

# IMANI'S SAFEHOUSE



## Happy New Year, Family!

How are you feeling? Hope that you are feeling, because sometimes it gets to be too much, and even I get numb. I hope that this holiday brings feelings of joy and happiness to both you, and your loved ones.

The culture in NYS is slowly changing and survivors of sexual violence are getting rights, even when these survivors were in prison. For women like us, sexual assault was best kept secret. Now, for a short time, you can say something about it to the courts, and get compensated (money awarded) for your suffering. Take a look at the following pages for more information.

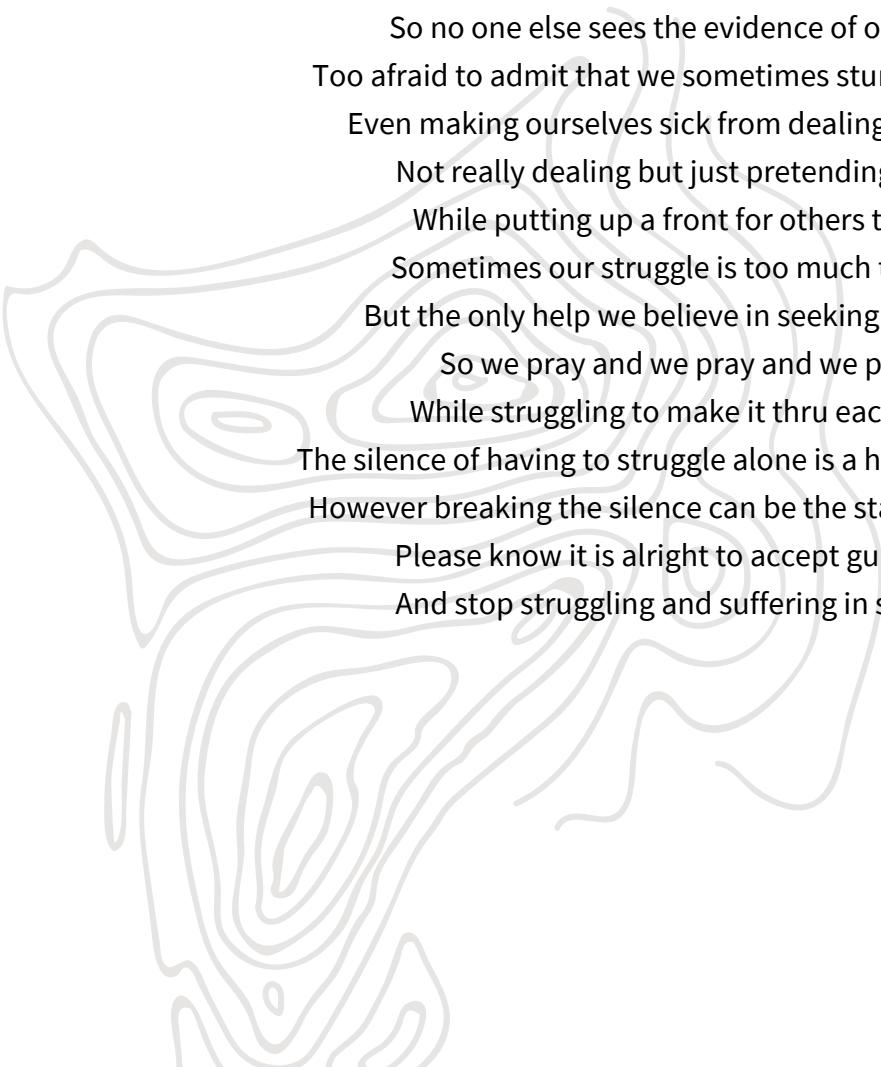
Respectfully, please don't wait for the last second. Claims must be filed before November 24, 2023. Clearly labeled envelopes with "LEGAL MAIL," will not be opened by the facility staff.



*Jennifer Fecu and Raqibah Basir at the opening of the Gate of the Exonerated in Central Park*

# *STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING IN SILENCE*

**A POEM BY MY TRUE ESSENCE**



We were never taught how to deal with our troubles  
But told to keep quiet about our struggles  
So we do and then the self-destruction begins...  
The self-hate vs. self-love battle we're fighting within  
Internalizing the pain instead of releasing the hurt  
Falling down, staying down and wallowing in the dirt  
Because getting up requires putting in the work  
Crying but hiding our tears by standing in the rain  
So no one else sees the evidence of our pain  
Too afraid to admit that we sometimes stumble and fall  
Even making ourselves sick from dealing with it all  
Not really dealing but just pretending to be  
While putting up a front for others to see  
Sometimes our struggle is too much to bear  
But the only help we believe in seeking is prayer  
So we pray and we pray and we pray  
While struggling to make it thru each day  
The silence of having to struggle alone is a horrible feeling  
However breaking the silence can be the start to healing  
Please know it is alright to accept guidance  
And stop struggling and suffering in silence

# *ADULT SURVIVORS ACT INFO AND ACCESS CAMPAIGN*

New York State survivors of sexual violence committed by correctional staff now have a new avenue for seeking compensation. The Adult Survivors Act (ASA) went into effect on Thanksgiving Thursday, November 24, 2022, and includes a one-year look-back window period ending on November 24, 2023. This means survivors have until November 24, 2022, to file claims for compensation for sexual assaults as far back as 1980.

This new law is a significant change for survivors of sexual assault. Many have previously been reluctant to speak out about their experiences due to fear of retaliation or lack of faith in the legal system. Financial compensation can be a form of reparations for the irreversible damage suffered by survivors. Imani's Safehouse Inc. has partnered with the law firm of Levy Konigsberg to disseminate information about this new law and to provide free consultations to survivors. The firm is known for litigating sexual abuse lawsuits against large and powerful institutions and has recovered over \$3 billion in compensation for clients. They are leading the fight for female inmates abused at jails and prisons statewide.

Survivors can contact the law firm directly at Levy Konigsberg, 605 Third Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10158. It is important to note that claims must be filed before November 24, 2023. Also you can call or contact the firm on line at [Levylaw.com](http://Levylaw.com). The firm advises survivors to use clearly labeled envelopes with "LEGAL MAIL" to ensure that the facility doesn't open the mail.

The Adult Survivors Act is a positive step forward in giving survivors the rights and resources they deserve. We encourage all survivors to take advantage of this opportunity to seek compensation for the harm they have suffered. For more details and resources check out the law section the new 2023 Connections book from New York Public Library



**"Gender violence is a complex issue that affects people of all genders, particularly non-male individuals. The recent passage of the ASA in New York State is a step in the right direction, as it provides rights to survivors of sexual assault. However, it is important to recognize that gender violence encompasses a wide range of forms of violence and abuse, and more needs to be done to address the specific needs of survivors. Additionally, there are issues with the criminal justice system where women are disproportionately represented and often face harsher sentences than men. It is important to continue to work towards creating a society that is open to change and addressing these issues."**

**Jennifer Fecu**

# MOVING ON

BY LORETTA CURTO  
DEDICATED TO JOEL M.

Convicted of Love  
I plead guilty  
He didn't want Love  
He wants loyalty  
That was his last words to me

Convicted of Love  
I fell short plenty of times  
He puts the blame on me  
And said I crossed the line

Convicted of Love  
I gave all I had to give  
He shows no emotions  
So for him it's hard to forgive

Convicted of Love  
I put myself last  
He said he hated me  
And dwells on the past

Convicted of Love  
I ask for forgiveness  
He holds grudges  
So there's no winning

Convicted of Love  
Got me sitting a cell  
My pen bleeding with emotions  
Because it's hard to voice how I feel

Convicted of Love  
I just want to be released  
No more Love  
Just me at peace

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## EMPOWERING WOMEN IN PRISON: THE JOURNEY TO HEALING AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Being in prison can be a difficult and isolating experience. But it doesn't have to mean that healing and self-discovery are out of reach. As women, we have the strength and resilience to navigate even the toughest circumstances and become even stronger on the other side.

So, how can we begin the journey to healing ourselves? Here are a few tips to get started:

**Practice mindfulness and self-reflection.** Take the time to check in with yourself and your emotions. Journaling can be a helpful tool for processing your thoughts and feelings.

**Surround yourself with positivity.** Reach out to keep community through communication with loved ones and supportive friends, whether through letters or phone calls. Seek positive affirmations and uplifting quotes to remind yourself of your strength and worth, and write your own.

**Take care of your physical and emotional well-being.** Eating, drinking water, and exercising can positively impact your mental health, even if it's just a few stretches or push-ups in your cell. Don't forget to breath work. It is incredibly attainable. It is also recommended to teach small children to learn breath work to empower them with the valuable skill to self-regulate emotions.

**Find purpose and meaning in community interactions.** Volunteering for programs like Imani's Safehouse Inc.'s Community Connects can empower you by giving back. You make a difference in your community. It also keeps you connected to the community beyond the bars.

**Seek professional help when necessary.** Everyone needs to be cared for by someone at some time. There should be no shame in seeking professional care when necessary.

It can be challenging to remain mindful that healing is not a destination; it's a journey. We must be kind and patient with ourselves as we navigate the process.

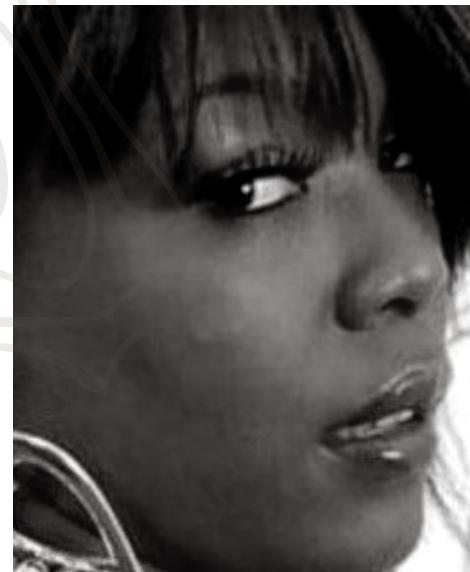
As women, we are powerful and capable of healing ourselves and each other. Let's support and empower each other on this journey to self-discovery and inner peace. We can break through the barriers together and find hope, healing, and strength.

## IN MEMORIUM

In loving memory, we are making space to remember and honor beloved members of our community who have transitioned this past year.



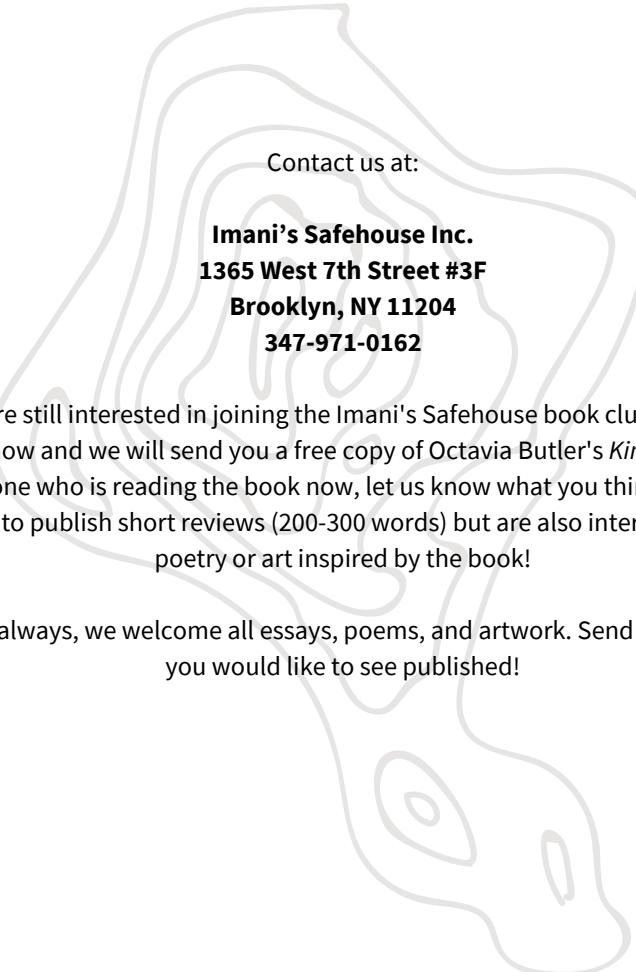
**GiGi Jordan**  
BLESSED MEMORY  
1962 - 2022



**Sherbert "Strawberry" M. Maddox**  
BLESSED MEMORY  
1982 - 2022

# Empowering Survivors

**Imani's Safehouse, a community organization founded and led by survivors, works to empower intersectionality-impacted women, girls, and gender non-conforming people to end gender violence.**



Contact us at:

**Imani's Safehouse Inc.  
1365 West 7th Street #3F  
Brooklyn, NY 11204  
347-971-0162**

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!