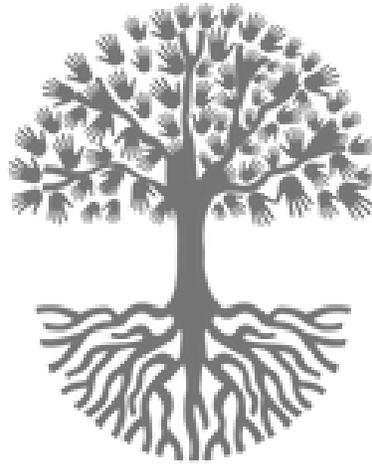


# IMANI'S SAFEHOUSE



## Hello, Family!

This month we celebrated Mother's Day, and it made us appreciate our Imani's Safehouse family. We celebrate all of you mothers, grandmothers, caregivers, loyal friends, mentors and children. We take care of each other, and that's something to celebrate, too.



*We take care of each other. Photo from Mother's Day protest.*

# MOTHER'S DAY ON RIKERS



The crisis on Rikers Island continues to escalate, and on May 6, the Women's Community Justice Association (WCJA) held a Mother's Day rally. Director Michelle Feldman said that the group's #BEYONDROSIES campaign "uplifts all the mothers and daughters at the Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers," and demands that the city decarcerate.





# *TIME*

**BY KAREN THOMAS**

We all mark time in some way when we're doing time. I know that I did. Some of us cross off each day on the calendar. Some of us count milestones like a child's birthday, or a monthly visit, or some of us count down the number of commissary buys. But, no matter how we keep track of our time, prison time seems to move slowly. Some days in prison feel like they are weeks long, moving slowly, inching along.

I was released on April 18, 2017, after almost 35 years.. It seemed like time was crawling in slow motion that day.

The way we perceive time is relative. Time seems to move so differently since I was released. On April 18, 2022, I woke up realizing that I have been out for five years. Five Years!

Those five years have gone by in the blink of an eye. My days are filled with the responsibilities of my job, paying bills, the hassle of the subway, and the ever-increasing prices at the supermarket. But, every day, I am filled with joy and appreciation for the blessing of freedom, whatever I'm doing.

Being home for five years has not dimmed my memory of what time was like while I was in prison. Nothing could erase the memory of those days. But, I consider that a good thing, because the comparison between then and now makes me appreciate each day and cherish my freedom even more.

## *KATHY BOUDIN, 1943-2022*



*Kathy with her young son, Chesa, at Bedford Hills*

Kathy Boudin, a beloved friend and essential member of our larger community, died on May 1, 2022. It is fitting that Kathy died on May Day, a holiday celebrating solidarity in struggle. Kathy, as a young activist, and later, as the co-founder of the Center for Justice at Columbia, devoted her life to political struggle and building a more caring and more just world. Karen Thomas, who was incarcerated with Kathy at Bedford Hills, says she is frustrated to see that journalists still define Kathy by the acts that brought her to prison. Imani’s Safehouse doesn’t want to make the same mistake. While Kathy’s early life and political radicalization are deeply interesting, we want to focus on the extraordinary work Kathy did while she was at Bedford Hills and after her release.

### **Work with HIV/AIDS**

Kathy was incarcerated in 1981, and arrived at Bedford Hills in 1984.

In a 2007 essay called “The Resilience of the Written Off: Women in Prison as Women of Change,” Kathy writes that, by the mid-1980s, prisons were at the center of the devastating AIDS epidemic. In 1987, 20 percent of people entering prison were HIV-positive, but the stigma around AIDS was so strong that no one ever spoke about it. People incarcerated at Bedford lobbied for education sessions about HIV/AIDS with doctors—but as Kathy wrote, it wasn’t enough. She and others demanded resources and training to care for one another. “We wanted to create a community within the prison; we wanted to take care of our sisters who were dying in front of our eyes, and prevent others from getting sick,” she wrote. To this end, Kathy helped found a group called AIDS Counseling and Education (ACE). She and other ACE members published a book called *Breaking the Walls of Silence* in 1998.

*KATHY BOUDIN cont'd*

**Organizing for Higher Education**

Kathy received a master’s degree in adult education in 1989, becoming the first woman to earn a master’s while incarcerated at a New York State Prison. In 1995 —thanks to the omnibus crime bill—the federal government stopped funding higher education in prison, effectively ending the opportunity to receive a college degree while incarcerated. Outraged, Kathy, Cheryl Wilkins and others at Bedford effectively created their own college program, collaborating with Marymount Manhattan College to ensure that people could still earn a degree if they chose. Kathy, who went to prison when her son, Chesa, was a year old, also created a parenting program to help incarcerated mothers connect with their children, and spearheaded the “tree of life” Thanksgiving tradition at Bedford.

**Center for Justice**

Kathy was paroled in 2003. Her co-defendent, Judy Clark was released in 2019, after Governor Cuomo commuted her 75-year sentence in 2016. Clark served nearly 40 years.

Boudin earned her Ph.D. from Columbia University in 2008. She founded the Coming Home Program at Mt. Sinai in Morningside Heights, to meet the health needs of people newly-released from prison, and in 2013, co-founded the prolific group, RAPP (Releasing Aging People from Prison) with Laura Whitehorn and Mujahid Farid. In 2014, founded the Center for Justice at Columbia with Cheryl Wilkins and Geraldine Downey.



*Kathy, David and Chesa (photos from Center for Justice)*

In a New Yorker article about Boudin, Whitehorn said: “Kathy had a fierce and unbending commitment to principle, and an ability to manifest principle by building community. She connected with people and saw each person for who they were. And that was her political statement, not a personality quirk.”

She is survived by her son, Chesa, who was elected District Attorney of San Francisco in 2020. Her partner, David Gilbert, was released from prison in 2021 when then-Governor Cuomo commuted his 75-year sentence. He had served 40 years.

Contact us at:

**1365 West 7th Street, Apt. 3F  
Brooklyn, NY 11204**

If you are still interested in joining the Imani's Safehouse book club, please let us know and we will send you a free copy of Octavia Butler's *Kindred*. For anyone who is reading the book now, let us know what you think! We're looking to publish short reviews (200-300 words) but are also interested in any poetry or art inspired by the book!

And as always, we welcome all essays, poems, and artwork. Send us anything you would like to see published!