

NEWSLETTER

Q&A with Robin Ledford

Clinical Director,
Restorative Justice
Program, Families Free



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You are the clinical director at Families Free, Inc., and you oversee the restorative justice programs, including a recovery court program and jail-based classes. What do your jail-based classes look like, and what changes have you seen in those participating in this program?

We are in five local detention centers—our jail-based classes are primarily psychoeducational, and we do some evidence-based curriculums. We are doing Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), the Matrix Model, and Seeking Safety, and we've just expanded some of our jail classes in two counties, so we could spend a whole day doing classes with female clients, and the same for male clients. We also have a specific recovery curriculum, which we call the Freedom Recovery Curriculum, that Families Free developed, looking at all the reentry domains. The domains include housing, family support, concrete support, social support, and even vital records, etc.—which are all essential to helping clients prepare for reentry.

Clients also need access to treatment, so they can come out as ready as possible to reenter society successfully. We have seen clients achieve reunification with family and successful employment; we've seen some going back to college, and just being able to engage in a life that they enjoy living, and that's the most rewarding part of it. Not everyone is successful, and that's part of people's stories as well, and it's really important that we're always there to support them at any opportunity we have to engage with them.

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Natural Supports Perspective Series: Adult Child of a Parent That Is Incarcerated

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***Editor's Note:** In the Natural Supports Perspective Series, SAMHSA's GAINS Center explores the lived experience of individuals identified as a natural support of a person who was or is incarcerated or justice involved. Our goal is to promote a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities that natural supports may face when providing support to individuals involved in the criminal justice system who have mental and/or substance use disorders or trauma-related needs. Natural supports are established when support and assistance naturally flow due to a previously established relationship or environmental context. People identified as a natural support to a person who is incarcerated or justice involved tend to be family members but can also be friends, coworkers, neighbors, clergy, or local librarians, among others. Access the full article below for more information on natural supports.*

In this article, the author requested anonymity to protect and maintain relations with their

understand the following context: The writer is the eldest of their parent's three children. In spring 2020, at the start of the pandemic, the writer was finishing their final semester of law school in a state and city to which they had recently transplanted. The following is the writer's reflection on their experiences with their parent's incarceration and release.

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Planting Justice Programs: Sowing Seeds of System Transformation and Community Growth



Planting Justice Programs: Sowing Seeds of System Transformation and Community Growth

Julie McLafferty, MA, Project Associate, Policy Research

“It’s no secret that getting your hands into the dirt and helping things grow is healing,” says Ashley Yates, the media director at Planting Justice. Planting Justice, an Oakland-based non-profit, has a simple mission: grow food, grow jobs, grow community. Founders Gavin Rafers and Haleh Zandi created Planting Justice in 2009. Their goals are threefold:

1. Address structural inequalities embedded in the industrialized food system.
2. Promote economic justice.
3. Support community healing in marginalized communities that have been impacted by structural oppression.

Rafers and Zandi are lifelong activists who dreamt of transforming the food system, one garden at a time. Yates notes that the past 6 years have been a time of exponential growth for Planting Justice; they have been able to deliver robust programming, engage with the community and open multiple physical sites where folks can come and work

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