the work you’re doing, your advocacy, your care, is absolutely essential.”

**— Dr. Melissa Gilliam
President of Boston University**



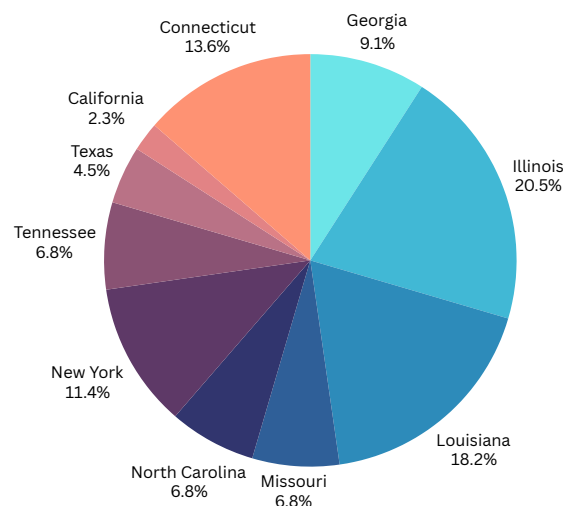
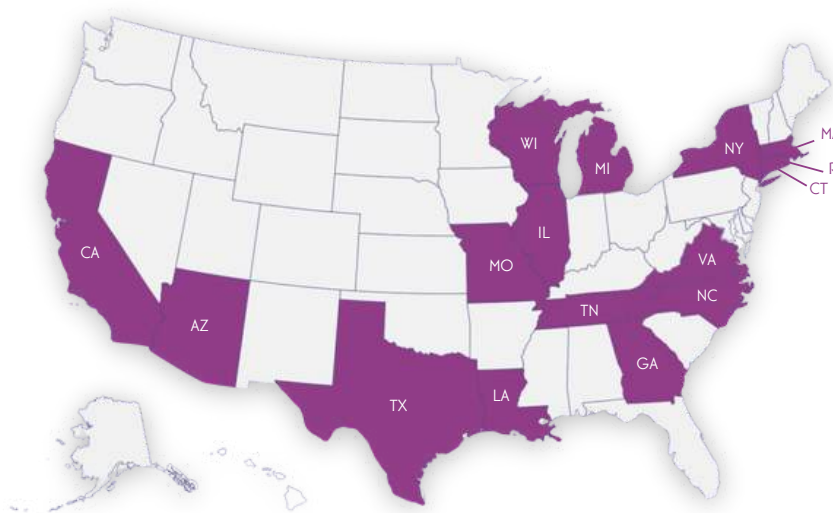
What's Next?

Mothers Against Violence Learning Community Cohort

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

American Baptist minister, activist, and political philosopher



Connect with nonprofit leaders from across the country!

MAV Learning Community is an online space dedicated to fostering **psychological safety, healing, exploration, and connection**. This supportive environment empowers individuals to learn, share resources, and build meaningful relationships with others who share similar experiences. Through training, resources, and growth opportunities, the community **encourages members to connect and thrive together**.

If you lead a **women-led nonprofit** focused on **healing and sustainable growth**, we invite you to join us! Become part of a community of like-minded changemakers dedicated to impactful movements and personal wellness. Together, we support one another through **unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith**.

MAV Learning Community Cohort Coming Soon 2025

Applications open January 2025

Free to Apply

Who We're Looking For:

- 5-10 **women-led organizations** who are committed to building a sustainable nonprofit movement while healing through trauma.

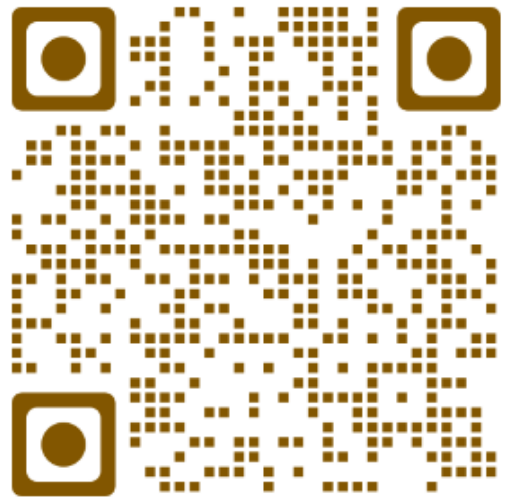
Fellowship Benefits:

- **1-Year Fellowship**
 - A full year of guidance, support, and resources to help you grow and sustain your nonprofit.
- **Operating Grant**
 - Access to essential funding to empower your organization's mission and reach.
- **Business & Strategy Coaching**
 - One-on-one business coaching and webinars dedicated to sustainable growth.
- **Entrepreneurship & Career Readiness Programs**
 - Practical support for nonprofit development and leadership.
- **Resource Library & Workshops**
 - Comprehensive resources and hands-on workshops to advance your knowledge.
- **Advocacy and Activism**
 - Resources to strengthen your impact in advocacy and community engagement.
- **Wellness & Community Support**
 - Healing workshops and peer networks for guidance and inspiration.



**Coming Soon!
Register for
the movement**

Visit our MAV Website



Discover all the exciting details about our upcoming events and initiatives by visiting our new and exclusive website at mavconference.org!



Follow us on Social Media



Stay up-to-date with Mothers for Justice and Equality! Your support helps us spread the word on our important mission to end neighborhood violence.



Facebook - [@mothersforjusticeandequality](https://www.facebook.com/@mothersforjusticeandequality)



Instagram - [@mothersforjusticeandequality](https://www.instagram.com/@mothersforjusticeandequality)



Linkedin - [@Mothers for Justice and Equality](https://www.linkedin.com/company/@Mothers%20for%20Justice%20and%20Equality)



Twitter/X - [@wesayitsnotokay](https://twitter.com/@wesayitsnotokay)



[Subscribe to our Newsletter](#)



www.mothersforjusticeandequality.org







MOTHERS
FOR JUSTICE & EQUALITY

Mother to Mother, Neighbor to Neighbor, together we can change the story of our streets.

-Monalisa Smith
Founder, President, & CEO of Mothers for Justice and Equality

Mission Statement

The mission of MJE is to end neighborhood violence by empowering mothers and youth to challenge the normalization of violence and become effective catalysts for change in their homes, schools, and communities. We engage mothers, youth, & families by providing targeted support, educational opportunities, and the opportunity to advocate for peace as a community.

Contact Us

☎ (617) 516-8086

✉ info@mothersforjusticeandequality.org

🌐 mothersforjusticeandequality.org

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