

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Women Behind Bars
A Free Community Program

Los Angeles, CA (July 15, 2015) - The National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles (NCJW/LA) announces a free community program to be held on July 22, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. at NCJW/LA Council House, 543 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036, to discuss issues related to programs and treatment of incarcerated women and their families.

A panel discussion will be moderated by John Duran, Criminal Defense Attorney and West Hollywood City Councilmember. The panelists include: Captain Maria Gutierrez, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; Denise Johnston, Director, Families & Criminal Justice; Drian Juarez, Program Manager, Transgender Economic Empowerment Project Los Angeles LGBT Center; and Karen Carson, former inmate and Case Worker, Housing Works.

On-going research in the fields of mental health, substance abuse, and violence against women has shown that women offenders face challenges in jail that are different from men. Women typically are in the criminal justice system for nonviolent crimes that are often drug or property-related. Incidents of violence and aggression committed by women in the jail system are low. Women in jail are more likely to have experienced poverty, gender violence, sexual abuse, or substance abuse along with mental health issues.

Some of the issues NCJW will be exploring are what programs are available to women in the jail system upon release, will they have assistance finding jobs, safe housing to avoid returning to their abuser. The availability of female guards vs male guards; the impact of children of women incarcerated and visitation, as well as transgender women, mothers who are pregnant or parenting small children. First offenders reactions to custody and supervision, and programs focused on intervention and treatments for more successful outcomes for female offenders.

NCJW/LA Vice President of Advocacy, Donna Benjamin stated, *"All women in prison regardless of sexual orientation, as well as the transgender community have unique needs. This distinguished panel will discuss how women are coping and the affect their incarceration has on their families in the future as well as during their incarceration period."*

Denise Johnston Director, Families & Criminal Justice stated, *"A growing body of research demands that those of us who work with justice-involved women consider and address their historical, intergenerational and early life as well as current social and relational adversity. It also requires us to recognize that when we work*

with a justice-involved woman, we are addressing her outcomes as well as the outcomes of her children and future descendants."

Please join us on July 22, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. to learn more about the issues and what you can do to get involved. For more information or to RSVP, contact Ruth Williams, Director of Advocacy, at 323-852-8503

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ABOUT NCJW/LA

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates committed to the welfare and well-being of the Los Angeles Community. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.

NCJW/LA serves more than 12,000 individuals each year. Our community services include, but are not limited to, art and literacy programs for youth, community mental health services, scholarships, intern training programs and our clothing assistance projects. NCJW/LA social justice programs and workshops provide education, awareness and legislative advocacy on issues that affect and impact women, children and families in the areas of children's rights, economic justice, healthcare, human trafficking, reproductive justice, LGBTQ, and gender related violence. NCJW/LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (Tax ID #95-1641433). All donations to Council Thrift Shops support the programs and services of NCJW/LA.

NCJW®

National Council of Jewish Women
Los Angeles Section

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