DEAR SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS,

CCA is breaking ground this year in more ways than one. As we write, “Freedom Commons” is rising on Burt Avenue in Syracuse. This pioneering joint venture with the Syracuse Housing Authority will provide 57 units of affordable housing for low-income families, including housing for people re-entering the community after serving a sentence. The combination of housing and services for people re-entering society was developed by the Fortune Society, whose Castle Gardens project in New York City has won wide acclaim. Fortune is providing technical assistance on Freedom Commons. We anticipate that the Syracuse Housing Authority’s visionary partnership with us will point the way for other public housing authorities to partner with nonprofits to serve the thousands of people who come out of prison every year.

Our work has been recognized this year by a number of other public agencies.

• A new grant from the U.S. Department of Labor will enable our Syracuse office to connect people coming out of prison with training for jobs in industries that are hiring, such as construction and food services.

• Our New York City office has broken through formidable barriers to provide educational and recreational programs to youth in detention at Rikers Island and Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brownsville, Brooklyn.

• Our Recovery Centers in both Rochester and Syracuse have moved into new spaces with expanded hours and programming, providing wraparound services to people coming out of prison and trying to maintain healthy lifestyles. New York State’s Office of Substance Abuse and Alcoholism Services (OASAS) funded the expansions and new initiatives.

• We have been awarded a grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) for our adult treatment program in Brooklyn, New York, focusing on serving individuals who have both mental health and substance abuse diagnoses. The grant will strengthen our capacity in that area.

Finally, in spring 2017, the New York State legislature responded to a well-coordinated citizen campaign by raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18. New York along with North Carolina had long been outliers in continuing to impose adult sentences on juveniles. CCA’s Justice Strategies division fought long and hard for this change, alongside other leading social justice agencies. We are continuing to work to assure the law is fully implemented, in particular exercising vigilance that the new law’s vagueness does not open the door to further abuse.

At a time when all social justice initiatives are in jeopardy, we depend on the understanding of people like you for support. Please help us keep up the fight.

Sincerely,

David Condliffe, Esq. Daniel Arshack, Esq.
Executive Director Board President
“Freedom Commons” Rises in Syracuse

The cooperation of the Syracuse Housing Authority was a critical element in CCA’s ability to take on the replication. “We are tremendously appreciative of all our partners in this effort,” said David Condliffe, Executive Director. “Adequate and affordable housing is one of the great challenges that face people attempting to re-enter the community. We hope that Freedom Commons will lead the way for other public housing authorities to follow the example set by Syracuse.”

The name “Freedom Commons” honors Syracuse’s history as an outspokenly abolitionist city during the time of slavery and its role in the Underground Railroad, helping former slaves to reach freedom.

Freedom Commons consists of a total of 57 residential units. These include three shelter units providing transitional housing; nine permanent supportive housing apartments for homeless individuals or families struggling with a criminal history; and 45 affordable apartments for low-income families.

CCA will provide residents with supportive services both on- and off-site. Case management services will be provided to recently released homeless individuals and homeless individuals with criminal records and special needs. Homeless individuals living in the shelter units will receive assistance in finding appropriate permanent housing. These services will be operated by CCA and funded by the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI).

Freedom Commons is expected to be complete and ready to receive its first tenants in late 2018 or early 2019.

Besides CCA and SHA, Norstar Development/Nonstar Building Corporation is the third developer and is acting as general contractor. Construction funding was provided by NYS Homes and Community Renewal and NYS OTDA Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation. Key Bank Development Corporation provided the financing for tax credits that made the project affordable.

The Second Chance Initiative will focus on helping individuals coming out of prison receive training and find jobs in sectors that are expanding and have career ladders, such as construction, culinary/food service, and advanced manufacturing. These industries are also considered “justice-friendly” because they extend opportunities to people with skills who have criminal records.
“Raise the Age”

SIGNED INTO LAW, with Exceptions

In April 2017, the New York State Legislature finally passed legislation to raise the age (RTA) of criminal responsibility in New York State to 18. CCA played a key role in organizing support for this long- overdue change, in particular by mobilizing constituencies in upstate New York.

While the RTA legislation is a step in the right direction, much work remains for our state to fully recognize the special circumstances of adolescents. For example, the new legislation provides exceptions that are vaguely defined as “extraordinary circumstances” and could continue the inappropriate treatment of young adolescents. The legislation also continues the harsh Juvenile Offender law and does not adequately allow for the sealing of juvenile records. Passage of “Raise the Age” legislation does not end our work. Rather, it is an important achievement that requires strong advocacy to ensure effective implementation.

Through the continued support of the Tow Foundation, CCA will implement a communication and education strategy on behalf of adolescents in the criminal justice system. It will support and train local constituents, particularly in upstate communities, to monitor and document how the law is implemented, to communicate with citizens about areas of concern, to identify trends, and to continue to advocate for further reform.

In another hard-fought victory, SUNY (State University of New York) decided in fall 2016 to “ban the box” asking about criminal histories on applications to all its institutions. Many private colleges, however, continue to ask about criminal histories, deterring qualified applicants who need and deserve access to higher education. CCA will continue its advocacy efforts to pass “Ban the Box” legislation that will end the use of criminal history screening for employment, volunteer enrollment, and college admissions nationwide.

Marissa Saunders is co-leading the work of the Justice Strategies division during a leadership transition. She said, “CCA believes our policy priorities and stances must continue to be informed by the people and communities we serve. Our approach respects the struggles and challenges of people we encounter through our direct service work.” Saunders added, “Through my work with young people transitioning back into school after an absence, I’ve become aware that girls are being trafficked into sexual abuse and ultimately to prison. I want to elevate efforts to focus on that area of advocacy because of my on-the-ground knowledge of this pressing issue.”
CCA is grateful to all its private and public supporters. Your belief in the work we do is vital to the struggle for reintegrative justice.

Government
U.S. Department of Education
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of Justice
Office of Juvenile Programs
DHHS/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration (DHHS/SAI)
Department of Labor

NEW YORK STATE
Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
Department of Education
Department of Health
Division of Criminal Justice Services
Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OAASAS)
Office of Court Administration
Office of Children and Family Services

CITY/COUNTY
City of New York
City of Syracuse
New York City Department of Youth & Community Development
New York City Probation Department
Onondaga County Department of Probation
Onondaga County Department of Social Services
Syracuse City School District

Foundations, Corporations & Organizations
Over $100,000
Open Society Foundations
United Way of Central New York
$10,000-$19,999
The Herb Block Foundation
Brooklyn Community Foundation
Fortune Society/Castle Replication Project
Men’s Wearhouse
The Tow Foundation

$1,000-$9,999
Patrick Clement Fund
The Crowd Group, Inc.
Frank H. Hiscok Legal Aid Society
National Economic & Social Rights Initiative
TD Charitable Foundation

$500-$999
100 Black Men of Syracuse, Inc.
The John L. and Carmine Alpert Foundation
Philip and Helen Buck Fund
CNY Arts, Inc.

Kappa Alpha Theta-SU
Levy Family Trust
Eric and Judy Mower Fund
The Prince Charitable Trusts
Sien Studios

$10-$499
Alpha Epsilon Phi
Alpha Gamma Delta Fraternity
Alpha Phi
Bond Schoenknecht & King
Costco Wholesale
Delta Gamma Sorority
Delta Phi Epsilon
Delta Tau Delta
Gamma Phi Beta
Carol Walton Greenhouse

The International League of Muslim Women, Inc.
Kappa Kappa Gamma
Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity at Syracuse University
New York Epsilon Phi Delta Theta
Northside Collision
Phi Sigma Sigma

The Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity
Price Chopper Galbi Foundation
Psi Upsilon Fraternity
Redman Enterprises
Sigma Chi Fraternity
Sigma Delta Chi Omega Chapter
United Way of Great Chattanoogas
Vintage Spool
Washington Street Partners, Inc.
Wegmans
Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity

$1,000-$19,999
Anonymous
Daniel Archack
David C. Condiffe
Betsy Gotbaum
Michelle Henry
Gary Parker
Xiomara Romain
Shelby Rule
Sara Stuart

$500-$999
Charles and Christine Abaté
Jane Alpert
Benjamin and Susan Baet
Karen Braunen
Len Campobella
Robert Catelli
Sara and Benjamin Kraines
Walter and Deborah Gardner
Liz Jaitel
Ed Klein and Linda Trapkin
Rebecca Rahm
Richard Rayman

$250-$499
Steven Belenko
Leonard Bernard
Miri and Neid Braunstein
Scott and Deborah Deming
Carole Eady
Shawn Kennedy
Katherine Koch
Ellen Condiffe Lagemann
Andrea Latchef
Milani Nagrecha
Kathleen Ward
Marsha Weissman

$100-$249
Ron Ashton
Megan Barriger
Bret Benjamin
Amy Brouwer
Alex Carballo-Dieguez
Richard and Betty Carroll
Charles Codovzi
Robert Cole
Jane Condiffe
Frank and Sue Delo
Jennifer Epting
David Frischherr
Maureen Fischer
Fred and Chris Fiske
Dan Fixot
Anne and Neil Flick Braun
Casey Franz and Scott Pettiet
John and Deborah Gardner
Elin Golden
Deborah Grebbon
David Guernerald
Emile Hascall and K. Ryan Haych
Maxine Herr
Marguerite Jones
Mary Katzenstein
Mattawther Kern
Ellen Largere
Joy Leinberger
William and Linda Levy
Max Linderman
Vincent Love
David Michel and Peggy Lussau
David Miller
Diane and Fred Murphy
Ted and Betty Murphy Stark
Aaron Notie
Emily NaHer
Alan and Rosalind NaHer
Patrick O’Keefef
J. Scott Porter
Anealeigh Porter
Wendy Powers
Lou Prieto and Sara Baughan
Thomas Reier
Virginia Robbins
Kelly and Jennifer Ronan
Nancy Rosenwieg
Kala Rosenthal
Richard Rothemel
Thomas Ryan
Joanne and Gregory Snowmier
Beverly Smir
Todd Smith
John and Jane Stopfer
Catherine Sullivan
Hugh Thacker
Susan Togofop
Jeff Unaitis
Alan Vickery
Thomas C. Vles
Gale and Stephen Warren
Deborah Weissman
Marie Wicks
Natalia Wilbur
Richard Wiltscott
Fred Zolna

Individuals
$1,000-$19,999
Anonymous
Betsy Gotbaum
Michelle Henry
Gary Parker
Lauren Ross
Sara Stuart

$500-$999
Charles and Christine Abaté
Jane Alpert
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Robert Catelli
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Gale and Stephen Warren
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Marie Wicks
Natalia Wilbur
Richard Wiltscott
Fred Zolna

KELLY GONZALEZ NAMED DEPUTY DIRECTOR, SUCCEEDING CHRISTINE ABATE
On May 1, 2017, attorney Kelly Gonzalez became Deputy Director of CCA, with supervisory responsibilities over the Syracuse and Rochester offices. Gonzalez began her career at CCA four years ago as a Student Advocate and soon moved into program director roles. Before coming to CCA, she worked for the Legal Aid Society, then for Syracuse University’s College of Law as a practitioner in residence, supervising law students.

Gonzalez is a graduate of the CCA Advocacy Academy and earned her Ph.D. in sociology during her tenure as Executive Director of CCA.

BETSY GOTBAUM JOINS BOARD
Betsy Gotbaum, an independent fundraising consultant who served as Public Advocate for the City of New York from 2002-2010, has been elected to the Board of CCA.

Besides her service as Public Advocate, an elective office, Gotbaum worked as an advisor to three mayors and served as a financial executive and president of the New York Police Foundation.

In June 1994, she became president of The New York Historical Society, which was suffering from financial troubles. When she left the institution in 2000, it had a $37 million endowment.

As Public Advocate, Gotbaum reshaped the office into the primary place New Yorkers could take problems related to municipal reform in education, school construction, prevention of crime, and the fight against hunger.

Gottbaum was inspired to join CCA because, as she said in an interview, “People coming out of prison in New York State are not getting the help they should in re-entering society. This is an important issue and I hope, as part of CCA, I can do something positive.”

FOUNDER MARSHA WEISSMAN HONORED AT JUNE 7 EVENT
“Spring Fundraiser” celebrating CCA Founder Marsha Weissman, Ph.D., who led the agency for 35 years as Executive Director, was held on June 7 on the rooftop of Castle Gardens. In addition to CCA staff who paid tribute to Marsha’s vision and dedication, guest speakers included JoAnne Page of Fortune Society, Elizabeth Gaynes of the Osborne Association, Joel Copperman of CASES, and Vivian Nixon of the College and Community Fellowship.

Speakers highlighted Weissman’s pioneering work in introducing service programs, analyzing policy, and achieving reform. Her 2011 book, “Prelude to Prison,” has left an enduring mark on the field, alongside many published articles on which she was a solo or joint author.

Weissman has continued her involvement with CCA as a Senior Policy Fellow. Her comprehensive knowledge of both the agency and the field makes her contributions highly valuable. She is also teaching courses in her field at Syracuse University, where she earned her Ph.D. in sociology during her tenure as Executive Director of CCA.

The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) is a leader in the field of community-based alternatives to incarceration. Our mission is to promote reintegrative justice and a reduced reliance on incarceration through advocacy, services and public policy development in pursuit of civil and human rights.
Gift of Wheels Makes a New Life Possible

Leon Bellamy Jr, now owns a car. And therein lies a story.

Leon Bellamy, 34, the father of a 6-year-old daughter, has served time at the Onondaga County Correctional Facility. Before and after his release, he worked hard to put his life together. While at the correctional facility, he participated in several CCA programs. Afterward, he continued his involvement, attending LEADERS, a work readiness program, and joining a transitional jobs program. Eventually, Bellamy obtained a job at Byrne Dairy. He has maintained his employment for over a year.

While the new job was a great opportunity, transportation to and from work was challenging. Bellamy works nights, when buses are not running. For transportation, he had to rely on a car shared by family members. He wanted to pursue a degree in business at Onondaga Community College but could not fit that into his schedule without a car, and wasn’t earning enough to be able to buy one in the foreseeable future.

The solution came when an employee at Darco Manufacturing, a local company, wanted to donate a high-mileage Nissan Versa to a worker who needed a car. He realized that a dependable car like his could make a difference. Darco reached out to CCA—which is well known to companies in the area—to identify a person who would benefit from such a donation.

After Bellamy and CCA staff reviewed Bellamy’s finances, they determined that he could manage the cost of registration, insurance, gas, and maintenance. Bellamy, CCA staff, and the donor then met at the DMV. Bellamy took the car for a test drive, got his tags and drove off, a happy new car owner.

Both the car and its new owner are doing fine. Still employed at Byrne Dairy, where he has a good work record, Bellamy is also now enrolled as a full-time student at OCC studying business. He said, “The car is great. It’s helping me get to work and school. And I have something of my own.”

Leon Bellamy, proud new owner of a Nissan Versa donated by a Darco Manufacturing employee

Leon Bellamy Jr, now owns a car. And therein lies a story.