



FFLIC

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children

CLOSING PRISONS | REFORMING SCHOOLS | BUILDING COMMUNITIES | FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

15

FFLIC: a 15-year retrospective

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Message from Outgoing Board Chair, Candace Chambliss

I first came to know of FFLIC about a week after I relocated to New Orleans. I was a recent law school graduate and my first position was that of attorney on behalf of incarcerated youth in Louisiana. In many ways, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of work—stories of youth abused in prison, mishandled legal cases, and parents who were angry, sad and desperate for help as their child delved further into the court system. Fortunately, the organization for which I worked had close ties to FFLIC. At any time, I could call Executive Director, Gina Womack, or even walk into her office—a space cluttered with photos of her children and everyone else's children as well. I could ask Gina how best to aide a parent whose child had become entrenched in the legal system, and every time, Gina took that parent's information and had a fellow FFLIC member reach out to lend support and access to information and resources.

Soon the process was formalized. When attorneys and advocates took on a new client, that child's parental information automatically went to FFLIC for contact and follow-up. Our organization was very successful at meeting the legal needs of the child, but we did little for families or communities as a whole. FFLIC was able to fill that gap, empowering parents across Louisiana. Therefore FFLIC was and remains critical in healing and supporting marginalized communities.

As I transitioned from young attorney, to mother and later to board chairperson of FFLIC, a position that I feel honored to have served in the past 6 years. I watched FFLIC grow and transition from an organization that assisted families of children involved in the legal system to an organization that sought to prevent children's involvement in the legal system, the ultimate desire of all communities and families. FFLIC has been at the forefront of addressing the school-to-prison pipeline in Louisiana and their success is evident in the number of schools who have changed their policies to retain students rather than push them out into the streets. As I prepare to resign from my seat as Board Chair, I must stress the importance of continuing to support this organization that has remained dedicated to transforming the lives of families and children.

With Respect and Gratitude,



Candace Chambliss, Esq.



Message from Executive Director, Gina B. Womack

On September 8, 2001 Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) held its inaugural event: The Mock Jazz Funeral to mourn the dead and dying dreams of Louisiana's children.

Developed by the members of our parent support group to shed light on the notorious Tallulah Correctional Center for Youth, parents advocated for the closing of Tallulah alongside our parent organization: the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana. Our parents decided to no longer remain silent; instead we endeavored to speak loudly and often of Louisiana's state sanctioned abuse of their children. We yearned to shout out loud and clear that we are NOT bad parents, and these are NOT throw-away children!

What a proud and defining moment; I don't think anyone realized that FFLIC would become a catalyst for passing ACT 1225, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003. With four chapters across the state, FFLIC has advocated and supported over a 1,000 families and held countless meetings to educate stakeholders and policy makers to pass legislation that would benefit our families and children.

Since our inception we have increased our focus beyond a punitive criminal justice system to reforms that prevent the entrance to juvenile incarceration and have realized the passing of Act 136 and Act 248, solutions to keeping our children in school and out of the juvenile prison system.

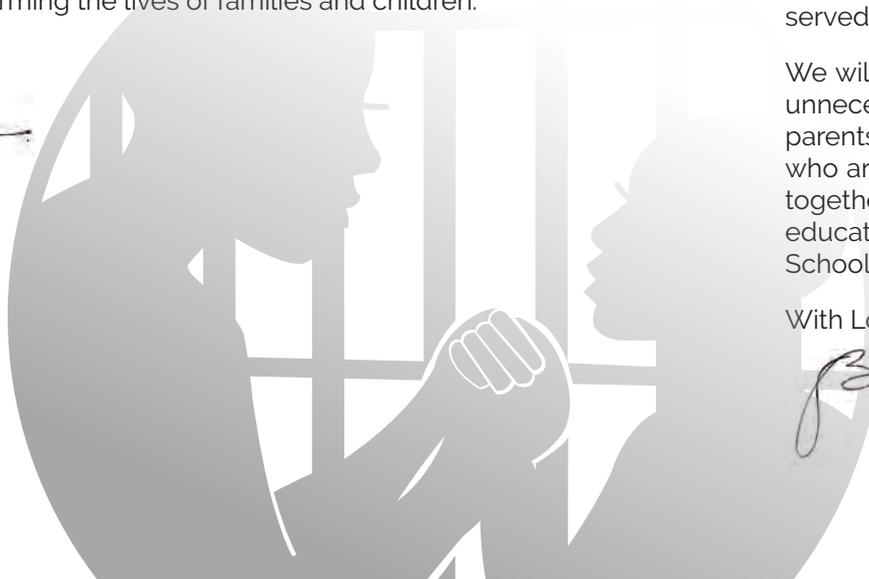
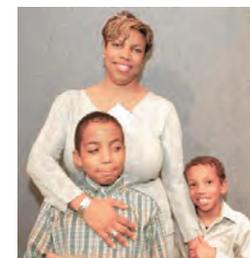
I am so grateful to have the opportunity to work with so many extraordinary individuals from our members, staff, and board, and I am thankful to the many individuals and foundations who make our work possible. We look forward to your continued support as we continue to organize our families to ensure that the Office of Juvenile Justice and the State of Louisiana provides treatment and rehabilitation for children in their care and reduce the number of youth incarcerated for non-violent offenses when they are better served in their communities.

We will continue to advocate for children who are being pushed out of school through unnecessary suspensions and expulsions for minor infractions. We know that empowering parents to be involved in their children's education can reduce the number of children who are pushed out of school and into prison. When parents rise up and we ALL come together to fight to change laws that are criminalizing children and demand quality education for ALL children, we will close the achievement gaps and WE WILL stop the School to Prison Pipeline.

With Love and Appreciation,



Gina B. Womack



About Us

Our Mission

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) is a statewide parent-led, membership-based organization dedicated to creating a better life for all of Louisiana's youth, especially those who are involved, or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. As mothers and fathers, grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles and allies we seek to use education, direct action organizing, and peer advocacy to build strong, powerful families and communities and to fight for justice for our children and ourselves. We have united to collectively demand that the systems and institutions which are supposed to help our children grow and thrive fulfill their mandate and cease being a force of oppression against our youth and our families.



Vision

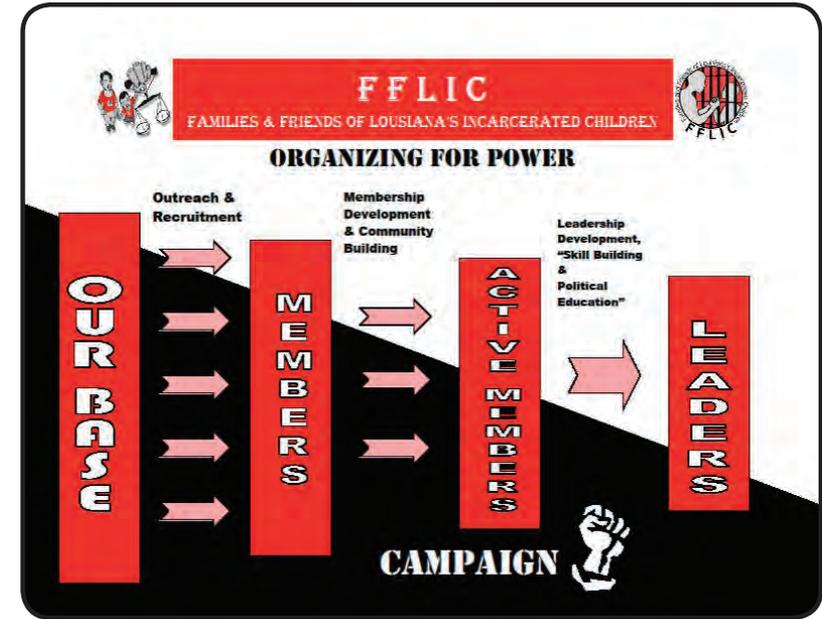
From the street level to the state level, from our meeting rooms to the state capitol, we are working to build a society based on the principles of racial justice, human rights, and full participation through our tireless fight for justice for youth. For this reason, we seek to build a truly democratic, multiracial organization whose membership reflects the communities we come from. We believe that we are the "experts" on what our communities need and that solidarity and collective action are our most powerful tools in our struggle for self-determination and justice for our children and families.

What We Believe

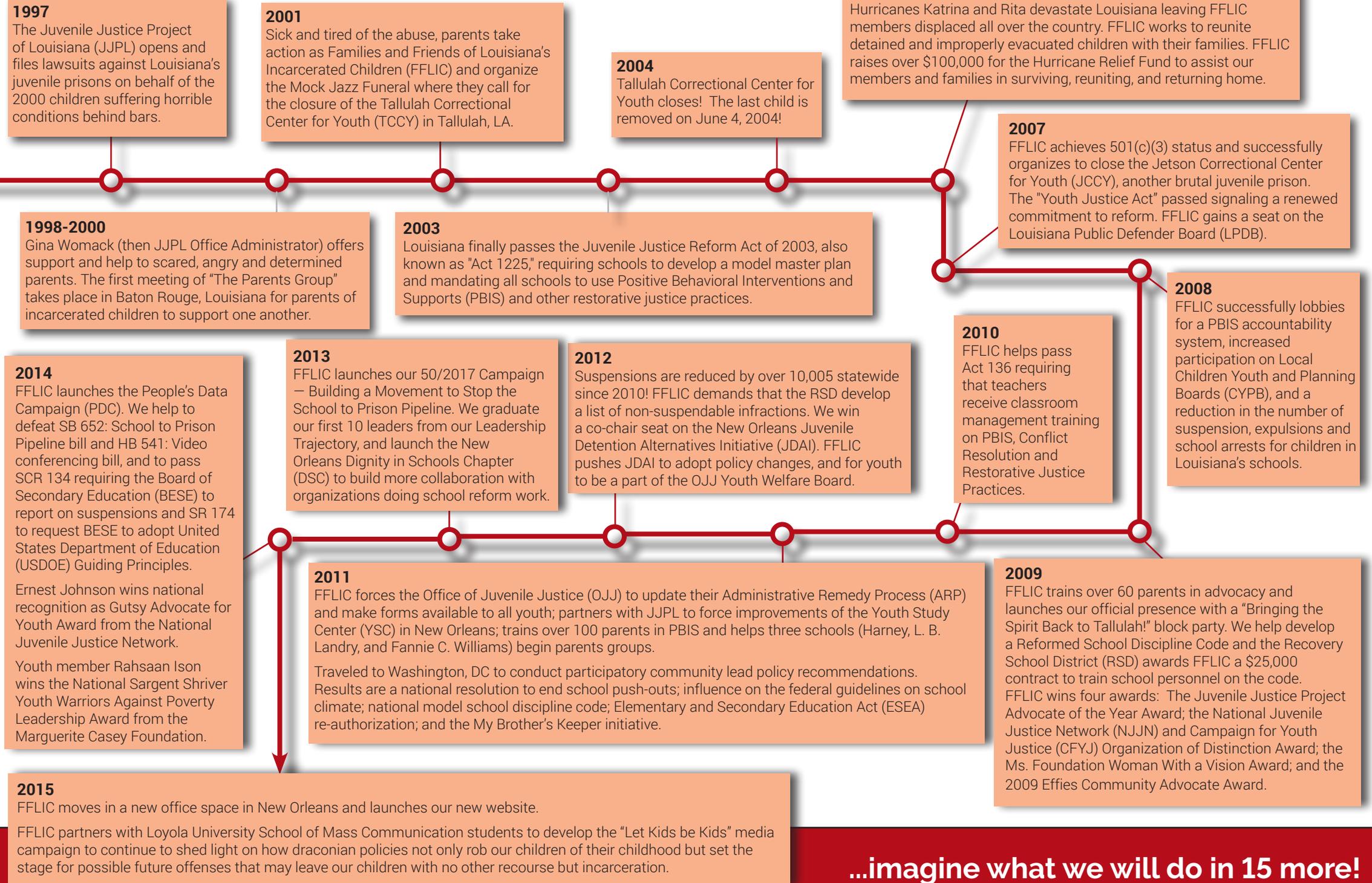
- We are the experts on what OUR kids and communities need
- That TOGETHER we can make a difference
- When children make mistakes; even bad ones, they should receive HELP and not be locked behind prison bars
- That OPPRESSION of all kinds exists: Racism, Sexism, Classism, Ageism and Homophobia and that we should work together to fight it. We do NOT judge one another

What We Do

- Outreach to families who are affected by the juvenile prison and education systems and provide support and advice to each other
- Help each other develop as leaders and provide racial healing for one another, through learning about the oppressive system, the school to prison pipeline and the prison industrial complex
- Tell our Policy Makers what WE need; fight for equity justice
- Go to meetings in our communities and tell the groups that are supposed to help us, what WE need
- Make demands on the Office of Juvenile Justice and the Education Systems



Look what FFLIC has accomplished in our first 15 years...



...imagine what we will do in 15 more!

Our Work

FFLIC's 50/2017 Campaign

FFLIC is on the ground daily working against this trend of pushing our children out of school and into prison.

In April 2013, FFLIC launched our 50/2017 Campaign: Building a Movement to Stop the School to Prison Pipeline which is dedicated to fighting the historical inequalities, concentrated poverty, racial disparities in discipline, and segregated education that is leading to school push-out. We want to ensure that every child who enrolls in school graduates with a high school diploma and lives up to their fullest potential instead of being ushered into the prison system. The 50/2017 Campaign utilizes the strategies of leadership development, organizing and outreach, and advocacy to "derail the school to prison pipeline".

Our work is aimed at empowering, engaging, and educating parents, children, and families. We are transforming them into leaders and advocates who can work with policy makers and school officials to develop and implement: alternatives to harsh disciplinary codes, school push out, and zero-tolerance policies; promote rehabilitative sentencing approaches; and ensure incarcerated children have access to support and resources needed to succeed in school and move out of poverty.

Programs/Services

- **TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP:** We provide training for families, youth, and community members giving them the tools necessary to successfully advocate for ALL children and to develop campaigns that will transform the oppressive juvenile justice and education systems.



- **EDUCATION REFORM:** We help parents navigate the education system before children are suspended from school by ensuring due process and seeking alternatives to suspensions and expulsions.
- **JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM:** We help parents navigate the juvenile justice system before children are incarcerated by pushing for quality representation and/or alternatives to detention ensuring children receive rehabilitative treatment and necessary re-entry plans after incarceration.



Moving Forward

Over the past three years we have organically developed "opportunity youth" leaders who have been impacted by school pushout and zero tolerance policies. Our youth leaders have completed our leadership training, allowing them to be present at tables such as the National Dignity in Schools My Brother's Keeper Initiative Youth Table, the National Youth Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (NYABMOC), and YouthShift New Orleans where decisions are being made about their lives.

In June 2016, our young men began discussing a mentoring project and formed the "Black Man Rising Movement" (BMRM). As a pilot project of FFLIC, BMRM is a national campaign whose mission is to encourage all people of color to define, reach, and excel beyond their own vision of success to become stakeholders to their community by providing Outreach, Mentorship, and Resources. We are extremely proud of the growth of our youth leaders and we will continue to support them as they move forward to great success.



In August 2016, FFLIC signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work with New Orleans College Prep Charter Schools to reduce the reliance on all forms of exclusionary discipline and to replace them with best practices that support students, teachers and all members of the school community in creating safe and engaging classroom environments. We are excited about this opportunity to collaborate with schools and parents. Implementing and reinforcing positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and restorative justice (RJ) practices.

On September 18, 2016, FFLIC will host its Annual Membership meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana. Our members from each of our 4 chapters (Lafayette, Lake Charles, New Orleans, and Shreveport) will join us to begin laying the ground work for 2017 campaigns and strategies needed in our communities to change the climate and policies in the state of Louisiana from ones that oppresses our youth to ones that uplift and provide equity and justice for our children and families. We will assess where we are and determine what work will need to be continued or adjusted to maintain reform victories and address systemic and policy issues that remain unchanged. We will continue to meet and strategize over the remainder of the year to develop more concrete plans for 2017 and beyond.

Our Leaders and Families

Since we are the experts on our own experience, we must be the ones to lead the struggle to make sure ALL our children and families get justice.

It is because of this that our "self-identified" members engage in FFLIC's "Leadership Trajectory Training". During the training, members learn more about the legal system and how to be a successful advocate for parents and families. They study laws and bills, meet others who have had interactions with the juvenile justice system, and learn techniques for effectively communicating with youth, families, lawyers, judges, and politicians.



2013 FFLIC Leaders pictured are: Ms. Valencia Thomas, Mr. Eugene Dean, Ms. Jackie Smith, Mr. Wayne Scott, Mr. A.C. Haynes, Ms. Lillian Tillman, Ms. Shana Sears, Ms. Lynette Adams, Ms. Verna Carr, Ms. Shante Lockett. 2014 FFLIC Leaders not pictured are: Sonia Coleman, Roshanda Williams, Gladys Kindred, Barbara Palmer, Bridgette Musgrove

Testimonial from Ms. Avis Brock, FFLIC Co-Founder and Family Member

At an early age I was taught that whatsoever you do when helping others, is to make sure all is done to the glory of God. As a co-founder of Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC), never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that an informal group of parents and allies joined around a common goal in 2001 would bring us to the point in history where we are today. Fifteen years later, FFLIC is still here advocating for youth and families after achieving the hard fought mission of successfully closing the country's most notorious juvenile detention facility – Tallulah Correctional Center for Youth.

I am so proud to say that from the past to the present, FFLIC has continued to provide me an opportunity where I can improve my community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy skills. Since the closure of Tallulah, we have been able to see some other positive benefits that are carried on still today; such as Positive Behavioral Supports and Boards designed to protect the well-being of children whether incarcerated or not. All I can say is, TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOR THE MARVELOUS THINGS HE HAS DONE. May FFLIC's success in supporting families and children continue another 15 years and beyond.

Testimonial from Ms. Charmaine Washington, FFLIC Leader and Family Member

I've been a part of this organization for nearly 10 years. My son was a causality of the school to prison pipeline. After nearly seven years of feeling helpless and beaten down by the system I was introduced to FFLIC.

That introduction allowed me to join with people who knew just what my struggle had been. I became empowered to deal with the system. I suddenly had a platform to share my experiences and air my grievances with the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission (JJIC) board that were the watch dogs of the juvenile justice system.

FFLIC helped me fight for my son while he was in the juvenile system and was there to pick me and my family up and help us carry on when he was murdered. I am working with FFLIC to complete FFLIC's leadership trajectory training and I have been an active member helping FFLIC to grow its membership by performing outreach and hosting fundraisers such as FFLIC's "Red & Black Affair – A Party with a Purpose" to bring folks from the community together to celebrate FFLIC's work. I attend chapter meetings when possible to keep myself abreast of FFLIC's work and possible campaigns members can support and get involved with. I have been preparing food for FFLIC meetings, fundraisers, and trainings for several years and through the support I have received from FFLIC, today I have my own catering business that was born out of my struggle.

The struggle continues and FFLIC support has never been greater.

Our Board and Staff

FFLIC believes in action and involving parents in each and every step of the processes that involve and affect their children's lives, honoring the struggle of those most impacted. This principle has naturally led our staff and board to look like it does.

FFLIC's board is made up of people who are directly or indirectly affected by the issues we fight against. One is a formally incarcerated adult, one is a formally incarcerated youth, one has a child that is formally incarcerated, and seven out of eight board members are people of color. The majority of FFLIC's staff were born and raised in Louisiana, two are formerly incarcerated, and all have family members who have children that are or have been targeted by the juvenile justice system.

2016 Board of Directors

Candace Chambliss, Esq., Outgoing Board Chair

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Norris Henderson, Secretary

William Rodriguez, M.S., J.D.

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Robin Templeton

Lionel Coleman

Terrance Watson

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Executive
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Sonji Hart
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Chandra Grayson
Statewide
Community Organizer



Donelle Cormier
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Organizer



Melaney Batiste
Development/
Communications
Coordinator



St. Patrick Williams
Lake Charles
Community Organizer



Maria Victoire
New Orleans
Community Liaison



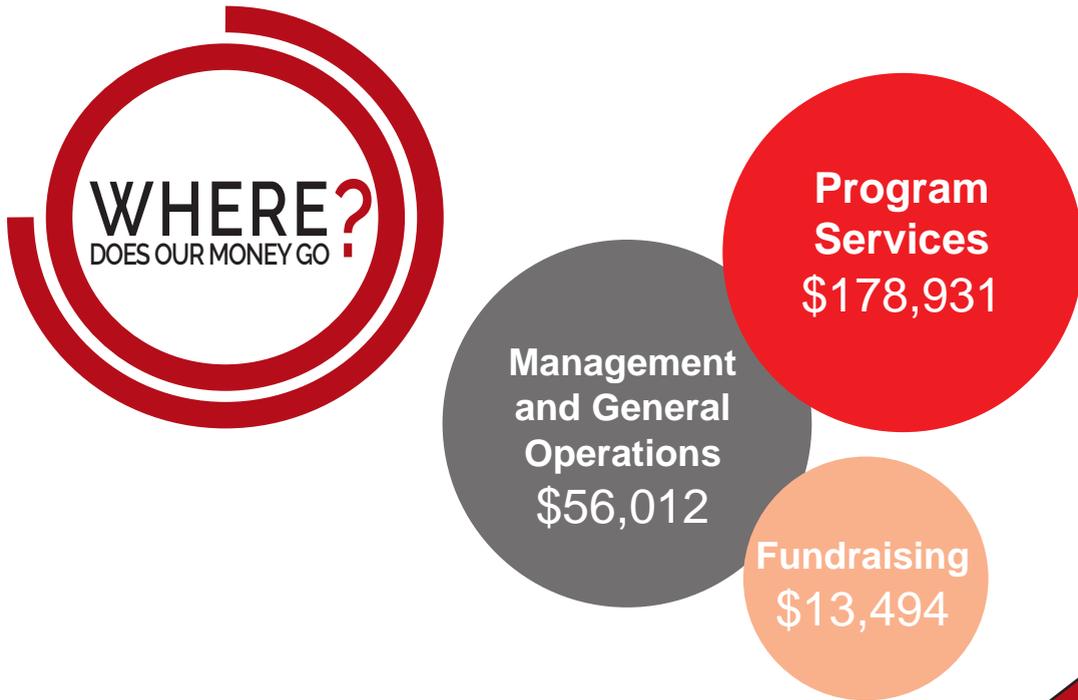
Antonio Travis
Youth Organizer



Sonia Coleman
Shreveport
Community Organizer

Our Finances 2014*

*2015 financials are currently under audit and were not available at the time this report was published.



Our Funders and Donors

FFLIC, our families and our members want to say a big "Thank You!" to all of our funders and donors who have supported our work over the past 15 years. Without your support, FFLIC would have not been able to assist the hundreds of parents and children who have sought the support of an organization like FFLIC, the only statewide organization whose sole mission is to empower parents of incarcerated youth in Louisiana.

Funders

21st Century Foundation
Academy for Education Development
Advancement Project
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Baptist Community Ministries
Ben & Jerry's Foundation
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