



**STRONGER
THAN MY PAST**



**PREPARED FOR
MY FUTURE**

OCTOBER 3, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

**Welcome
Message**

6

**Conference
Etiquette**

7

Agenda

8

**Keynote
Speaker**

11

**Workshop
Descriptions**

24

**Resource
Guide**

28

**Walking In
My Shoes**



Dear Conference Attendees,

Welcome to the 2026 Women Moving Forward Conference!

The National Association of Women Judges and our steering committee volunteers are so glad you are here. We know that returning home after incarceration brings many challenges and decisions. By attending, you are taking an important step toward preparing for your future, and we are honored to be part of that journey.

Conference Date:

Saturday, October 3, 2026

Chairs:

Hon. Cathy Hollenberg Serrette
Shawn M. Flower, Ph.D.
Acting-Warden Genieve Goodall

Conference Coordinator

Lisa Pierotte, Ph.D.

2026 Steering Committee:

Tracey Asbury
Nicole Barnes
Ellen Bredt
Rachael Campbell
Dr. Bridgette Chase
Laurie Denham
Mary Pat Donelan
Ann Holmes
Leslie Johnson
Lauren Lambert
Richard Mattingly
Moriah McQueen
Dr. Cheryl Mercer
Sgt. Virginia Ngugi
Hon. Maria Oesterreicher
Angel Rich
Donna Rojas
Keisha Byam Simmonds
Quajeebah Stinnette
Officer Serita Veney
Roseanna Vogt

Our theme this year is ***“Stronger Than My Past, Prepared for My Future.”***

We are excited to open with keynote speaker Chris Wilson, who received a life sentence when he was eighteen. But as he said, “What felt like the end of my story was just the beginning.” Today, he is a best-selling author, artist, and social entrepreneur. His memoir, *The Master Plan*, shares his transformative journey and has touched millions of readers.

Baltimore’s Biddle Street Catering will treat us to a delicious lunch featuring their homemade entrees and desserts. After lunch, the talented I-WISH Players from MCIW will present “I Can Fly Higher,” followed by a special dance performance by the Howard Community College Dance Program.

Today’s six workshops are designed to help prepare for your return home, covering topics such as learning a trade, financial decision-making, reentry planning, mental health, and growth and healing through journaling. To close the day, three speakers will share their experiences navigating release and reentry in “Walking in My Shoes.” We hope their stories remind you that while everyone’s journey is different, you do not have to walk alone.

The Women Moving Forward Conference website, www.wmfmd.org, offers valuable information about community resources, services, and support. Please use it when seeking assistance.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this conference possible. We are grateful to each of you.

We are so glad you are here. We hope today leaves you feeling encouraged, empowered, and ready for the road ahead.

With warmest wishes from your co-chairs,

*Judge Cathy Hollenberg Serrette, Dr. Shawn M. Flower, &
Acting-Warden Genieve Goodall*

WMF Conference Sponsors

THE LUVU PROJECT

In Memory of Carolyn C. Mattingly

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Prove Them
Wrong STRONGER
THAN
MY PAST

I AM

BEAUTIFUL



THE
MOMENT
ALL



WOMAN



A circular infographic with a dark purple background. In the center is a large white circle containing the title 'CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE' and a quote. Surrounding this central circle are seven smaller white circles, each containing a rule of etiquette. These seven circles are arranged in a ring and are connected by a light purple circular band. The entire graphic is set against a dark purple background.

**Respect
Everyone**

**Prepare Your
Heart & Mind**

**Stay
Professional**

CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

*"The art of listening is not simply hearing words;
it is giving someone the dignity of your full attention."*

**Work
Together**

Participate

**Take
Brief Notes**

Listen

AGENDA



Time	Room Location	Event
9:00 a.m. to 9:20 a.m.	Gymnasium	Welcome
9:20 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.	Gymnasium	Keynote Address: <i>Chris Wilson</i>
10:00 a.m. to 10:55 a.m.	See Workshop Schedule	Morning Workshop I
11:05 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.	Gymnasium	Lunch
11:50 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.	Gymnasium	<i>I Can Fly Higher.</i> I-WISH Players & Howard Community College Dancers
12:45 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.	See Workshop Schedule	Afternoon Workshop I
1:50 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.	See Workshop Schedule	Afternoon Workshop II
2:55 p.m. to 3:10 p.m.	Gymnasium	Hand in Evaluations Gift Bag Distribution
3:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.	Gymnasium	Walking in My Shoes
3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Gymnasium	Closing Ceremonies 7

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Chris Wilson

Executive Director, Founder

Chris Wilson splits his time between Miami, Florida, and New York City. He works as a visual artist and a social justice advocate. Through his work, he investigates societal injustices, human relationships, and public policies. His artwork is collected and displayed internationally. His bestselling book, *The Master Plan*, has inspired countless individuals to find hope, meaning, and purpose in their lives. He founded the Chris Wilson Foundation to support social entrepreneurs and prison education, including reentry and financial literacy for returning citizens, as well as diversity and inclusion in the arts. He loves house music, traveling, and getting time in the studio.





Stronger together

I CAN FLY HIGHER

Directed by Judy Templeton Pierantozzi
Written and performed by I-WISH Players
(Incarcerated Women Inside Seeking to Help)

**Original Monologues and performances by
I-WISH members with life of long sentences:**

Affirmations and Inspirations

A Day in the Life

Who am I?

Making the World a Better Place

Send-off to all the Women Moving Forward

In collaboration with the MCIW I-WISH members, the Dance Program has created dances that explore and express the depth of these women's stories.

Great appreciation to the Howard Community College Dance Program and Liz Higgins, Coordinator of Dance, for this unique and profound project utilizing Dance for Healing and Social Justice.



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS



Rising Strong: *Building Emotional Resilience for the Journey Ahead*

Healing is a journey, and you don't have to walk it alone. Explore practical strategies to strengthen your emotional well-being after incarceration, including building a healthy support network, practicing self-care, reframing relationships, and recognizing when to seek professional support as you prepare for your future.

Presenter - Dr. Bridgette Chase is the passionate CEO and founder of Chase Counseling and Consulting Services (CCCS). CCCS is a community-based, woman- and minority-owned organization headquartered in Washington, DC. CCCS provides essential clinical counseling services to families, individuals, groups, and faith-based organizations in the metropolitan area.

Dr. Chase brings over 30 years of experience practicing in Washington, DC, and the surrounding areas. Her commitment to addressing her community's mental health needs has driven the establishment and success of CCCS. Throughout her career, Dr. Chase has worked extensively with clients facing severe co-occurring disorders, homelessness, and incarceration due to mental illness and substance abuse disorders.



Founder & CEO
Dr. Bridgette Chase



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Building Skills, Creating Opportunities

Learn a Trade for Your Future

A new future begins with new opportunities. This workshop introduces a paid apprenticeship program centered on home craftsmanship under the guidance of experienced instructors. Learn how you can earn an income while gaining hands-on training in upholstery and home décor sewing, build marketable skills, and prepare for meaningful employment. Discover how learning a trade can open doors to financial stability, confidence, and a stronger future.

Presenter - Stacy McAleer is the founder and executive director of The Cavanagh House, a vital resource to Baltimore and its surrounding areas, dedicated to helping individuals gain financial stability through the trade of upholstery and sewing. With a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and over 35 years as a self-taught sewer, Stacy brings both clinical insight and hands-on expertise to her leadership.

Committed to helping revitalize the upholstery and sewing industries in Baltimore and throughout the U.S., The Cavanagh House serves as a feeder of skilled workers to the industry. Under Stacy's guidance, the organization not only provides hands-on training but also fosters economic independence and long-term career pathways for its participants.



Founder & Executive Director
Stacy McAleer



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From Reflection to Renewal: *Healing Through Journaling*

Discover how journaling can become a safe way to process life's challenges, release emotional burdens, and reconnect with your inner strength. Learn how putting pen to paper can support healing, foster self-discovery, and help you move forward with hope and confidence—all within a judgment-free space for your thoughts, feelings, and personal growth.

Presenter - Keisha Byam-Simmonds is a faith-driven speaker, entrepreneur, and creative visionary whose mission is to help women embrace self-love, walk boldly in their God-given purpose, and write the vision for their lives—both literally and spiritually. As the founder of KBanx Designs, she designs inspiring journals, beadable pens, and custom gifts that empower women to prioritize mental wellness, self-reflection, and intentional living.

With a professional background in healthcare administration and years of experience speaking to diverse audiences, Keisha brings a unique blend of storytelling, research-based insights, and humor to every stage. She believes transformation starts within, and her sessions guide women through powerful journaling exercises, practical tools for personal growth, and the reminder that God's promises are uniquely designed for them.



**Speaker, Entrepreneur &
Creative Visionary**
Keisha Byam-Simmonds



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Your Next Step Starts Here:

A Practical Guide to Reentry Readiness

Preparing for reentry means navigating both opportunities and challenges. This workshop explores practical approaches to rebuilding family relationships after incarceration, and addressing the legal, emotional, and logistical aspects of returning home while identifying strategies and supports that can help strengthen connections and prepare you for what's next.



Community Engagement & Reentry Coordinator
Shannice Anderson

Co-Presenter - Shannice Anderson is a native Baltimorean and a graduate of Bowie State University who serves as the inaugural Community Engagement and Reentry Coordinator for the Maryland Office of the Public Defender. In this role, she develops partnerships with community organizations and service providers to connect public defender clients with critical non-legal supports, including housing, employment, behavioral health services, and family reunification.



Reentry Manager
Carlita Brown

Co-Presenter - Carlita Brown, also known as **Asabi**, is a community leader, author, and advocate who is dedicated to empowering women and individuals impacted by incarceration. As the Reentry Manager for PIVOT Baltimore, she helps support women returning from incarceration by connecting them with resources, mentorship, and opportunities to successfully reintegrate into their families, communities, and the workforce.

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Preparing Today For A Stronger Financial Tomorrow

A stronger future starts with a solid foundation. This workshop explores key strategies for financial reentry success, including thoughtful planning, smart decision-making, and practical tools to help you build stability, confidence, and greater financial independence as you move forward.



Financial Advisor

Ann Holmes

Co-Presenter - Ann Holmes is the retired Senior Assistant Dean for Administration and Finance for the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) at the University of Maryland, College Park. During her distinguished career, she oversaw college budgets, state and federal compliance, and research administration, later earning the UMD President's Distinguished Service Award and the BSOS Dean's Medal.



Senior Manager of University Partnerships

Annie Weinschenk

Co-Presenter - Annie Weinschenk is the Senior Manager of University Partnerships at SECU (State Employees Credit Union), where she channels her passion for community engagement and financial education. Dedicated to empowering students and residents with personal finance knowledge, Annie brings both heart and expertise to her work.



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Moving Forward With Potential and Purpose

Explore how integrative wellness, community connection, and culturally rooted resources can support resilience and personal growth. This workshop highlights tools and practices that will help you strengthen your wellbeing, recognize your potential, and move forward prepared for the future.

Presenter – Shoareged Phillpotts is a licensed social worker, public health professional, therapist, and nonprofit leader with more than 15 years of experience advancing health equity, community wellness, organizational development, and systems change. She holds dual Master's degrees in Public Health and Social Work and has extensive experience in program design, leadership development, mental health, fundraising, policy advocacy, and nonprofit management.

As Executive Director of It Takes a Village, Shoareged leads organizational strategy, partnerships, fundraising, governance, and organizational growth. She oversees the development and implementation of ITAVcollab's Healing Justice, and Integrative Wellness initiatives while ensuring the organization remains responsive to community needs and aligned with its mission. Her work focuses on creating healing-centered solutions that address both individual well-being and the systemic factors that impact community health, opportunity, and long-term stability.



Co-Founder & Executive Director
Shoareged Phillpotts



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Women Moving Forward

Program Resources
<https://www.wmfmd.org/conference-resources>

Housing and Basic Needs

211 Maryland Reentry Resources

- Connects Maryland residents returning from incarceration with community resources for housing, food, employment, healthcare, mental health, substance-use treatment, transportation, and other basic needs; visit 211md.org/resources/mdreentry/ or call 211.

Maryland Benefits One Application

- Provides one online application that can be used to apply for multiple Maryland benefit programs, making it easier to determine what assistance they may qualify for after release; visit ub.benefits.maryland.gov or call 1-800-332-6347

Maryland Transition Guide

- Provides families with information about transition planning, available services, support, and Maryland resources, helping you and your family identify assistance during major life transitions; visit mdtransitions.org.

Rental Housing Protections for Domestic Violence Survivors

- Explains housing protections and options that may be available to women experiencing domestic violence, including information about rental housing rights and protections; visit peoples-law.org/housing-protections-and-options-domestic-violence-victims#rental

Identification

Birth certificate: visit health.maryland.gov/vsa/Pages/birth.aspx or call 410-764-3038

Social Security Card: visit ssa.gov/number-card or call 1-800-772-1213

Revoked or Suspended Driver's License: visit mva.maryland.gov/your-mva-guide/drivers-revoked-or-suspended-licenses

ID: visit mva.maryland.gov/licenses-ids/get-new-license-permit-or-id/identification-id-card



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Program Resources

<https://www.wmfmd.org/conference-resources>

Healthcare

Maryland Health Connection

- Help individuals find and enroll in health insurance and determine whether they qualify for financial assistance to lower healthcare costs; visit marylandhealthconnection.gov or call 1-855-642-8572.

Health Care After Incarceration

- Provides reentry information about reconnecting with health coverage and healthcare services after incarceration, making it useful for someone preparing for their medical needs after release; visit cms.gov/priorities/health-equity/c2c.

Maryland Behavioral Health Provider Directory

- Licensed Maryland programs for mental health, substance-use treatment, crisis stabilization, opioid treatment, outpatient treatment, residential treatment, psychiatric rehabilitation, and mobile crisis services; visit health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/BHA-Licensed-and-Certified-Providers-and-Programs.aspx

Maryland DDA – Contacts & Information

- Provides information for connecting with Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Administration so women or families can identify the appropriate DDA contacts and begin asking about eligibility and available disability services. visit health.maryland.gov/dda/Pages/Constituent_Services.aspx or call 410-767-5600.

Legal and Family Matters

Maryland Courts – Family Self-Help Center

- Helps women find information and self-help resources for family-law matters, including navigating family court and finding assistance for family-related legal issues; visit courts.state.md.us/family/familyselfhelp

Maryland Courts – Court Forms

- Access to official Maryland court forms for different court matters; visit mdcourts.gov/forms

Maryland Courts – Domestic Violence / Protective Orders

- Provides information for women experiencing domestic violence who need to understand protective orders, court procedures, and available court resources for safety-related legal matters; visit www.mdcourts.gov/dv



Women Moving Forward

Program Resources

www.wmfmd.org/conference-resources

Maintaining Meaningful Connections During Incarceration

With Children:

- Talk with your child about your incarceration in an age-appropriate, honest, and reassuring way.
- Give your child space to ask questions and express their feelings without judgment.
- Focus conversations on your child's daily life, interests, school, and accomplishments to maintain your connection.

With Others:

- Stay connected through approved phone calls, letters, visits, or other forms of communication.
- Try to remain involved in important moments, such as birthdays, school events, and accomplishments when possible.
- Be consistent and patient as you work to maintain your relationship while you are separated.

Visit the Women Moving Forward Conference website for additional resources:

www.wmfmd.org/conference-resources/

**are you
ready?**



By Marianne Rose

WALKING IN MY SHOES



Rita Gray is an accomplished grants strategist, operations professional, and reentry advocate with extensive leadership experience in the nonprofit sector. Having served as Director of Operations and Special Projects for nonprofit organizations, she has led strategic initiatives, strengthened organizational operations, and supported programs that create meaningful opportunities for justice-impacted individuals. As a formerly incarcerated woman, she has transformed her lived experience into a lifelong commitment to criminal justice reform, workforce development, and community empowerment.

Ms. Gray currently serves as the Returning Citizen Liaison for the County Executive Office, Prince George's County, Maryland, where she works collaboratively with county agencies, employers, and community-based organizations to connect returning citizens with employment opportunities, workforce training, housing resources, and supportive services that promote long-term economic mobility and successful reentry.

Rita is also the Founder and Executive Director of Females of Color United for Success (FOCUS), an emerging nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering justice-impacted women of color through transitional housing, workforce development, leadership training, life-skills education, and holistic support services. Through FOCUS, she is creating pathways that help women rebuild their lives with dignity, stability, and purpose.

Rita earned her Bachelor of Arts in Business Management from The Catholic University of America. She will graduate in December 2026 with a Master of Business Administration (MBA), further strengthening her expertise in nonprofit leadership, strategic management, financial stewardship, and organizational development.

WALKING IN MY SHOES



Tammy Mitchell, formerly known as **Tammy Moore** during her incarceration at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W), knows what it feels like to believe life may never change. She has lived through addiction, incarceration, disappointment, relapse, and moments when hope seemed far away. But she also knows what it feels like when God refuses to give up on you.

When Tammy was released in 2017, she was determined to build a different life. The road wasn't easy. Like many people returning home, she faced setbacks and continued to struggle with addiction. There were times when she stumbled, but kept getting back up. Looking back now, Tammy realizes that every step, even the difficult ones, became part of the story God was writing.

Today, Tammy works as a Lead Collections Analyst for an orthopedic billing company while earning her Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Health Science with an emphasis in Addiction at Grand Canyon University. Her goal is to continue to earn a master's degree in Addiction Counseling so she can walk alongside individuals and families affected by addiction, not just with what she has learned in the classroom, but with the understanding that comes from having lived it herself.

WALKING IN MY SHOES



Carlita Brown's passion for reentry advocacy is rooted in her 22-year experience at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W). Released on August 26, 2020, she has since dedicated herself to creating pathways for healing, accountability, and transformation. In 2023, she was appointed to Mayor Brandon Scott's **Returning Citizens Advisory Council (RAC)** and previously served as a Case Manager with Living Classrooms.

She is the founder of PUS'HER (**P**reparing **U**s **S**trategically **H**elping **E**veryone **R**egardless) and the Victim Awareness Building Bridges Project, initiatives focused on preparing and empowering women for successful reintegration. Carlita has also served as a lead facilitator for SCREAM and as an accredited teacher through the Evangelical Training Association.

A three-time published author, Carlita's works include the Global Butterfly Effect bestseller *It Takes One To One Know* and *People Pusher*. She hosts the weekly livestream "PUS'HER" every Wednesday at 6:30 PM and the "Healing Out Loud" podcast on YouTube. Her leadership and advocacy have been recognized with the Black Girlz Rock Phenomenal Woman Award (March 2025) and an official citation from the Maryland General Assembly (April 2025).





I WANT TO REMAIN SO ROOTED TO THE
GROUND

-THESE TEARS

-THESE HANDS

-THESE FEET

SINK IN



WEBSITE

www.wmfmd.org



EMAIL

coordinator@wmfmd.org

CONTACT US!



Women Moving Forward

