



Jacksonville Urban League
Center for Advocacy and Social Justice

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*



ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022



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History

The Jacksonville Urban League's Center for Advocacy and Social Justice began program development in the summer of 2020. The founding vision of the Center for Advocacy and Social Justice was to be a leading advocate for promoting access to quality education, economic opportunity, community engagement, health, and wellness. The Center for Advocacy and Social Justice reached out to like-minded organizations and established partnerships focusing on its mission to identify critical equity gaps and to inform the Northeast Florida Community in a way that inspires community action.



What We Do

The Center for Advocacy and Social Justice (CASJ) supports the League's mission to help **secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights**. The Center simultaneously promotes the development of good citizens and the proper and equal treatment of all north Florida residents regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, or sexual orientation.

Partnering with other social justice allies, educational and religious institutions, and individuals the CASJ advocates for:

1. Regular and open communication between citizens and government
2. Legislation promoting human potential over-incarceration and a consistently just application of the law
3. Opportunities for individuals to gain access to knowledge, training, and education initiatives that facilitate healthy life outcomes
4. Basic services to African Americans and other underserved situated in the urban core

Through community engagement, research, and analysis, the CASJ monitors the success of JUL activities and that of other community organizations in underserved communities to provide support for continuous improvement. The CASJ involves students from regional and national higher education institutions as well as legal and health professionals to advocate for policy initiatives identified through these processes.



CASJ Internship

Since the Center's founding in the Summer of 2020, the Center has relied on support from its Social Justice Interns. Social Justice Interns are **graduate and undergraduate students from across the country** who major in an array of disciplines. Social Justice Interns assist the Center in executing its social justice programs, facilitating partnerships, and building their professional development skills

OUR PILLARS

These pillars allow interns to investigate their passions in meaningful ways that give them the confidence to drive the change they want to see in their future career opportunities and society.

RESEARCH

1. Use quality investigative techniques to gather information on a chosen topic
2. Translate information into a short paper that analyzes the content from a relevant perspective that will be published on the JUL CASJ website after peer and subject-matter expert review

PROFESSIONALISM

1. The applied practice of professional communication, strategic planning, interdisciplinary teamwork, and leadership
2. Applied practice includes letters, emails, community engagement planning, hosting town hall, grant writing, etc.

EMPIRICAL WORK

1. Creation of tangible products that can be shared with the community to empower them toward a productive and successful life
2. Products include social media posts, brochures, flyers, video creation, articles, and infographics

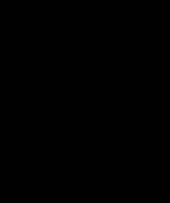


CASJ Internship

To date, **seventy-seven interns** have answered the call from the following institutions of higher learning:

American University
Ball State University
Barnard College
Boston University Law School
Columbia University
Emory University School of Law
Florida A&M School of Law
Florida Coastal School of Law
Florida Southern University
Florida State University
Georgia State University
Georgia Southern University
Georgetown University
Harvard University School of Law
Johns Hopkins University
Southern University Law Center
Stevenson University
St. Francis College

Tulane University
University of California, Los Angeles School of Law
University of Central Florida
University of Delaware
University of Alabama
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Central Florida
University of Georgia
University of Iowa School of Law
University of South Florida
University of Tampa
University of Minnesota
University of New Haven
University of Northeast Florida
University of Virginia
William and Mary University



Our Partners

The Center relies heavily on the collaboration between its partners and sponsors. Community partnerships help guide the Center’s initiatives and deepen efforts for actionable change.

To date, **over sixty partners** have helped aid the Center in its mission to empower communities and change lives:

100 Black Men
904Ward
ACLU of Florida
African American Nurses Association
All Things Diverse, LLC
AME Ministers Alliance
Aspire Duval
Bethune Cookman University
Black Church Food Security Network
Buck Squad
CaRE2 Health Equity Center
CareQuest Institute
Center for Children’s Rights
City of Jacksonville Safer Together Program
Discussions that Encounter Program
Duval County Public Schools
Duval County Soil and Water Conservation District
Educating Minorities about Transplants Incorporated (EMAT)
Edward-Waters University
Episcopal Church of Florida
Faith In Florida
Feeding Northeast Florida

First Coast Black Nurses Association
Florida A&M University Pharmacy
Florida Consortium of Urban League Affiliates
Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
Florida Office of the Attorney General
Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC)
Florida Rising
Florida State Parks Foundation
Floridians for Dental Access
Fort Mose Historical Society
Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida
Health Smart Holistic Health Program for Seniors
Here Tomorrow
ISAIAH Institute of New Orleans
Jacksonville Area Legal Aid
Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board
Jacksonville Housing Authority
Jacksonville Jaguars
Jacksonville NAACP

Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office
JASMYN
League of Women Voters
Loyola University
Mayo Clinic
NAMI Jacksonville
Northeast Florida Medical Society
Northeast Florida Pediatric Society
OneJax
Operation New Hope
Partnership for Child Health
Patient-Centered Research Collaborative
Pause for the Truth Podcast
Project R.E.A.C.H.
Publix
SAMHSA
Southerners for Medicaid Expansion
Sunshine Health
Technologies for Justice
UME Church of Jacksonville
United Way
University of Florida College of Medicine Jacksonville
University of North Florida
Wolfson’s Children’s Hospital
Zebra Coalition



Our Partners



HOW WE ASSIST OUR PARTNERS

By partnering with the Jacksonville Urban League and its Center for Advocacy and Social Justice, community organizations and businesses can receive assistance on how to be a voice for closing the gap in areas of education, economic opportunity, community engagement, health and wellness, and criminal justice reform. The Center provides a platform for exemplary work that is already being done in the community to be showcased. Additionally, it provides a space for open dialogue for people from all backgrounds.

The Center takes projects to the next level through connecting resources to the community, building long-lasting infrastructures that reflect the goals of our partners by assisting with 501 C (3) and 501 C (4) creation, educational and social media campaigns, training, town halls, engagement circles, grant proposals, and overall passion for the work that we do.





Our Initiatives

- 1** Public Health
- 2** Voter Suppression
- 3** Education
- 4** Criminal Justice
- 5** Neighborhood Bill of Rights
- 6** Racial Healing and Reconciliation
- 7** Reclamation Program for Returning Citizens



PUBLIC HEALTH



The Public Health Group seeks to address the social determinants of health through collaboration with our partners such as the Patient-Centered Research Collaborative, Population Health Consortium, and First Coast Black Nurses Association to close the health equity gaps. The initial area of Public Health focus at the CASJ's founding was COVID-19. However, the Public Health group has expanded since its founding into new topics and now includes issues beyond COVID-19 and vaccine hesitancy and into mental and behavioral health, food security, oral health access, healthcare coverage (insurance), health literacy, health access for senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and minority communities; LGBTQIA+ health, and current public health issues such as monkeypox



PUBLIC HEALTH

COVID-19 and Vaccine Hesitancy

In collaboration with the Project R.E.A.C.H. program, the Center trained 82 small businesses in Health Zone 1 (Zip codes 32202, 32204, 32206, 32208, 32209, and 32254) on the importance of health and wellness in the workplace. Topics included healthy eating, exercise, mental health, and COVID-19. 77 of these training sessions were completed in person, 4 were by educational videos, and 1 was completed through the Zoom platform. This program enhanced health literacy in the community and dispelled some of the medical mistrust that exists among some African American and minority community members.

Additionally, our Vaccine Hesitancy and Mental Health for Businesses Town Hall on April 30, 2022, specifically discussed why medical mistrust exists, ways to build trust, ingredients in the vaccines, common misconceptions about COVID-19, and how we can move forward.





PUBLIC HEALTH



Mental and Behavioral Health

CASJ interns took on a passion for discussing mental health and how to promote well-being among not only themselves but the community. The Center's partnership with Sunshine Health has allowed interns to create content and provide a space for conversation to eliminate the stigma around the topic, especially for the youth audience. Tangible items that have been created include a mental health toolkit in both English and Spanish, a Youth Mental Health Survey, a Town Hall, and a recording discussing the resources and what individuals can do if they need help.

The partnership also featured content surrounding the implementation of 988, the new and universal telephone number and hotline system for mental health crises and suicide prevention which went into effect on July 16th, 2022. Two town halls were hosted surrounding this implementation. The first was centered on what Jacksonville is doing and featured speakers from NAMI Jacksonville and the Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition. The second town hall was centered around what is happening nationally and featured the Senior Medical Advisor for SAMHSA.

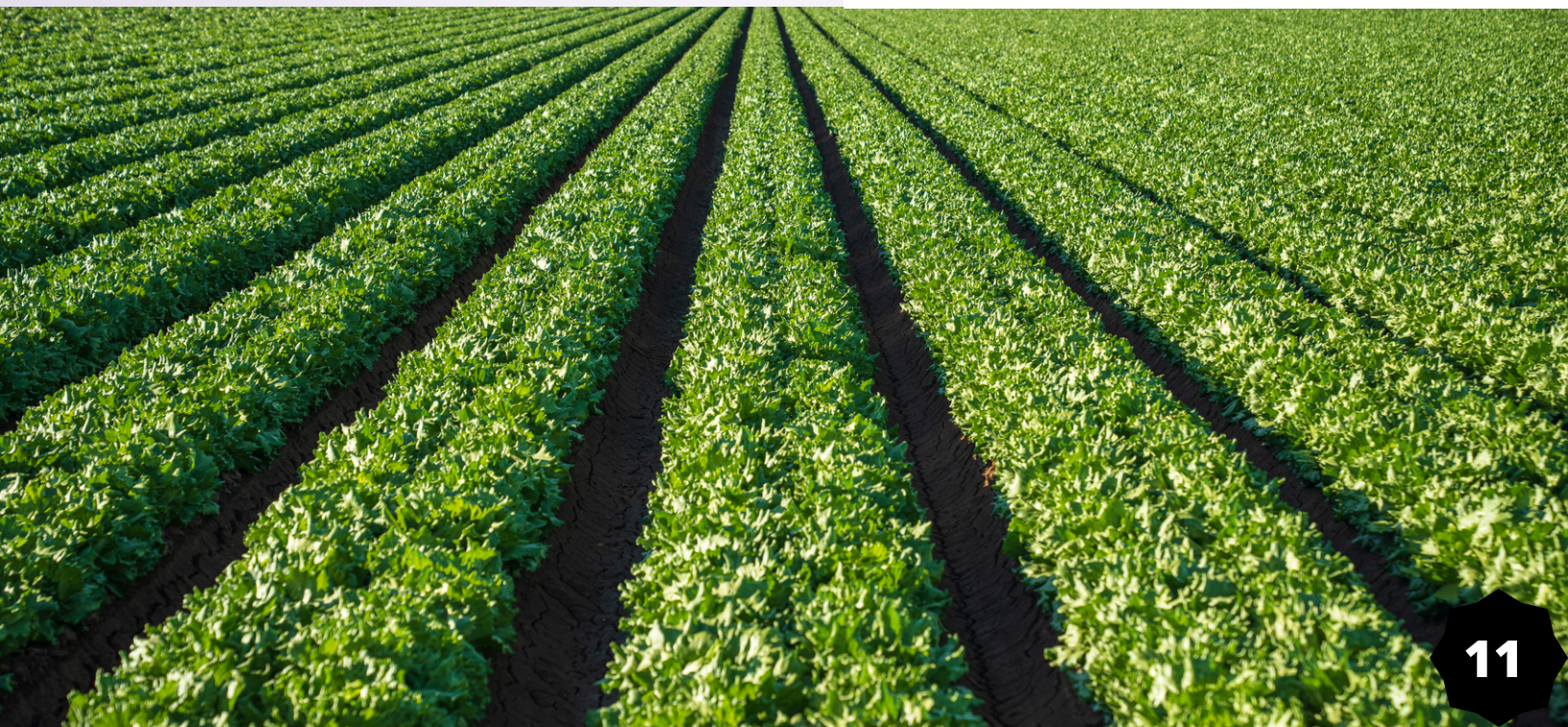




PUBLIC HEALTH

Food Security

In partnership with the Health-Smart Holistic Health Program for Seniors, the Center has been a voice for the program on transportation barriers that participants and community members are experiencing with the ReditRide system. During the Jacksonville Transportation Alliance meetings, the center with Jerry McMillan continues to advocate for increased routes to the apartment and residential communities. The Jacksonville Transportation Alliance has taken the Center's feedback into account and expanded its ReditRide system to the neighborhood Walmart.





PUBLIC HEALTH

Oral Health Access

The oral health crisis disproportionately affects minority communities and is a racial and social justice issue that must be addressed through oral health reform. The Center has partnered with Floridians for Dental Access and received funding from CareQuest to raise awareness about the public health issue as well as garner support for the fight to improve the dental workforce, reduce treatment costs, and decrease transportation barriers. The Center's Town Halls, infographics, and presentations to community stakeholders have increased oral health literacy and introduced new stakeholders to the cause.



HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE EQUITY?

Advocate for bills that increase oral health access

- Donated dental care through charity
- Increase insurance reimbursement rates
- Student loan repayment programs for dentists
- Authorization of dental hygienists to direct access



PUBLIC HEALTH

Future Strategic Goals

Creating a community health worker toolkit that outlines workforce development in the public health space which can be used by JUL's Center for Education, Career Development, and Workforce Services

Partnerships with JUL CASJ allow continued and sustained expansion of JUL's reach to underserved communities relative to health and wellness

Assisting Hermonyone Walker in the creation of a 501 C (3) for her Food Pantry Coalition

Bringing on the Florida Consortium of Urban League Affiliates and Florida NAACP branches to join Floridians for Dental Access



VOTER SUPPRESSION



The Voter Suppression group seeks to raise awareness on efforts that suppress voting generally and in specific areas such as the disabled and minority communities through town halls, educational campaigns, canvassing, phone banking, community events, and collaborative meetings of JUL key players in the field and raise awareness of key issues among the community.

The goal of the group is that all individuals within Jacksonville understand the importance of their vote and take actionable steps to not only vote but make educated votes that will empower leaders that prioritize the community's needs.



VOTER SUPPRESSION

Progress Made

Through the National Urban League's support, the CASJ has aided the JUL's #ReclaimYourVote Campaign. The JUL Guild President and JUL Organizing Manager for the Voter Education Project talked on the Pause for the Truth Podcast about the importance of voting and how to bridge the gap between generations to build a better future. Additionally, the JUL has offered Voter Registration at Edward Waters University and Military Day. The best turnout was at Edward Waters College with 25 new college registrants.

Future

- **October 8, 2022**-Friends and Family Fun Day/Voter Registration Event- In collaboration with Faith in Florida and the AME Ministers Alliance, this event will include food (fish fry) Burgers & Hot dogs, drinks, games, music, and a table set up for voter registration.
- **November 1, 2022**- Sister Strut-The JUL will be tabling and encouraging attendees who are registered to get out and vote.
- Souls and Strolls to the Polls- A church collaboration where community organizations come together and encourage minority communities to go to the polls and exercise their right to vote to emphasize the message that #BlackVotesMatter.



**RECLAIM
YOUR VOTE**
PROTEST TO POWER



EDUCATION



The Education Group supports Community Outreach Coordinator Felicity Price-Forehand in her efforts to implement programs that reflect the community's needs regarding educational access and resources. Overall, the group seeks to change the dynamic of educational neglect in Jacksonville, establishing a network of concerned individuals who will significantly improve education levels in Duval County and its surrounding counties.



EDUCATION



Progress Made

The Center has pushed 2 surveys one about the Mileage Tax and the other about the ½ Cent Sales Tax. Each assesses the community's feelings about increased taxation and allocation to school programs. Marketing material for the Father's in Schools Committee and other local education organizations and programs has been created and distributed utilizing the JUL network. Letters of Intent have been drafted for two funding opportunities. One of the opportunities would allow the current work being done to be used to answer the following research questions A) What are the impacts of educational policies on learning outcomes for students in economically disadvantaged regions of Jacksonville? B) How does the intersectionality between educational support systems, housing, teacher support, and poverty impact community response and student performance?

Future

- Apply for more funding opportunities that enable the work to continue such as the Kellogg Grant
- In collaboration with the ReadJax Project and Initiative, establish a reading nook at the JUL which promotes literacy for youth
- Disseminate the School to Prison Pipeline Survey to schools to assess student feelings of support as well as potentially risky behavior
- Engage local news outlets to showcase parental concerns about the education system and the tearing down of educational landmarks





CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM



The Criminal Justice Reform group relies on its partnership with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Florida Office of the Attorney General, and the community to work on its goals of reducing recidivism, eliminating the school-to-prison pipeline, and fostering police-community relations.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Engagement Circles

Through Sponsorship by the Florida Office of the Attorney General, the Center creates opportunities for educational exchanges in a concerted effort with community residents, adults, youth, law enforcement officers, and other stakeholders. Engagement Circle topics include but are not limited to critical conversations about racial injustice, fear of police, communication & language barriers, and accountability.

The Center has hosted 3 Engagement Circles so far one centered around the work done by Joe Givens in New Orleans, the second around Dr. Hodo's Safer Together Report, and a third concentrating on law enforcement training.

Progress

- Multiple intern papers summarizing critical issues around criminal justice such as Pre-Trial Detention and Bail Reform, Beyond Policing, and Gun Violence
- The groundwork for future engagement circles has been established
- Behind the Badge Social media reposting of content
- A Gun Violence survey was distributed and analyzed to understand Duval county's perceptions of gun safety





NEIGHBORHOOD BILL OF RIGHTS



The Jacksonville Neighborhood Bill of Rights (NBR) is a citywide ordinance that requires local government to keep all recognized neighborhood organizations of Jacksonville informed on decisions being made.



NEIGHBORHOOD BILL OF RIGHTS

Rights Included

1. Prompt responses to any questions regarding city business
2. Advanced notice from the city concerning any public works or utility projects
3. Opportunity for formal input on City budget
4. Opportunity to participate in the design of publicly funded projects



The more citizen involvement in matters of the present, the better will be the future... There are limitless opportunities, such as town halls, our City Council Special Committee on Social Justice, structured surveys, and virtual focus groups that can and should be used to carry out the mandate of Neighborhood Bill of Rights.

DR. RICHARD DANFORD JR.

President and CEO
Jacksonville Urban League



WHY THIS MATTERS

TRANSPARENCY

Trust in one's government is crucial.

These individuals make decisions that shape our day-to-day reality. Through the NBR, the requirement of **alerting the public** of the major moves that affect them **eliminates the room for doubt** which strengthens trust.

AWARENESS

Through the NBR, we have an **increased awareness** of what elected officials are doing in our city and how their decisions impact us as citizens. This allows us to **make more educated decisions** and leave room for input on how we want our neighborhoods to look.

EQUALITY

Everyone should have a voice in the discussion about the issues that affect them to reduce the chances of underrepresented groups being left out. This increases equality overall.



NEIGHBORHOOD BILL OF RIGHTS

What We Have Done

The Center communicated with the City of Jacksonville arguing that the Neighborhood Bill of Rights has not been upheld and intends to utilize community partners who have experienced similar blatant disregard in hopes that the city will pay for their lack of accountability. Trust in one's government is crucial. These individuals make decisions that shape our day-to-day reality. Through the NBR, the requirement of alerting the public of the major moves that affect them eliminates the room for doubt which strengthens trust. The NBR is also supposed to increase awareness of what elected officials are doing in our city and how their decisions impact us as citizens. This allows us to make more educated decisions and leave room for input on how we want our neighborhoods to look. Everyone should have a voice in the discussion about the issues that affect them to reduce the chances of underrepresented groups being left out. This increases equality overall.

Future Steps

The CASJ is meeting with other organizations regarding the failure of the COJ to follow the NBR. This failure has caused an equity issue in our community. To move forward, the Center is working on the following items:

1. Working with the legal team on subsequent actions
2. Gaining support from the existing community partners to share actions
3. Keeping the NBR in the public's eyes through social media posting and Op-Eds as well as relating it to other issues we see in current community efforts





RACIAL HEALING AND RECONCILIATION



The Racial Healing and Reconciliation group ensures that the monthly conversations hosted by the JUL create an environment where relationships can be built, perspectives can be shared, and community can be established.



RACIAL HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Initially, the monthly conversations were an opportunity for individuals from varying backgrounds to come together and share how they were feeling about certain things happening around them. Now the monthly conversations consist of a 30 minute-session of a guest speaker sharing their experiences as it relates to racial healing and reconciliation and the remainder of the time is for questions and community discussion.

With the new format, the Center has been able to enhance its marketing strategy to advertise the conversations. TikTok and Instagram reels have provided a platform to share insight from our guest speakers. Additionally, the LinkedIn Blog post feature has been a useful tool to publish summaries of the conversation for those who are unable to watch the recording on YouTube.





RACIAL HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Speakers

Since its inception, the Racial Healing and Reconciliation Conversations and Conference have had the privilege of welcoming the following guests:

Abdullah T. Antepi

Imam Antepi is a globally acknowledged scholar and leader of cross-religious and cross-cultural dialogue in American higher education and in non-profit world. He has built multiple organizations and initiatives to facilitate religious and spiritual life across America's college campuses, sowing seeds of understanding between religions while upholding their cultural integrity and dignity. In July 2019, Antepi joined the Sanford School of Public Policy as associate professor of the practice, with a secondary appointment at the Divinity School as associate professor of the practice of interfaith relations.

Al Barlow

A. Wellington "Al" Barlow wields over thirty-five years of trial court experience in both criminal and civil law, protecting and advancing the constitutional rights of clients in both spheres of the legal system. He has served on the 4th Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission (1991-1994) via gubernatorial appointment and was elected to serve as Chairman. He was also appointed by a Florida Bar president to serve on a 4th Circuit Florida Bar Grievance Committee which investigates attorney misconduct and recommends appropriate punishment if necessary. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (1983) and a Juris Doctorate (1985) from the University of Florida. He holds bar membership in Florida (1986) and Georgia (1994).

The Rev. Canon Dr. J. Allison DeFoor

Allison DeFoor is an Episcopal priest who serves as Canon to the Ordinary to the Bishop of the Diocese of Florida, seated in Jacksonville. Before coming to Jacksonville, Canon DeFoor served as a priest in four prisons in the Tallahassee area and as an assisting priest at Grace Mission, an inner city mission in Tallahassee. Canon DeFoor has earned degrees in law, criminology and theology. He has an extensive background in criminal justice, having previously served as a prosecutor, public defender, judge, and as the elected Sheriff of Monroe County. In addition, he is a former law professor and the founding chair of the Project on Accountable Justice at Florida State University. Canon DeFoor has served on the board of Episcopal Children's Services since 2015.

BJ Priestler, Esq.

Benjamin J. Priestler has been a law professor for nearly twenty years, teaching criminal law and criminal procedure, constitutional law, civil procedure, and a wide range of elective courses. He has taught at Florida State University College of Law and Florida Coastal School of Law, where he served a three-year term as Associate Dean of Faculty Development; he is a Visiting Professor of Law at Florida A&M University College of Law for the 2021-22 academic year. He graduated from Harvard College with a degree in Government and summa cum laude from Duke Law School.



Dr. Brian Van Brunt

Dr. Brian Van Brunt has worked in the counseling field for more than 25 years, and specializes in educational counseling, behavioral intervention and support, and issues related to mental health and alcohol/substance abuse by students. He is the Assistant Deputy Director of Training for Secure Community Network (SCN), the official homeland security and safety initiative of the organized Jewish community in North America. Dr. Van Brunt is a prolific writer, having authored numerous books, book chapters, and articles. He has additionally produced various assessment instruments, video training materials, and is a blogger and photographer during his spare time.

Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder

Dr. Wilder obtained her PhD from the University of Florida in Sociology. In addition to her studies in sociology, JeffriAnne also completed a PhD concentration in Women's Studies and Gender Research from the University of Florida. JeffriAnne completed her MA in Sociology from Cleveland State University, and a BA from Allegheny College. As a black woman and sociologist, JeffriAnne is deeply passionate about connecting sociology to the everyday issues occurring within our society. JeffriAnne regularly speaks on race, gender, and diversity issues.

Dr. Kimberly Allen

Dr. Kimberly Allen is a Jacksonville native along with her husband and three children. She earned two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree from Florida State University. She obtained a Ph. D. from the University of Georgia. Dr. Allen also worked at the University of Georgia's Center for Family Research where she examined the relationship patterns of rural, African American men. She became the CEO of 904WARD after serving as the board chair of the all-volunteer organization for two and a half years and a member two years before that. During that time, the organization has engaged over one thousand Jacksonville community members, created and sold over 1,200 decks of the Race Cards as a tool to invite meaningful dialogue. Her hope is to work the organization out of business so that her children, grandchildren and future generations can actually see the beauty in our city rather than just its potential.

Dr. Rudy F. Jamison Jr.

Dr. Rudy F. Jamison Jr. is a native of Jacksonville, FL and proud graduate of Jean Ribault Sr. High School, Florida A&M University, and University of North Florida. Dr. Jamison currently works as faculty and Assistant Director of the Center for Urban Education and Policy in University of North Florida's College of Education and Human Services. His academic interests include Black leadership development, community organizing, diversification of teacher education, culturally responsive teaching/leadership, career mobility, developmental relationships, self-monitoring, and nigrescence. Dr. Jamison is committed to advancing consciousness around equity, racism, and social justice in ways that assess, challenge, and support a more virtuous humanity.

Dr. Tammy Hodo

Tammy L. Hodo earned her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Urban Studies, with a minor in Sociology in which she specializations in Race, Class, Gender, and Ethnicity. Dr. Tammy L. Hodo established All Things Diverse LLC, an educational consulting company working with organizations to optimize employee productivity through recognizing the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Tammy has provided training to local and national organizations all under the umbrella of diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has written course content on Implicit Biases and Microaggressions for a national educational vendor that is being used at hundreds of colleges and universities. She is a TEDx Jacksonville speaker where she discussed "The Social Implications of Race." A few areas that she addresses are issues of racial equity, homophobia, gender identity, expression, and fluidity. She conducts workplace climate surveys, conducts policy audits and develops diversity programming based off organizational needs.



Dr. Victoria McNeil-Young

Dr. Victoria McNeil-Young (she/her/hers) is a researcher, therapist, and professor committed to the liberation of BIPOC individuals and communities. She conducts research and provides consultations, trainings and workshops on topics related to understanding experiences of oppression and hate as well as justice and liberation among marginalized communities with the goal of increasing BIPOC wellness. Dr. McNeil-Young serves as an assistant professor of psychology at Jacksonville University.

Erin McGeever

Director of Christian Formation Director of Christian Formation-Diocese of St. Augustine. Provides support and resources to pastors, parishes, and schools in the Diocese of St. Augustine. Oversees formation opportunities at all levels in the name of the Diocesan Bishop. Coordinates sacramental activity. Directs the three year lay ecclesial ministry program.

Freda Doxey, LMHC

“Head” Coach Freda Doxey is passionate about transforming lives one mind at a time. She received her undergraduate degree from Cheyney University, where she was a starter for the iconic Lady Wolves Women’s Basketball team under the leadership of Naismith Hall of Famer Coach C. Vivian Stringer and was inducted into the Cheyney Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame in 2018. Freda continued her success in basketball as an assistant coach at the University of Missouri-Columbia and Florida State University before obtaining two master’s degrees: MPA from the University of Missouri-Columbia and MABC from Dallas Theological Seminary. Freda is currently a licensed mental health professional operating a private practice. Freda is the proud wife of Gentry Doxey and mother of two young adult college students.

Hermoyone Williams Walker

Pantry Coordinator of the Health Smart Holistic Health Program for Seniors. Health Smart aims to address social isolation, food insecurity, and financial insecurity that negatively impact the health and quality of life of many seniors in Health Zone 1 of Jacksonville, Florida. This program is supported by an investment from the Humana Foundation and is led by Dr. Carolyn M. Tucker at the University of Florida.

Jacques Whitfield, JD

Jacques Whitfield is a seasoned Human Resources Executive with over 20 years of experience in human resources management, recently completing a six-year tenure as the Chief Human Resources Officer for the Yuba Community College District. He is a subject matter expert in performance management, employee engagement and state and federal EEO compliance matters. He is highly accomplished in successfully working with others to develop professional skills and improve employee effectiveness through training and development. Whitfield is a frequent speaker, trainer, and presenter.

Kaya Hill

Kaya is a senior interpersonal communication major minoring in both African American Studies and History. Her background in communication paired with her experience being a member of intersecting minority groups has increased her awareness of both personal and social advocacy, a passion she hopes to communicate to everyone by sharing her story. In her years following college, she hopes to continue to advocate for others and help mend our society.



Kyle Reese

Kyle Reese is the Executive Director of OneJax and former pastor of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. In his role, Kyle focuses on the strategic direction of the institute as well as connecting with the greater Jacksonville community. Bringing diverse peoples together is what OneJax is about and what Kyle enjoys most. Kyle is a graduate of Leadership Jacksonville (Class of 2008) and participated in Leadership Florida Class XXVIII. Kyle serves on the board of Baptist Health and is currently chair of Baptist's Social Responsibility Committee. He holds degrees from Wayland University, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, and Northern Seminary.

Lonnie Braxton

Lonnie Braxton was born in Greenville, Mississippi on February 9, 1948, the son of sharecroppers who had recently left the plantation. Educated in segregated Catholic schools, he joined the Naval ROTC as a sophomore in high school and served in the Navy, two years on active duty and over four years in the reserves. He arrived in New London in November 1968 having chosen Connecticut as a place of opportunity in both industry and education. Over a period of fifteen years of part-time study, while working at Electric Boat and pursuing business interests, he earned a BA from Connecticut College in 1986 and two years later earned a law degree from the University of Connecticut Law School. Lonnie served as a Senior Assistant State's Attorney in the Juvenile Court in Waterford, Connecticut for 10 years and retired in December 2021.

Lynn Sherman

Director of Social Responsibility and Community Health for Baptist Health. Responsible for community benefit planning and implementation: coordinating strategic investments for community benefits, development and support of community partnerships with other non-profit organizations community outreach events and health fairs, faith-based partnerships, Tipping the Scale" Adolescent Advocacy and Intervention Mentoring Program, and manage department staff.

Nicole-Davidson Hairshaw

Nicole Davidson-Harshaw is a Nationally Board Certified Counselor and is an experienced Registered Marriage, Couple and Family Therapist Intern and a Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern. She certifies for having met the highest national standards for general practice of counseling. Currently, she maintains her clinical role as a provider with Jewish Family and Community Services where she administers face-to-face and telemedicine services for a diversified population. Her focus with clients covers a myriad of mental, emotional and behavioral issues to aid with anxiety, trauma, depression, relationships, social skills, and severe mental illnesses as well as domestic violence. Nicole earned her Master of Science in Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling from Walden University. During her undergrad, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Pre-law from the University of North Florida and an Associate in Arts degree in Communications from Florida Community College at Jacksonville.

Snowfaden McFall, M.A.T.

Snowden McFall, M.A.T, is a professional speaker, tv host, corporate trainer, and owner of Brightwork and Fired Up Professional Speaking and Coaching. Snowden has authored and co-authored 6 books, including Fired Up!, which has now sold over 65,000 copies. She is also the host of Ignite Success!, a tv show which airs on ABC and YouTube. She is also co-founder of the non-profit group "Success for Women Entrepreneurs" and was named National Women in Business Advocate of the Year by The United States Small Business Administration. Featured in Success Magazine, Investors Business Daily and Foxnews.com as an expert on burnout, Snowden has been speaking for over 25 years and has addressed several thousand professionals in companies like Pepsico, Vistakon, Fidelity National Financial and more.



Sr. Cora Marie Billings

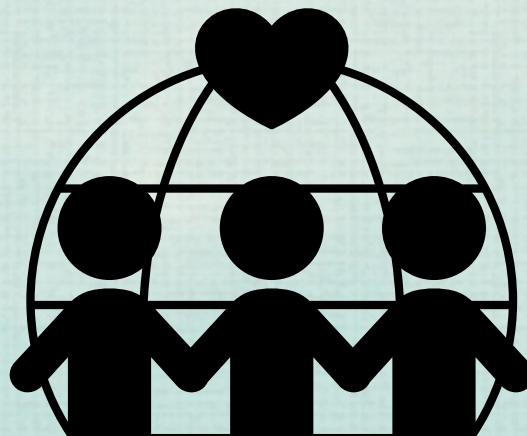
In 1956, 17-year-old Sr. Cora Marie Billings of Philadelphia entered the Sisters of Mercy in Merion, Pennsylvania, becoming the first Black member of the Philadelphia community. Catholicism has always been a part of Billings' life, coming from a devout Black Catholic family who fought against racial barriers to fully participate in the Roman Catholic faith and tradition. Her great-grandfather was enslaved by the Jesuits at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Her great-grandfather's 11 siblings were also enslaved. In the 1940s, two of her aunts became members of the first successful Black Catholic order in the United States, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, founded in 1828 by Mother Mary Lange. Her aunts couldn't join other congregations at the time due to segregation. Billings was the first African American to teach in an all-white grade school in Levittown, Pennsylvania, as well as the first African American sister to teach in a Catholic high school in Philadelphia. She was the first Black sister to work as a campus minister at Virginia State University and the first African American sister to lead a U.S. Catholic parish, working as a pastoral coordinator at St. Elizabeth Parish in North Richmond, Virginia. She also led the Richmond Diocese's Office for Black Catholics for 25 years and served as director of the Human Rights Council for Virginia from 2007 to 2010. Billings is also a founding member of the National Black Catholic Sisters' Conference.

Willis Harris, JD

Willis Harris, JD, is an experienced Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion expert. Driven by creating cultures of community respect and humility, he takes pride in providing the best equitable training and workshops possible to more than 3,000 employees. Being an equity specialist, allows him to focus his goals on increasing workplace psychological safety and retention, employee engagement, and eliminate discrimination. In addition to his career, Willis is also a father and husband and enjoys spending time with his family and three dogs.

Future

Moving forward, the Center strives to continue to be a leader in the social justice space by initiating critical conversations between individuals of diverse backgrounds. The overall goal is to change historic relationships with and perceptions of fellow Americans of a different race, history, and culture. By creating these spaces, we hope that people can open their minds and their hearts to create a Beloved Community free of poverty, hunger, and hate, and with access to education, civility, and reform.





RECLAMATION PROGRAM FOR RETURNING CITIZENS



The Reclamation Program for Returning Citizens (RPRC) project recruits and assists formerly incarcerated individuals in the preparation for finding employment. The goal of the program is to develop a partnership with churches and prisons to build an infrastructure that fits each of the client's needs.



RECLAMATION PROGRAM FOR RETURNING CITIZENS

Short-Term Goals

Assisting individuals in overcoming barriers to jobs such as limited skills, poor health, and location or transportation barriers as well as restoring individual voting rights are the short-term goals of the project.

Long-Term Goals

1. Counteract recidivism
2. Improve client quality of life
3. Reduce disenfranchisement
4. Reparations for overly aggressive incarceration policies that impact people of color

PROGRESS MADE

CASJ intern, Natalie Gilbert, has collaborated with Chester Daniel to work on partnerships with organizations that would help with clemency, record expungement, and voting restoration issues for re-entry. The re-entry group has identified gaps in the coordination of services, so they are working on an app that links these services together. Factors such as cost, app developers, and timeline are still being investigated, but the app aims to assist clients in overcoming barriers.



Our Impact

Meetings



Since October 2021, the center has conducted **940 meetings** totaling **274,679 minutes** engaging **6,128 participants** within the meetings themselves. This does not factor in the meetings and time devoted by the Social Justice interns using their Zoom meeting accounts, In-person meetings with subject matter experts and community partners, phone calls, and communication done through email. The Center is committed and passionate about the work.

Town Halls



The Center has hosted and facilitated **over 50 Town Halls** since its founding. From October 2021 to today, the Center has hosted 24 Town Halls totaling close to **40 hours of virtual community engagement**

Social Media

Using Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Tiktok the Center over **90 posts** have been made with a total of over **20,000 Impressions**.



ANNUAL REPORT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following interns for their contributions to the Center for Advocacy and Social Justice this past year: (Fall 2021) Skylar Bloom, Zoe Samuels, Meghan Schutte, Emma Nicholl, Julian Walker, Anna Rashkover, Casey Heinle, Toniae Thomas, Sophia Burger (Spring 2022) Juliet Winther, Cecilia Djan, Lila Edmonds, Gabriella Hale, Alexandra Johnson, Jamie Krasnigor, LaQuenthia Telfair, Aubrey Gerhardt, Lexi Potter, Sasha Wilson, Daniela Rodriguez, Natalie Gilbert (Summer 2022) Alexis Wright, Jesse McCarter, Mariana Orozco, Sara Bergmann, Julie Miller, Tristyn Walton, Shayla Delamar, Victoria Caraballo (Fall 2022) Maddie Traylor, Kaya Hill, Jessica Huang, Caroline Dugan, Julianna Celestin, Socorro Topete, Malea Dickerson, Glenntoria Crawford, Caroline Hazlett, Vivian Wermers, and Sayidana Escoffery.

We would also like to thank all our partners for all of our opportunities to collaborate on exciting projects that make a difference in the Jacksonville community.

Lastly, we would like to give big thanks to the JUL Team, especially the CASJ Executive Director, Dennis Stone, and JUL President and CEO, Dr. Richard Danford Jr. who have both guided the Center for Advocacy and Social Justice toward impactful movements that will not only educate and inform the community, but drive the community towards the change that they want to see.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to advocate for equity in all spaces so we can empower communities and change lives.



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Jacksonville Urban League Page



JUL Center for Advocacy and Social Justice



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