

TOPEKA K. SAM
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE LADIES OF HOPE MINISTRIES
(THE LOHM)



While in Federal Prison, Topeka K. Sam witnessed firsthand the epidemic and disparity of incarceration on women, more specifically women of color. She felt the urgency to bring the faces and voices of women in prison to the public in order to bring awareness to women's incarceration and post-incarceration issues in order to change the criminal legal system.



After her release in 2015 and in response to what she saw and learned in prison, Topeka created The Ladies of Hope Ministries (The LOHM) an organization whose mission is to help disenfranchised and marginalized women transition back into society through education, entrepreneurship, spiritual empowerment, and advocacy. With Vanee Sykes, Topeka developed the vision for Hope House NYC while they were incarcerated. Hope House NYC is a safe housing space for formerly incarcerated women located in the Castle Hill neighborhood of the Bronx.

Topeka K. Sam is a '2017 Soros Justice Fellowship' recipient. Her fellowship, The Probation and Parole Accountability Project focuses on the broken and arbitrary probation and parole systems. Her op-ed, It's Time to Overhaul America's Broken Probation and Parole Systems, was published widely. Sam is a '2015 Beyond the Bars Fellow' and a '2016 Justice in Education Scholar both at Columbia University'.

In early December, in partnership with Grammy-winner and activist John Legend's FREE AMERICA and Bank of America, New Profit, Topeka was named as one of eight people to the first cohort of Unlocked Futures, an accelerator for social innovators who have been impacted directly by the criminal justice system.

Additionally, Topeka is consulting with Senators Cory Booker and Elizabeth Warren on the Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act, and she has been a TEDxMidAtlantic presenter. In December 2017, Topeka was one of three women who met with Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Lee, Shelia Jackson Lee and 17 other members of the Democratic Women's Working Group where she spoke with them about the realities faced every day by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women.

Sunday, December 31st, 2017, on page 1 of the Metropolitan Section of the New York Times, featured a story about Topeka K. Sam's vision to creating and now struggle to a safe house for formerly incarcerated women "A House for Women Leaving Prison Sits Empty".

Beginning on January 7th, 2018 and on every Sunday at 9 AM est., Topeka K. Sam hosts the weekly show, Last Mile, Second Chances on SXMUrbanView Ch. 126. (<http://www.siriusxm.com>). As of February 1st, 2018, Topeka was named the Director of the #Dignity Campaign for #cut50.

Sam, a founding member of the National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls ("National Council"), has spoken widely about the issues of incarceration, post-incarceration, and the carceral state. In her past role as National Organizer with the National Council, she created and produced "Real Women, Real Voices" symposia at eleven law schools nationwide.

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