



The **CAMPAIGN** for the  
**FAIR SENTENCING**  
of **YOUTH**

## **Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network (ICAN)**

### **About ICAN**

The Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network (ICAN) is a national network of formerly incarcerated children that provides support for its members and empowers them to create positive change in their communities. ICAN identifies, mobilizes, and amplifies the experiences of these leaders in order to advocate for legal system reform and an end to the extreme sentencing of children.

Members of the ICAN network are individuals who committed harm as children and were given extreme or life sentences but received second chances due to laws that were created to give release opportunities for deserving people. Upon their release, these leaders have not just contributed to society financially, but have found meaningful ways to serve their communities. Among the hundreds who have been released, there are teachers, substance abuse counselors, ministers, truck drivers, entrepreneurs, re-entry specialists, factory workers, restorative justice practitioners, translators, and more. They are by all accounts a boon to American society, finding creative ways to serve their communities, and this nation would benefit from showing mercy to those who are able to prove to the parole board that they are ready to responsibly rejoin society.

Our ICAN support system includes some of the largest corporations in the world. Among them are: **Verizon, Google, Lyft and Starbucks**. They have dedicated their time, finances and resources to ICAN members nationwide in a variety of ways including providing: meaningful employment, safe transportation, technology training, professional development opportunities and many other resources.

### **Mission**

ICAN is committed to creating a truly equitable and transformative legal system that recognizes children's capacity for change and provides them with equal opportunity for success. We are dedicated to using our stories to bring awareness to the mistreatment of children by the legal system and the racial, class, and gender disparities in incarceration. As ICAN members, we support each other by providing community care, professional skill-building opportunities, and connecting members to the reintegration resources necessary to rebuild our lives and advocate for change.

## What Do ICAN Members Do?

- **Speak publicly as subject-matter experts and living examples of positive change** to system-impacted children, legislators, stakeholders, and media networks about the realities of incarceration in order to change the damaging narratives about incarcerated youth.
  - **Create a safe space for formerly incarcerated youth** through mutual networks of support and understanding among its members, with regular check-ins and self-care retreats. ICAN members participate in monthly national calls as well as monthly Heart-to-Heart Conversations designed to address the unique needs of formerly incarcerated women.
  - **Benefit from resources, training, and educational opportunities** to help them be successful in their communities and empower them to use their voices for change.
  - **Advocate for changes in punitive policies** that impose harsh sentences on youth that fail to account for the fundamental differences between children and adults.
  - **Fight for racial equity and equity for all** by changing the carceral system that disproportionately targets children of color and subjects them to extreme sentences.
  - **Engage with survivors of youth violence, their families, and the families of incarcerated people** to emphasize accountability and remorse while increasing understanding of children's ability to change.
- Most importantly, ICAN members show through their daily lives** that everyone is deserving of a second chance and should not be defined by their worst mistakes. They are living examples of what second chances look like.

To get involved with the ICAN community, please contact Eddie Ellis at [eellis@cfsy.org](mailto:eellis@cfsy.org) or Catherine Jones at [cjones@cfsy.org](mailto:cjones@cfsy.org).

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