



The Graduates  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
[www.thegraduates.net](http://www.thegraduates.net)  
225-400-2447 OR 504-915-9902

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# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## The GRADUATES

*Carry Emerson*

*Taece Defillo*

*Fox Rich*

*Kathy Randels – Co-Director*

*Ausetua AmorAmenkum Co-Director*

*Sabrina Mays-Montana – Project  
Coordinator*

*The Graduates are committed to improving the quality of life of formerly incarcerated women by empowering them to participate fully in the shaping of their future while achieving goals for development and sustainability.*

MARCH 2, 2018

**Sabrina Montana**

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## BEYOND INCARCERATION SUMMIT

*“Empowering incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women to transform”*

A premier summit in New Orleans, Louisiana, hosted by **The Graduates**, a group of formerly incarcerated women addressing the failings of Louisiana’s criminal justice system and connecting to a global movement to eradicate mass incarceration.

National speakers include: **Susan Burton** (*A New Way of Life: Reentry Project*), **Topeka Sam** (*Founder, Ladies of Hope Ministries, Director of Dignity for Incarcerated Women, Cut 50*), **Andrea James** (*Founder of Families for Justice as Healing*), **Kathy Boudin** (*Center for Justice at Columbia University*), **Susan Rosenberg** (*Political Prisoner in My Own Country—A Prison Memoir*), **Rhodessa Jones** (*Performing artist and founder of The Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women*), **Tomiko Shine** (*RAPP Releasing Aging People in Prison*) and **Lois Ahrens** (*The Real Cost of Prisons*)

## BEYOND INCARCERATION SUMMIT:

Friday – Sunday, April 6-8, 2018 New Orleans, La.

**Friday, April 6, 2018**

St Charles Avenue Baptist Church

7100 St. Charles Avenue

New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

6:00 pm-10:00 pm

Opening Reception

Keynote Speaker **Topeka Sam**

Performance **“Won’t Bow Down” by The Graduates & Queens of the Nation**

**Saturday, April 7, 2018**

St Charles Avenue Baptist Church  
7100 St. Charles Avenue

New Orleans, Louisiana 70118 8:30 am-5:00 pm

Keynote Speakers: **Andrea James and Rhodessa Jones**

Performances by: **A Scribe Called Quess & Asali DeVan Ecclesiastes**

Workshops facilitated by Fox Rich, Dolfinette Martin, Norris Henderson, Syrita Martin, Spirit House, Susan Rosenberg, Tomiko Shine, Kathy Boudin, Lois Ahrens, Tufara Muhammad and others

**Saturday Evening Discussion: What's God Got To Do With It?**

***A Panel on the Role of Faith Communities in Ending Mass Incarceration***

***Part of The Mabel Palmer Lecture Series***

St Charles Avenue Baptist Church 7:00 pm-9:00 pm

Panelists: **Pastor Elizabeth Lott** (St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church), **Ivy Wolf Turk** (Project Liberation-New York), **Rev. Wilfred Johnson** (P.U.S.H. New Iberia, La.), **Ricky Banks** (City of Faith Church Monroe, La.), and **Mary Ulloho** (SisterHeart)

Performances by: **The Conquerors & former members of LCIW Drama Club**

**Sunday, April 8, 2018**

**Beyond Incarceration Closing Ceremony:**

Tombar Life Center  
1683 N Claiborne Ave  
New Orleans, LA 70116  
8:00am -12:00 noon

***Unveiling of the Life Quilt: The names, of 107 women serving life sentences, in Louisiana, beaded by Black masking Indians, woven into a tapestry by Brandan "Bmike" Odums***

Keynote Speaker: **Susan Burton**

Performances by: **Wendi O'Neal, Dr. Ysaye Maria Barnwell** (*formerly of Sweet Honey & The Rock*), **Michaela Harrison, Sula Spirit & Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective**

The Graduates are co-created and co-sponsored by ArtSpot Productions and Kumbuka African Drum & Dance Collective. The Graduates are Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellows, and are supported in part by grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Alternate ROOTS Partners in Action Program, made possible by support from Nathan Cummings Foundation, Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Surdna Foundation. Additional support for the Beyond Incarceration Summit has been provided by St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church.