

Launched in 2001, by Lillie Branch-Kennedy, to help end the trend of mass incarceration in Virginia, so began Resource Information Help for the Disadvantaged (RIHD), a small, but extremely active, all-volunteer, statewide nonprofit. RIHD, is known for its ground-level and direct service work, assisting, uplifting and empowering prisoners and families with “self-help” initiatives, providing transportation to families to faraway Virginia prisons, justice and legislative awareness, serving on several committees including juvenile justice reform for alternatives to incarceration and keeping juvenile’s adult prisons.

*"The duty to define justice and reform its administration is shared by all three (3) branches of government." -- Duty Calls*

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# CIRCLE OF “WE” MOVEMENT



**R.I.H.D.**  
Resource Information Help for the Disadvantaged

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## RECOGNITION/AWARDS

- 2007 Virginia Defenders Community Defender of the Year Award
- 2008 Virginia Department of Corrections Volunteer Award
- 2008 Third Street Bethel AME Church Restoration of Voting Rights Appreciation
- 2010 Virginia Organizing Welcoming Them Back to the Community Award
- 2011- P.D.A. "Community Activist" Service
- 2011 PETRA Fellow Humanitarian Award
- 2012 March 2 Richmond Free Press Person of the Week
- 2012 June/July Richmond Peace Education "Speaking for the Voiceless"
- 2014 January 18 Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. M.J.K, Jr. Community Service Award
- 2015 September 26 Henrico NAACP "Pursuing Liberty in the Face of Injustice" Award

## RIHD YOUTH

October 11, 2011 PROCAMATION DAY for RIHD YOUTH INITIATIVE "Lights on After-school Day" promoting the critical importance of quality after-school programs in the lives of children, their families and their community.

## VIRGINIA PRISONERS

- 2006 – Prisoner Advocacy Appreciation Award - Brunswick Correctional
- 2006 – Rastafarian Religion Community Appreciation Award – Lawrenceville
- 2007 – RIHD Prison Reform Champions- Coffeewood
- 2008 – Volunteer Appreciation Awards – Lawrenceville Correctional (RIHD Board Members: Brenda Jefferson & Leonie May)
- 2011 -Appreciation Certificate for Re-entry Resource Fair -Sussex II
- 2011- Appreciation Certificate for Re-entry Resource Fair – Deerfield

## SUCCESSFUL RE-ENTRY

*“Without a vote, a voice, I am a ghost inhabiting a citizen’s space.” — Joe Loya, disenfranchised with a record.*

### BAN-THE-BOX

What is “Ban-the-Box?” Removing the criminal record question off initial employment application. A movement that began over 10 years ago by All of Us or None and Ordinary Peoples Society “to give formerly incarcerated people a better chance at getting a job, so they can provide for themselves and their families, and fully reenter society

Movement in Virginia? Led by RIHD, the MJT and its coalition partners Good Seed Good Ground (Newport News), Bridging the Gap in Virginia (Richmond) were the first instrumental in successful passing Ban-the-Box in their municipality. Since organizing and awareness tours various partnering grass-root have joined and successful help passed Ban-the-Box legislation in Virginia. To date 15 Virginia municipalities; Virginia Governor signed state level Executive Order 41; private corporations include Targets, Bed/Bath & Beyond, Walmart and Koch Industries have join the MOVEMENT!

### RESTORATION OF RIGHTS

With over 300,000 disenfranchised Virginians with felony conviction, there are two ways to get their rights back, depending on whether one’s conviction is classified as “nonviolent” or “violent.” MJT partner Bridging the Gap in Virginia continues his “campaign to restore “100,000” individual’s rights prior to the end of the current Governor’s administration (a non-partisan initiative). Throughout RIHD MJT events, Bridging the Gap shall continue to explain, answer questions, provide updates, process forms as well as discuss recommendations for further streamlining for automatically restoring one’s right policies legislatively through Constitutional Amendment process. To date our partner Richard Walker, President of Bridging the Gap in Virginia has assisted more Virginians in the process.

## Overview of Programs

### YOUTH INIATIVE



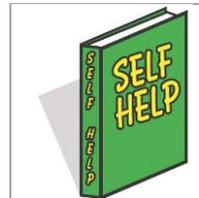
**R.I.H.D. Youth Initiative [RIHD Youth Proclamation) Proclamation Day** was declared to RIHD Youth Initiative by the Honorable Dwight C. Jones, Mayor for City of Richmond and Honorable Cynthia I. Newbille PhD, Richmond City Council, on October 11, 2011 for our “Lights on After-school Day” promoting the critical importance of quality after-school programs in the lives of children, their families and their community.

### PRISON TRANSPORTATION SERVICE



In 2001 in an effort to keep prisoners and families connected RIHD began 16-hour round-trip commute, monthly to/from faraway new “super-max” state security facility high in the Appalachian Mountains in the southwest corner of Virginia. Fifteen years later, we have assisted hundreds of families that normally would not have a way to Keen Mountain, Pocahontas, Red Onion, River North and Wallens Ridge.

### SELF HELP INITIATIVE



RIHD Assist, Uplift and Empower Online Directory. 1. “Sponsor a Prisoner Rehabilitation through Education” S.I.P.E. 2. “Investing In Your Future” Re-entry Planning – Business – Investment 3. Transportation Service to Faraway Virginia Prisons 4. “VA Prisoner Artistic Works” Annual Fundraiser - (Proceeds for child/family support)

## MOBILE JUSTICE TOUR (MJT)

April, 2013 - October, 2015

*"Making for a safer Virginia, by Improving the effectiveness and fairness of our justice system"*

### What Is the MJT?

Mobile Justice Tour led by Lillie Branch-Kennedy of Resource Information Help for the Disadvantaged (RIHD), with its coalition partners Richard Walker of Bridging the Gap and Quan Williams of New Virginia Majority and support groups includes Community Center for Change, Justice Policy Initiative and Advancement Project, Virginia Organizing and Prisoner and Families for Equal Rights raising awareness around justice issues that affect people with criminal records and providing direct services to so many people unaware of laws and policies that can empower them. With a focus on three key issues: civil rights restoration for citizens with felony convictions, removing questions about an applicant's criminal background from initial employment forms, and sentencing reform to end mass incarceration in Virginia.

Two years later after four (4) tours, 47 community events, the Mobile Justice Tour (MJT) has contributed to the new process for automatic voting rights restoration, to the statewide momentum toward 'ban the box' employment application reform. we found so many people were simply unaware of laws and policies that can empower them, folks had no idea about available alternatives for changing their lives.

The MJT continues, to empower ordinary citizens – college students, members of church groups and other individuals across Virginia, providing information and we look forward to hitting the road again Spring, 2016.

## SENTENCING REFORM

"improving the effectiveness and fairness of Virginia's criminal justice system" –RIHD

In 2009 RIHD a call for help to RIHD by Virginia prisoners and families to help end the trend of mass incarceration through unfair and unjust sentencing guidelines. Partnering with PAFERJ a prisoner and family support group RIHD led the sentencing reform in Virginia Movement. Five (5) years later, after hundreds of hours of research, interviews and 45 cities statewide public awareness events, led by RIHD, and an all-volunteer coalition, we look forward to moving forward two (2) position papers calling for the "need for sentencing reform and establishment of remedies to correct injustices of that past that remain uncorrected" affecting thousands of current prisoners' retroactivity enacted by Virginia state legislature. On November 18, 2015, we learned the "WE" hard work, was adopted recommendations by the Parole Commission to the Governor. Good news, however much more work for equality and justice.

## PRISON PHONE JUSTICE

**November 15, 2012** at FCC rally, RIHD Director and parent Lillie Branch-Kennedy testified: "I have spent over \$25,000 over the last 10 years just trying to stay in touch with my son in prison,"  
"There is no reason prison agencies and phone companies should be profiting off of families like mine, forcing us to choose between putting food on the table or keeping in touch with our love"

**October 22, 2015** RIHD founder, was amongst invited allies for the FCC vote 3-2, effort of The Campaign for Prison Phone Justice, led by the Human Rights Defense Center, Center for Media Justice, and Nation Inside along with a team of allies, prisoners, and, most importantly, prisoner family members--- won a major victory for prison phone justice! The new cap could represent a 50% drop in prison phone call costs. State and federal prison phone rates will be capped at 11 cents a minute. Jail rates will be capped anywhere from 14 to 22 cents per minute.

**December 1, 2015**, all Virginia DOC calls are at a rate of 4.9 cents per minutes. A MAJOR VICTORY!