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# EMAN NC IPATE

END OF YEAR **REPORT**

**Support Our Work**

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# Thanks to you, 2024 was a year of power.

It was a year of **people power**. The people rose up and demanded unarmed police response in Raleigh. Our community came together and showed up to listening sessions, signed letter-writing campaigns, and attended Wake County budget work sessions. Because our community made their voices heard, the City of Raleigh committed to funding and launching the city's first-ever unarmed crisis response team.

It was a year of **family power**. Partnering with Operation Stop CPS and The People's Alliance, we formed a local Child and Family Action team, creating a mechanism for families impacted by the family policing system to use their experiences to influence policy change. We launched Carolina Parent Defender's, North Carolina's first holistic family defense service.

It was a **year of power** in the courtrooms. Using a range of legal strategies, our attorneys are holding police accountable for misconduct and violence, abolishing racist monuments in Tyrrell County, improving jail and prison conditions, and achieving hope for parole for people sentenced to Life Without Parole as young people.

And it was a year of **civic power**. From protecting the right to protest to mobilizing people to the polls, we ensured that the voices of people directly impacted by the racist carceral state were centered in discussions about public policy and decision-making.

As we end the year, our focus is on capturing the momentum from this power to propel us even further in 2025. We use strategies that have been successful in 2024 to fight for unarmed police response in more municipalities. We will expand our Family Defense work to the rest of the Piedmont region. We will scale up our victories in individual court cases to achieve systemic reforms. And we will amplify the voices of the people at the polls and in the streets.

**With your support**, we have accomplished unprecedented victories in dismantling racism in the criminal legal system. In 2025, we will push harder, demand more, and be even stronger and bolder in our work emancipating North Carolina from—so we can all get free, together.

In Solidarity,

**Dawn Blagrove**



A thick orange square frame with a white inner square, centered on a dark purple background. The text 'OUR TEAM' is centered within the white inner square.

OUR  
**TEAM**

# Our Team



**Dawn Blagrove**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
& ATTORNEY



**Elizabeth Simpson**  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR  
& ATTORNEY



**Kerwin Pittman**  
POLICY & PROGRAM



**Ian Mance**  
SENIOR COUNSEL



**Dedan Waciuri**  
ORGANIZER



**Joy C. Belk**  
PARALEGAL



**Brandon Smith**  
TEAM DOCUMENTARIAN



**Jatoia Potts**  
ORGANIZER



**Jaelyn Miller**  
STAFF ATTORNEY



**Margaux Lander**  
INVESTIGATOR & STRATEGIST

## Board of Directors



**Savannah Baker**  
BOARD CHAIR



**Frances Castillo**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Tessa Hale**  
BOARD MEMBER



**Kristie Puckett**  
BOARD SECRETARY  
AND TREASURER



**Mandie Sellars**  
BOARD MEMBER



QUOTES FROM  
**OUR FUNDERS**

## Quotes from select funders.

The Roblee Foundation is a **proud supporter** of Emancipate NC, which allows us to live out our values for racial equity and upstream solutions. We appreciate their approach to showing up for people in the hardest moments of their lives, building organizing strength with the community, and making our legal system work for everyone.

Joseph H. &  
Florence A. Roblee  
Foundation

**Laura Horwitz**

Executive Director, JF Roblee Foundation

When it comes to creative education and narrative shifting around many of the issues North Carolina voters care about, Emancipate NC is leading the charge. In 2024, we saw **Executive Director Dawn Blagrove** and her highly skilled team of litigators and change-makers provide one-of-a-kind presentations inspiring campus and community alike surrounding the intersections of a healthy democracy and stopping over-policing, constraints on protest, and zero tolerance policies. We're proud the partner with Emancipate in their work to subvert structural racism wherever it lives — in this all-important year, and the many to come.

Common  
Cause

**Sailor Jones**

Associate Director, Common Cause NC

Emancipate NC is a **crucial partner** in the field of protecting the right to protest and dissent. As protest continues to be criminalized, Emancipate NC brings important expertise and knowledge in understanding how the criminal legal system targets Black communities most, and how in turn the attacks on protest disproportionately impact Black organizers and communities the most significantly. As many of the most repressive policies are introduced in the South, **Emancipate NC** is also an important voice in educating the right to protest field about anti-protest legislation introduced in North Carolina, the effects nationally, and effective strategies in combatting attacks against protest. Their work in public education, legal support, and working directly with impacted communities is an incredible example of a state-based, movement-oriented organization, and Piper Fund is proud to support Emancipate NC as part of its right to protest portfolio.

PIPER FUND  
A PROTEST FUND INITIATIVE

**Monica Kim**

Program Associate, Piper Fund

Emancipate NC's multifaceted approach to information work combines the reach of their own robust communication channels with the power to secure regular news media coverage. They are effective **narrative first responders** and trusted communicators. The North Carolina Local News Lab Fund is proud to support their efforts that help ensure people involved with the justice system are reflected accurately and add their voices to the complete story of our state.

North Carolina  
Local News Lab  
Fund

**Lizzy Hazeltine**

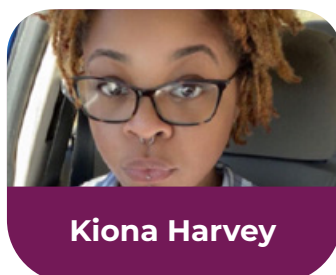
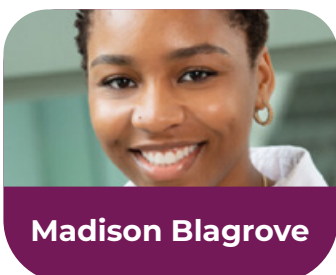
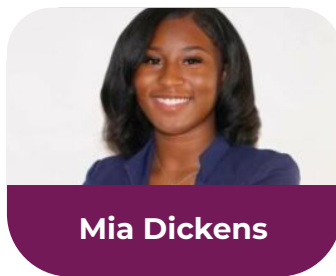
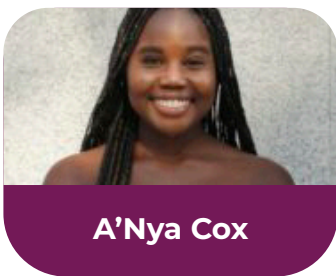
Director, North Carolina Local News Lab



JUSTICE  
**LEAGUE**

## The **Justice** League

The Justice League is an organizing fellowship for justice-impacted individuals and youth to learn advocacy and organizing skills, and to deploy those skills on campaigns to fight structural racism and mass incarceration. The Justice League members earn stipends while planning and developing campaigns.







Trinity Holder



Kyla Holton



Gianni Jackson



Rhonda Joines



Ricki Leak



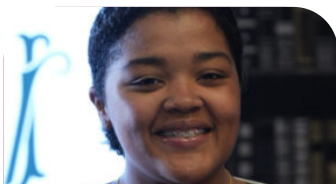
Ayanna Iovieno



Maya Muldrow



Shahonda Pope



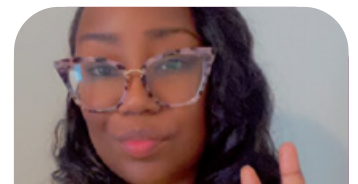
Saylah Rogers



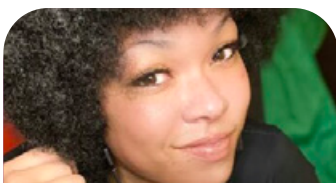
April Barber



Edward Scott



April Short



Mallory Thornton



Brandon Tweedy



Kenyata Smith



Patrick Ballard

Dismantling Structural Racism and  
Mass Incarceration Across North Carolina

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PROGRAM  
**ACHIEVEMENTS**

# Strategic Litigation:

Fighting police misconduct and prison conditions to catalyze systemic change in the courtroom.

## DARRYL HOWARD GETS PAID

“Paying Mr. Howard the compensation he is due would signal to the public that the city is committed to paying victims of police misconduct, as opposed to maneuvering to evade accountability.”

### EMANCIPATE NC ATTORNEYS, IN A LETTER TO DURHAM CITY COUNCIL.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously declared that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Darryl Howard served 24 years of an 80-year prison sentence for a crime he did not commit, spending nearly a third of a lifetime living in a cage because prosecutors withheld evidence that could have proved his innocence. After being released in 2016, when his conviction was tossed, his fight for justice still was not over. In 2021, a federal jury awarded Mr. Howard \$6 million for wrongful conviction; however, the City of Durham falsely claimed they could not legally pay Howard. This is when the attorneys and organizers at Team Emancipate stepped in to help. Emancipate NC attorneys rebutted the City of Durham’s claims in a September 2022 letter to the City Council that urged them to pay Howard. Emancipate NC then applied further pressure on the City to fulfill its obligation to Mr. Howard during a 2022 City Council meeting. Strategic Director and Attorney Elizabeth Simpson published an Op-Ed forcefully calling on the City of Durham to pay the judgment.

Finally, in May 2024, the City of Durham agreed to pay a \$7.75 million settlement to Mr. Howard to resolve all legal claims. Emancipate NC extends its sincere congratulations to Darryl Howard and his legal team for their decades-long effort to overturn his wrongful conviction and achieve justice from the Durham police officers.



## FIGHTING RACIST GOVERNMENT MONUMENTS

“This is the only monument in the country on public land that textually endorses slavery”

**EMANCIPATE NC ATTORNEY JAELYN MILLER**

One cannot enter the courthouse in Tyrrell County without walking by the monument at the steps of the courthouse that proclaims, “In Appreciation of Our Faithful Slaves.” In May 2024, Team Emancipate attorneys Ian Mance and Jaelyn Miller began representing Concerned Citizens of Tyrrell County, a civic organization comprised of Black residents of Tyrrell County. Through this lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of NC, Emancipate NC is supporting citizens of Tyrrell County in challenging the Tyrrell County Board of Commissioners’ maintenance of this racist monument.

The lawsuit asserts that this pro-slavery message is intended “to send an ominous message to every Black person with the misfortune of seeking justice in its halls.” This case has been profiled by influential media outlets, including Associated Press, CNN, The Guardian, USA Today, and Washington Examiner.



## ADVOCATING FOR TRANSPARENCY

“Policies are the surest way for the community, elected officials, or policymakers to understand how people are treated or should be treated in the jail.”

**JOHN SCHENGBER, UNC CHAPEL HILL LAW STUDENT WORKING WITH EMANCIPATE NC STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND ATTORNEY ELIZABETH SIMPSON.**

This year, Emancipate NC has continued our tenacious fight to end inhumane conditions, including solitary confinement, in prisons and jails. For nearly two years, Emancipate's attorneys have been demanding the release of an unredacted copy of the Durham County Jail policy manual. In January, after Emancipate, in collaboration with UNC-Chapel Hill Law Civil Clinic, filed a Public Records Act lawsuit, the Durham County Sheriff's office responded by providing heavily redacted documents.

In May, UNC Chapel Hill Students Nikolai Wise and John Schengber, alongside Strategic Director and Attorney Elizabeth Simpson, argued in court for the release of an unredacted jail policy manual.



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Although the judge denied Emancipate's motion for injunctive relief, he also denied the Jail's motion to dismiss. Next up is mediation! Throughout this case, Emancipate has been working with UNC-Chapel Hill law students to elevate the stories of people who have experienced incarceration in Durham County Jail.

In February, Emancipate NC released a report of the stories of people detained in Durham County Jail. More in-depth coverage of these stories were published by Indy Week. These stories were compiled by UNC law students, supervised by Emancipate Strategic Director and Attorney Elizabeth Simpson, through interviews intended to investigate the conditions of confinement and over-use of lock-down.

In February, Emancipate NC also partnered with End Solitary NC, the Durham Community Safety and Wellness Task Force, St. Phillip's Jail Ministry, and NC Community Bail Fund of Durham to provide a tour of a full-size replica of a solitary confinement cell—and raise awareness of Durham jail conditions.

## CHARGES DISMISSED!

Following aggressive representation by Emancipate NC attorney Jaelyn Miller, charges against a Black man unjustly charged with “Resisting a Public Official” were dismissed in April by the Wake County District Attorney’s Office. During the incident, our client was working as a Lyft driver when he was pulled over and accused of being intoxicated, then violently assaulted and taken to jail. Even though the trooper attempted to release this man without pressing charges, his supervisor insisted on charging him with something.

The police settled on a Resisting a Public Official charge, since our client’s blood alcohol level was 0.0. As soon as Jaelyn obtained dash camera footage of the incident, the State dropped the case.



## JUSTICE FOR DARRYL WILLIAMS

“There is not a day that goes by that I don’t think about how he was viciously murdered.”

“If I killed your loved one like a dog in the street when they said I have a heart condition and I can’t breathe and you tased them again, how much would you sue for?” This is the question that nationally-renowned civil rights attorney Ben Crump posed to Raleigh’s mayor, Chief of Police, and City Council the day that Emancipate NC and Mr. Crump filed a \$25 million federal lawsuit on behalf of the family of Darryl Tyree Williams against the City of Raleigh.



This lawsuit will hold the City of Raleigh accountable for the wrongful death, unlawful detention, and unlawful tasing of Mr. Williams, who was tased to death by Raleigh Police Department officers during an unlawful search of his vehicle under the city’s racist “proactive” policing policies. Team Emancipate and Ben Crump stood with Mr. Williams’ family in March to host a press conference announcing the lawsuit, which was covered by such media outlets as the ABC 11, Raleigh News & Observer, Spectrum News, WRAL, and WUNC.

## STANDING UP FOR JUSTICE

“Justice Earls stands in the gap for every marginalized community in North Carolina and now she is under attack.”

**DAWN BLAGROVE, EMANCIPATE NC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Justice Anita Earls is the only Black justice sitting on the Supreme Court of North Carolina. In 2023, the North Carolina Judicial Standards Commission initiated a baseless investigation into Justice Earls for speaking out about the lack of diversity on the Supreme Court.

Following an intense advocacy campaign by Team Emancipate, along with the NC Black Alliance, the North Carolina Judicial Standards Commission dismissed their complaint against Justice Earls. During one of the press conferences that were a key component of this advocacy, Emancipate Executive Director Dawn Blagrove called the investigation an example of “unrelenting trauma and hostility that Black women lawyers have to face every single day in North Carolina just to do our jobs.” Emancipate also joined with women leaders throughout the US to issue a letter in support of Justice Earls. Emancipate NC’s support of Justice Earls’ legal battle was critical in protecting democracy and preventing efforts to silence the voice of the people.



## PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM POLICE

Protecting our most vulnerable community members from police.

Emancipate NC has been proudly representing the family of K, a nonverbal 10-year-old Black child with Autism Spectrum Disorder. K was shopping at a mall in New Bern, NC with his mother when he started to cry because a store he hoped to visit was closed. After a woman called the police to report the incident, K’s mother explained to the officers that she had the situation under control. In spite of this, responding officers forced the child from his mother’s car, handcuffed him, and threatened to deploy a taser. The officers then involuntarily committed K to a psychiatric hospital without K’s mother’s consent, where he was traumatically separated from his mother, strip searched, and subjected to a blood draw. The doctors who assessed K did not observe any reason for him to be committed, so they released him back into his family’s custody.

Emancipate NC Executive Director Dawn Blagrove came to New Bern shortly after this incident, lending support to the family in public and the media and demanding accountability from local officials. Emancipate NC attorneys Ian Mance and Jaelyn Miller drafted a federal lawsuit against the City of New Bern, New Bern Police Chief Patrick Gallagher, and New Bern Police Officers Michael Zak, Supharuek Khamrin, and Ashton Cavin. The case settled before filing.





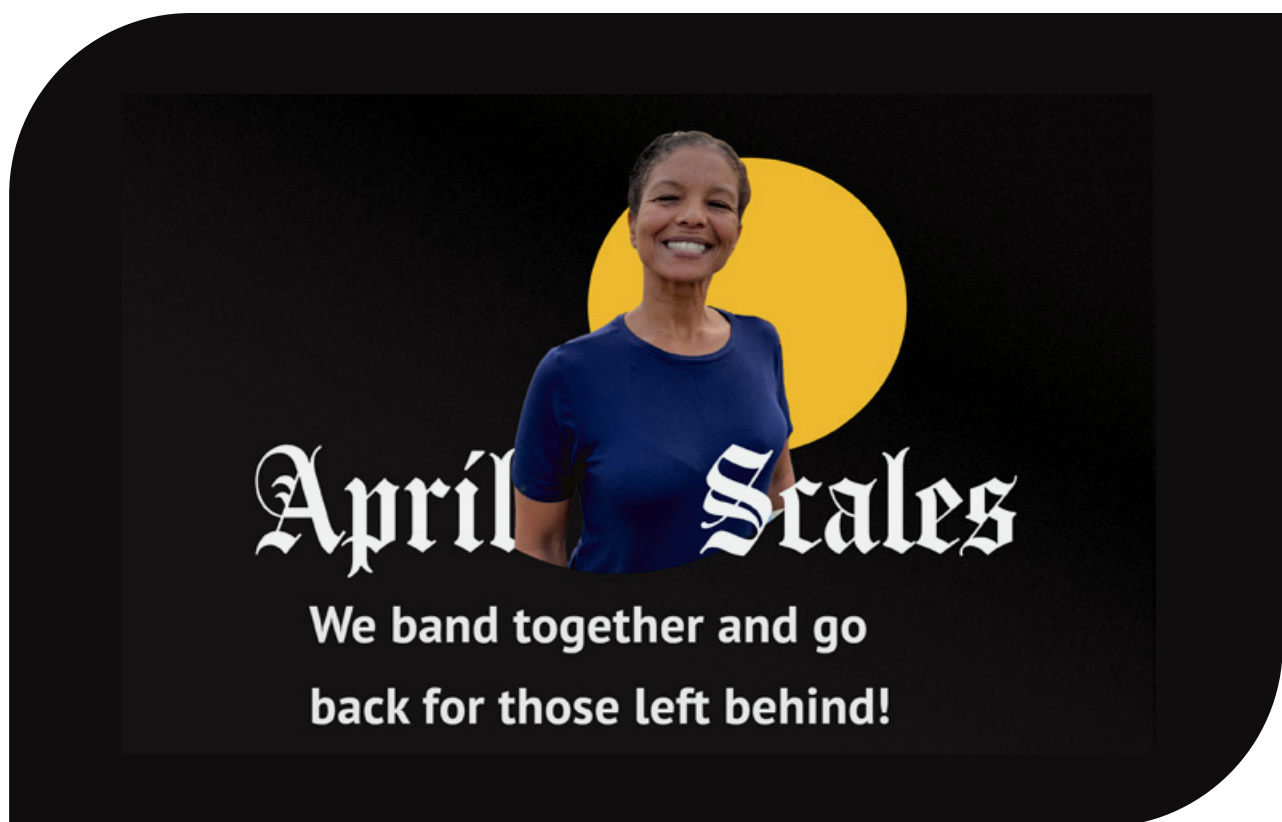
## JUST MERCY

Hope for people who received Life Without Parole sentences for crimes committed as young people.

North Carolina has the most severe racial disparities in juvenile life without parole (LWOP) sentences of any other state. While Team Emancipate has been working to address this issue for years, we have achieved significant progress in 2024.

Under statute G.S. 15A-1380.5, 225 people who were sentenced to LWOP between 1994 and 1998 are eligible to have their sentences reviewed. However, to date, nobody sentenced during this period has secured their release from custody under this statute. This is due, in part, to the fact that people must serve 25 years before having their case reviewed; therefore, only in recent years have public officials had to consider this statute's application.

One individual sentenced to LWOP between 1994 and 1998 is Emancipate NC client Dwight Jordan. Within weeks of turning 18, in 1995, Mr. Jordan was arrested for the shooting death of another man; after a jury rejected his self-defense and defense-of-others arguments, he was convicted of first-degree murder. Months before this shooting, the NC General Assembly had abolished parole in the state, leaving only one sentence available to the court: LWOP.



In 2023, Emancipate NC filed a petition for review of Mr. Jordan's sentence under statute G.S. 15A-1380.5, which applies to defendants sentenced to LWOP between October 1, 1994 and December 1, 1998. We were thrilled that, in February 2024, Mr. Jordan received a recommendation for his sentence to be altered to a parole-eligible sentence. This fall, Emancipate represented Mr. Jordan in an encouraging hearing before the NC Parole Commission, which reviews sentences after an inmate has served at least 25 years. Emancipate NC is hopeful that we will not only secure release for Mr. Jordan, but also be able to use Mr. Jordan's story and our experience representing him to provide a model of representation for other attorneys who represent the 225 people eligible to have their LWOP sentences converted to life with parole.

Emancipate NC attorneys have also been representing Darrell Anderson, another individual who was sentenced as a juvenile to LWOP. In 2019, after Mr. Anderson was resentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 50 years, Emancipate NC Senior Counsel Ian Mance filed an amicus brief to support his appeal to the Supreme Court of North Carolina. In this brief, Ian argued that the sentence amounted to a de facto life sentence—in violation of the state constitution—and highlighted the racial disparities in juvenile LWOP sentences in North Carolina.

After Emancipate filed this brief, the Supreme Court took the unusual step of granting Emancipate NC oral argument. Executive Director Dawn Blagrove argued in support of Mr. Anderson, resulting in the case being remanded to trial court. In July, following years of advocacy by Ian and support from Emancipate NC Attorney Jaelyn Miller, the trial court issued a final sentence of life with parole eligibility after 25 years—instead of 50.

Now, Mr. Anderson is eligible for release as early as 2027. Emancipate NC will continue to advocate for Mr. Anderson until his release and provide resources to ensure he succeeds in regaining his freedom and reuniting with his loving family.



# Family Defense:

Mobilizing our communities to end family regulation—and support policies/programs that prioritize kinship ties and limit the painful impact of family separation.

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## **Announcing the launch of Carolina Parent Defenders:**

Emancipate NC invested in the expansion of our Family Defense focus area by launching Carolina Parent Defenders. Led by Kaushiki Chowdhury, an attorney experienced in holistic family defense, Carolina Parent Defenders will begin offering free, holistic legal services to parents in Durham in 2025. Our model will be the first of its kind in North Carolina to offer a holistic, interdisciplinary strategy in legal representation, staffing cases with attorneys, investigators, and social workers. The launch of Carolina Parent Defenders will also make Emancipate NC the only organization in the Piedmont that provides free legal representation to parents before a petition is filed, allowing our attorneys to explain to parents their rights and responsibilities so they can make the best decisions for themselves and their families early in the process.

## **Elevating community voice through the Child and Family Action Team:**

Emancipate NC has joined with Operation Stop CPS and The People's Alliance to form the Child and Family Action Team, which meets monthly to plan policy and political education. This coalition has played a key role in elevating the stories and perspectives of people impacted by the family policing system to the N.C. Advisory Committee for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which launched an investigation this year. In June, our coalition organized a Community Forum for people impacted by the family regulation system to share their experiences with the child welfare system. Emancipate's team helped recruit panelists—from impacted parents to representatives from NC Central School of Law and Bronx Defenders—to present their experiences, research, and expertise to the Advisory Committee.

We helped host a total of five panel discussions between June and September. Beyond our work with the Advisory Committee, our coalition has been hosting community events that raise public awareness about the impacts of involuntary family separation and strategies community members can use to decrease reliance on family policing.

One example of this work was the town hall we hosted in September to discuss the effects of the Durham County Department of Social Services on our local community and to hold a vigil for children who have been taken by the Durham Department of Social Services.

**Building community power through family defense training:**

Emancipate provided training to people working in legal and healthcare industries, educating them about strategies they can employ to interrupt the harms of the family policing system and enforce the rights of parents and caregivers. In April, Emancipate NC Investigator Margaux Lander and attorneys Christine Umeh and Kaushiki Chowdhury presented about parents' Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights at the ABA Parent Defense Conference.

The presentation, *Intersecting the 4th Amendment, 5th Amendment, and Miranda Jurisprudence in CPS Investigatory Practices*, was a call to action and discussion about litigating 4th and 5th Amendment issues in the family regulation context. Emancipate NC also organized a community training session, "Dealing with Child Protective Services," which educated healthcare workers to mitigate harm to families in cases that involve Child Protective Services.



# Community Education: :

Raising public awareness about policies, civic actions, and strategies to abolish the root causes of mass incarceration.

As an organization committed to building grassroots power to transform the criminal legal system in NC, voter engagement, voter mobilization, and election protection programming are integral to Emancipate NC's work. During the historic 2024 electoral season, we worked on the ground to activate the Black electorate, which has the potential to significantly influence the direction of elections in our battleground state.

One hundred days before Election Day, we joined NC Black Alliance and other statewide organizations to host a call to action to Black voters, urging them to cast their votes. Executive Director Dawn Blagrove toured HBCUs and other colleges/universities throughout the state to provide voter education to Black youth. She encouraged students at Meredith College to make a voting plan, educated North Carolina A&T students about the harms of Project 2025, and presented on the 2024 HBCU Think Tank Panel about issues at stake in the election.





Emancipate NC also provided support to Black voters to combat efforts at voter suppression that have intensified since the 2022 election, which flipped NC's previously Democrat-controlled Supreme Court to a conservative majority. In 2023, one of the first actions of the newly-conservative Court was to reverse progressive voter ID legislation, instead requiring voters to show identification at the polls—a move commonly recognized as voter suppression targeting Black and formerly-incarcerated voters. Emancipate NC collaborated with VoteRiders to connect voters with this organization's free identification acquisition services. We also had a presence on-site at the polls on Election Day, with staff, Justice League Fellows, and volunteers answering questions from voters and conducting poll-watching. Incidents of voter suppression observed by our poll watchers were reported to Emancipate NC's legal team so that we could initiate follow-up, either by filing lawsuits or supporting litigation filed by partnering organizations (e.g., by serving as a co-plaintiff, submitting amicus briefs).

The issues at stake in the presidential election, especially in a battleground state like North Carolina, often overshadow the critical importance of local elections. However, the aftermath of the 2022 election has demonstrated the devastating impact that regressive judges can have on criminal legal reform. For this reason, Emancipate organized community education programs focused on the importance of the 2024 judicial races, including a panel discussion titled "Why Judges Matter in 2024" and a State Courts 101 webinar.

# Protest Defense Network:

Protecting protestors who challenge injustice.

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Emancipate's Protest Defense Network has continued to mobilize and train more than 40 attorneys to provide pro bono representation and group defense to protestors. Since its launch in June 2020, our Protest Defense Network has helped coordinate pro bono defense for over 150 individuals in Wake, Durham, Orange, Pasquotank, Pitt, New Hanover, Mecklenburg, Alamance, and Person Counties.

To add another layer of empowerment and protection for protestors, Emancipate hosted a First Amendment-focused know-your-rights training. Through this training, community members learned about the legal rights of protestors while protesting—including during interactions with the police—as well as tactics for navigating common legal liabilities that protestors encounter.

In the Spring, the General Assembly signaled its intent to continue suffocating the right to protest by passing HB 237, which has the potential to criminalize masked protestors, a true public health risk in the post-COVID era. After an intense public advocacy campaign, Emancipate secured a veto from Governor Cooper on this regressive anti-protest bill. Despite the override, we were able to get the democratic legislators to stand with the people and present a united front around the issue of safety and health.





# Freedom Fighter Bond Fund:

Supporting freedom for activists facing arrest and legal jeopardy

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Emancipate continues to manage the Freedom Fighter Bond Fund, through which we provide bail funds to protesters on the front lines of combating racial inequities, supporting Black lives, and spearheading social justice reform. Since 2020, we have posted bail for scores of individuals charged with civil protest and First Amendment-related offenses.

# Don't Plead to Weed:

Advancing the abolishment of over-policing for weed charges.

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Too often, law enforcement invokes the odor of cannabis as a pretext to harass and search Black pedestrians and motorists. Since North Carolina's decriminalization of smokable hemp, Team Emancipate has been educating citizens not to plead guilty to marijuana charges—on the basis that it is visually and olfactorily indistinguishable from legal hemp. Our Don't Plead to Weed campaign centers know-your-rights training, legal resources, and court watching activities that educate and empower residents charged with marijuana possession to make the process of proving that the substance in question is not legal hemp expensive, time-consuming, and frustrating for prosecutors.

In Greenville, Eastern NC Organizer Dedan Waciuri has been court watching, passing out know-your-rights fliers at the courthouse, and building relationships with people coming in and out of the courthouse charged with misdemeanor marijuana offenses. On April 20th, Dedan facilitated a know-your-rights workshop in Greenville, located within a county that has one of the highest rates of misdemeanor marijuana prosecution in NC. Our Emancipate team also hosted a know-your-rights workshop in Charlotte, expanding our Don't Plead to Weed campaign beyond Pitt County to other jurisdictions where marijuana possession is disproportionately charged against Black people.

Since launching our Don't Plead to Weed campaign, Emancipate NC has risen to become an authority on cannabis litigation and legalization—especially after the US Drug Enforcement Agency moved to reschedule marijuana in the Spring. In April, The Assembly quoted an Emancipate NC amicus brief written by Strategic Director and Attorney Elizabeth Simpson in an article detailing the current status of appellate litigation about the odor of cannabis.

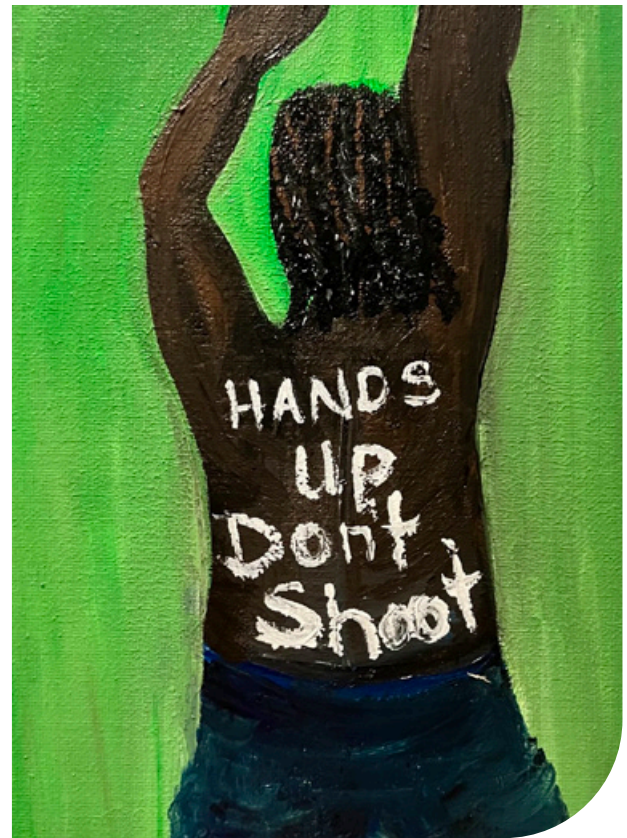
Executive Director Dawn Blagrove was quoted in news outlets with national reach, where she commented on the impacts of marijuana rescheduling on criminal legal reform—and the potential for decriminalizing marijuana and pardoning marijuana convictions to decarcerate prisons/jails and reduce racially-disparate social and economic outcomes.



# Peace Not Police:

Helping communities impacted by over-policing protect themselves from police harassment.

In Greenville, like many communities in North Carolina, systemic racism is manifested in government and corporate disinvestment in majority-Black communities—depriving community members of affordable housing, resourced schools, and quality hospitals/public health facilities. Under the leadership of Emancipate NC Eastern North Carolina Organizer Dedan Waciuri and Eastern NC Justice League Fellows, our Peace Not Police program has been building the knowledge of local residents to protect the East Greenville community from disinvestment and gentrification. Dedan and our Justice League Fellows have been working with local community members to fight against unfair code enforcement, protect elderly homeowners, and promote community safety.



# Raleigh HEART Coalition:

Unarmed crisis response is coming to Raleigh!

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After nearly two years of advocacy and organizing led by Emancipate NC and the Raleigh HEART Coalition, the City of Raleigh committed to funding and launching the city's first-ever unarmed crisis response team. The team is named Raleigh CARES. CARES is the name chosen by the community and was one of the names suggested by Emancipate NC. It stands for Crisis Alternative Response for Empathy and Support. Its mission is to connect the community to the resources and support that they need. The teams will include clinicians and peer support. CARES is in its pilot phase and will be available from 9 am to 5 pm, assisting individuals in distress who do not pose a threat to themselves or others, including people experiencing mental/behavioral health needs, substance abuse crisis, and housing crisis.





These hard-won victories were the result of months of organizing, education, and advocacy by Emancipate NC and the Raleigh HEART Coalition. We hosted community listening sessions where members of the community and City of Raleigh staff came together to discuss the current state of crisis response in Raleigh and strategies to reduce reliance on armed police. We also encouraged community members to make their voices heard in online surveys and public comment opportunities, as well as letter-writing campaigns. In April, the City of Raleigh announced the results of their listening campaign: more than nine out of ten respondents favored the establishments of both community response teams and a crisis call diversion line. Members of the Raleigh HEART Coalition then attended the Wake County Commission budget work session, where we provided input on budget items in which the City can invest public funds to make alternative crisis response a reality in Raleigh. This input informed the budget proposals presented in June.

Even as we celebrate this unprecedented step forward for criminal legal reform, we are vigilantly monitoring the city's implementation to ensure that the holistic alternative response program that Raleigh residents so strongly support gets off the ground in 2025.

# Police Misconduct Database:

An avenue to keep Black families safe from police violence and hold police accountable for misconduct.

Team Emancipate has continued to manage our Police Misconduct Database, which provides a mechanism for individuals to report a police encounter, upload videos/photos, and share this information publicly. ENC uses stories submitted to our Police Misconduct Database to advocate to law enforcement agencies and elected officials to address patterns of misconduct among officers and within agencies and to file complaints with state commissions overseeing law enforcement certifications.

# Poetic Justice:

Combining powerful personal testimony and electrifying artistic expression and displaying the talents and stories of system-impacted and incarcerated individuals.

Our 2024 Poetic Justice event featured six poets who skillfully used the power of their pens to raise awareness about systemic injustices and oppression. Poets who presented during this event included:



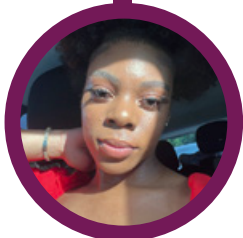
## J.Bow:

J.Bow is a prolific and versatile hip-hop artist based out of Raleigh, North Carolina who loves to freestyle and jam with talented musicians. As a 9Dime raised in the Bull City, she has developed into a jack of all trades, well-versed in arts ranging from spoken word poetry, to freestyling, improv, and rap. While J.Bow's talent is multifaceted, there is a single-minded focus on connecting with the audience and connecting the members. Endlessly expressive, J.Bow's performances focus on delivering meaningful lyrics from the heart. Her main goal is to inspire and cultivate an atmosphere of creativity while creating a culture of gratitude and appreciation of the arts.



### **Church Da'Poet:**

Joseph "Church Da'Poet" is a poet, spoken word artist, writer, motivational speaker, and playwright. He is the co-founder of City Soul Cafe and Black Poetry Theatre, and has produced several plays including "Black Poetry." As a motivational speaker, he infuses pieces of his story in ways that are relatable to all. Now, his mission is to teach youth how to communicate their emotions through the art of poetry and spoken word. Breathing life into the mic while garnering your attention with his strong voice and metaphors, Church is true to the art.



### **Purpose the Poet:**

Purpose the Poet, formerly known as Halima Oyata, is a Junior majoring in Journalism and Mass Communications at North Carolina A&T State University. She was born and raised in Laurinburg, NC, and graduated from Scotland High School with the class of 2021. Halima began writing poetry in high school, with one of her most celebrated poems entitled "Stop! Wait! Listen!", which addresses the actions necessary for our community to progress in a world that often deems us lesser and unworthy. Her poems cover an array of topics, each packed with power and passion for the subject matter and people they concern. Using the power of words, she ignites change, fosters connection, and welcomes you to a journey of self-discovery, social commentary, and artistic exploration.



### **Aye Jannay:**

Aye Jannay, who goes by Arie off-stage, is an artist at the very core of her being. Before any other realization came to be about who she felt she was and what she wanted to do with her life, she was creating art. As she's gotten older, she has garnered many stories worth telling and a broad variety of experience seeing the many possible walks of life. Now, she returns to the essence of her calling: to tell stories and create meaningful art again.



### Hausson Byrd:

Hausson Byrd is an Artist, Organizer, a Collaborative Curator, a Graduate of NCAT, and a Relapsing Book Addict that uses his words, actions, and energy to create change and encourage positive growth. He has a degree in journalism and mass communication from North Carolina A&T University, where is currently studying to attain his Masters degree. He also coaches for the Aggie Live Poets on campus, and is the Community Arts Organizer for the NC Museum of Art in Winston-Salem.



### Mesinjah:

Mesinjah is a visionary poet, lyricist, journalist, and spokesperson dedicated to enlightening the world through the transformative power of words. With a passion for opening minds and hearts, her work blends artistry and advocacy, inviting audiences to explore the depths of the human experience. Through her vivid writing and compelling delivery, Mesinjah seeks to inspire conversations that deserve attention, fostering a better understanding of life. Her mission is to craft a healthier world, beginning with the awareness that words hold power.





An orange L-shaped graphic consisting of a thick line forming the left and bottom sides of a square, with the top and right sides missing. The text is centered within the open square.

**MEDIA  
SPOTLIGHT**

# Media Spotlight

## North Carolina residents sue to have Confederate monument to 'faithful slaves' removed:

"It was put up in the front yard of what was soon to be the Tyrrell County Courthouse, which opened a few months later, to communicate to people that members of the Black community could not expect to get justice inside of that courthouse."



IAN MANCE

## How marijuana reclassification could affect North Carolinians:

"What it should do is send a very strong indicator to the people of North Carolina, to our legislators, to our district attorneys and law enforcement...that there is no longer an appetite for criminalizing this kind of behavior."

DAWN BLAGROVE



## Lawsuit seeks justice for NC man's death in police custody:

"To ensure that this lawsuit is litigated in a way that is fair and just for this family," said Blagrove, "but more importantly, in a way that results in getting a change in policies, a change in practices, a change in procedures."

DAWN BLAGROVE



## Council gets more advice on Office of Community Safety:

"What we see from these programs is that when resources, police resources, are not being depleted by these mental health calls, they're able to be diverted and focused on violent crime," Miller said. "And that's why we see a reduction in the crime rate."

JAELYN MILLER



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# Media Spotlight

## 'It is not over': Family demands justice 1 year after fatal encounter with Raleigh police:

"Even though the district attorney chose not to charge those officers who viciously murdered Darryl Williams, that don't mean we give up, y'all," said Kerwin Pittman, who works with civil rights organization Emancipate N.C. "We keep fighting for justice, y'all," he said. "Because it is not over."

The News Observer

**KERWIN PITTMAN**

## Legal Nonprofit Emancipate NC Sues Durham Sheriff's Office Over Redacted Jail Policies:

"It's just being secretive for the sake of being secretive. Birkhead ran as a progressive sheriff. I don't think people, when they cast that ballot, are thinking this is a sheriff who has an entire policy on restraint chairs and won't even tell us what it is."

**ELIZABETH SIMPSON**



## Op-Ed: Durham Should Pay the \$6 Million That the City Owes Darryl Howard:

"Howard spent 24 years in prison for crimes he did not commit. Durham's new council should pay him the judgment he was awarded."

INDY 100

**ELIZABETH SIMPSON**



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