

# NO MORE TEARS ON THE MOVE

*No More Tears Newsletter*

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## Meet the Editor



Violet is a junior politics major at the University of San Francisco. She is passionate about criminal justice reform, women's rights, and understanding the mechanisms behind decision-making that impact society. She wants to pursue a career in law and public policy.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome, dear readers, to the 2023 edition of the No More Tears newsletter "No More Tears on the Move." As we embark on this journey together, the essence of our newsletter is encapsulated in its title—a testament to progress, resilience, and the unyielding pursuit of positive change. In these pages, you'll discover compelling stories of personal growth, the transformative power of the Healing Circle, the youth program, the community support group, and the invaluable contributions shaping our community's narrative. Each article is a step forward, a shared experience, and a beacon of hope for those on a journey toward healing. We invite you to delve into these narratives that not only touch the heart but also inspire action. From testimonials that speak to the impact of our programs to insightful interviews and practical tips for personal growth, "No More Tears on the Move" is a celebration of our collective strength.

## **NMT PROFILE: BOBBY DEAN "BLACK" EVANS**



**IT'S A PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU HERE, MR. BLACK. BEFORE WE DELVE INTO THE INTERVIEW, COULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND SHARE SOMETHING THAT DEFINES BOBBY EVANS, BEYOND THE SURFACE?**

I'm Bobby Evans, and I take pleasure in seeing my complete name, Bobby Dean Evans Jr. One of the people that I like saying my name is Margarita because Margarita Sealy, Doctor Sealy, would say Bobby Dean and that's who I am. And currently who I am is a very happy man. I just got released from prison about a month ago after 30 years of incarceration for three strikes. And it's good. So there's a lot of paths. And that's where it's at. I work through it. I had issues with it. I dealt with those issues. And now that's the past. And the future is bright, and it is beyond what I imagined and beyond what I thought it would be.

**AS ONE OF THE CO-FOUNDERS OF NO MORE TEARS, COULD YOU SHARE THE INSPIRATION OR THE JOURNEY THAT LED TO THE CREATION OF AN ORGANIZATION AIMED AT STOPPING VIOLENCE? WHAT INSPIRED YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS MOVEMENT?**

It was a privilege to be in the beginning and the infant stages of No More Tears. I was there when it was being built and we wrote a lot of stuff. Lonnie Morris, Jerry Elster, uh, there was another brother. And it was four of us. I had got to San Quentin in 2002, and I was looking for education. I was looking for, you know, where's my life going? And I was introduced to this brother, Lonnie Morris. And he just welcomed me in and through the years (I was with Lonnie for about 15 years at San Quentin) he has been a big brother to me and and taught me a lot about organization structure. The blessings that come with it is the people that No More Tears is involved with and people that support No More Tears. They now, are my friends and supporters and helping me on the outside. So being a founding member, being there in the first stages of it has really been a blessing that I never knew would end up like this.

**CAN YOU SHARE A PERSONAL STORY OR EXPERIENCE THAT ILLUSTRATES THE IMPACT NO MORE TEARS HAS HAD ON YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW?**

I think the way No More Tears has personally impacted me, I would say through the healing circles. There was one time with the Healing Circle where the Ortiz family and Jorge, Mattie Scott, Paulette and all these people were coming in from San Francisco. They would tell their stories, and we would be the ones to hear the story because we're perpetrators of violence. And then on the other side, we're victims of violence or survivors of violence like they were. So one of the defining moments for me is sitting in a healing circle and hearing these people's stories and seeing tears. I wanted to get up out of there...I was locked in there with all of this kind of pressure. Because they were talking about me. Not personally, I mean, I haven't murdered anyone, but I did a lot of violence, you know, I did a lot of assaulting people. I did a lot of emotional, traumatizing people, and my family, and the women [that I hurt when] I was incarcerated for domestic violence...No More Tears, helped me to be a human, to have grown this empathy, this sympathy, and understanding, and even come to a place where now I can share my story and I could talk about what hurts--shame, pain, anger. There was a time where I couldn't talk about the emotional struggles and things that was going on, because I didn't know what they were. I couldn't identify, you know, shame. I couldn't identify pain, I couldn't I definitely wasn't going to admit to anger or fear, you know? So yeah, No More tears was what established a foundation to where I can move on in my life which has developed in a wonderful way.

# FACILITATOR CORNER: JAMAIN GURLEY COMMUNITY FACILITATOR



## CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT THE NO MORE TEARS HEALING CIRCLE COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP IS AND HOW OFTEN YOU GUYS MEET?

So the Community Support Circle, or Healing Circle, is a program that meets twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. We provide the participants a space to come and share their experiences. Also, we provide them an opportunity to just listen. We come up with questions, whether it's the topic is healing or accountability, and we pose discussion questions and allow them to either, as I stated, to listen to other people, share their experience and learn or we allow them to answer the questions, but it's no pressure.

## HOW DOES THE NMT HEALING CIRCLE SUPPORT GROUP PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE?

Healing Circles provide emotional support for returned citizens and the community by providing an outlet for them to receive information, also it gives them the opportunity to express some of the things that they are feeling and going through in the streets that need to be talked about and we provide a listening ear to give them that validation and closure...this circle is real and that its power in learning and you just have an opportunity to experience something that you can't get nowhere else. I feel like there's no other circle that's out there and offered to the community. I feel like there's no other circle that have a group of individuals that's as loving and caring and honest and transparent as our circle...This is a circle where you can just listen to different experiences to let you know that you're not alone in what you may be facing.

## IN WHAT WAYS WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE OR COME PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT HEALING CIRCLE?

Okay, I would encourage individuals to come participate in our community support circle. I just feel like it's an opportunity that the streets haven't had. The healing circle started inside, but now that it's out here. I feel like it gives people a opportunity to get information and discuss things that they normally wouldn't have the chance to hear. I know from my personal experience my family never heard of a healing circle, and even though they don't come out to the healing circle to participate, we still have our own circles within the house and I feel like once you're vulnerable and transparent and you're able to talk about some issues that may have been bothering you or some things that may have happened, you know, a long time ago or something that subconscious, you can actually start to grow and prosper.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALING CIRCLES

Open to all members of the community!



**6:30-8:00PM**  
**2ND & 4TH THURSDAYS**  
Please arrive by 6:15pm.

2930 Lakeshore Ave #200  
Oakland, CA 94610

# STAFF FEATURE: ALAIYA ZAKI EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR



## **WHY DID YOU WANT TO PURSUE A CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT WITH NO MORE TEARS AFTER YOUR INTERNSHIP?**

I decided to get more involved with No More Tears post-graduation because I really believe in No More Tears' work and their message. After going to some of the healing circles, I really believed in the work that they were doing for the community, for returning citizens, but also just the greater community of the Bay area. I see the way that they help people work through their emotions and transform their lives, and I want to be a part of that work as someone who has lived experiences with violence, and also for someone who believes in the transformation of the way we deal with violence in our communities.

## **HAVE YOU BEEN INSIDE OF SAN QUENTIN? WHAT WAS THAT EXPERIENCE LIKE AND WHAT DID YOU TAKE AWAY FROM IT?**

My time going into San Quentin prison as an intern was really eye-opening. The first time I went, I had already had some experiences going to halfway houses, and I was very curious, and I didn't know what to expect. I think for people who haven't had experience either going into prisons or going into prisons in this fashion--going into sit and spend time with people who are incarcerated and having deep, vulnerable conversations. It's really eye-opening to change or reflect on stereotypes that you might have been taught or learned on the outside. It also shows you the humanity and the similarities and how we experience the world...Seeing the similarity in how we feel and deal with our emotions has really allowed me to understand the transformative nature that we all need to experience in dealing with the violence in our communities and internally.

## **WHAT IS YOUR HOPE, PRAYER, AND/OR VISION FOR NO MORE TEARS MOVING FORWARD?**

My hope and prayer for No More Tears is for the community and people with any type of power to see the value in the work...I would love to see programs like No More Tears and the No More Tears models (because of how unique and powerful their model is), in other prisons across California, with youth, to prevent the cycle of violence from getting as deep as it is [the prison]. I think if the programs that No More Tears runs were in like high schools or any type of youth-centered space, that these cycles of violence could be really stopped before incarceration and that would be powerful for us as an entire society. So I would love to see No More Tears be expanded--for the community and the world to see the value in talking about cycles of violence from a way earlier stage.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DANIEL ALEM



## **HOW HAS PARTICIPATING IN THE HEALING CIRCLE SUPPORT GROUP CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR HEALING JOURNEY AND PERSONAL GROWTH?**

The support group has given me the ability to continue to work on myself and decompress. Reentering society after almost 12 and a half years of incarceration, at times, was overwhelming. And so this group gave me the ability to understand more about the tools that I have gained and how to utilize them as I continue to reintegrate myself into society.

## **ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC MOMENTS OR BREAKTHROUGHS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?**

Since my release, ya know... I was released about seven months ago, back on February 22 of this year [2023]. And I had a lot of trouble adjusting and getting employment, and so a lot of times, I started to become real doubtful, and really wondering if things were going to work out the way I planned them to. Probably three to four years before my release, I had been planning, anticipating, hoping, and praying that I was going to be released. And I had everything set up to where I knew what I wanted to do when I got out, and I knew how I wanted to do it. But as I got out, and I started to see how fast-paced life and everything was, you know, there were a number of stumbling blocks. And it was not easy to adjust, not having things my way or things go my way was really frustrating at times. So as I slowed down and learned to be more patient about things, I started to see more opportunities open up for me.

## **HOW HAS THE HEALING CIRCLE SUPPORT GROUP EMPOWERED YOU TO SHARE YOUR STORY AND FIND STRENGTH IN YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS HEALING?**

I think what helped me understand where I needed to focus more on myself, was hearing the testimonies out in the sand while I was incarcerated and joining the healing circle after my incarceration. Being released, and still being able to be in the community with these men, who are helping me understand what they went through when they were first released gives me a deeper understanding of the direction that I need to go. And I know that somewhere down the road, there's going to be individuals who have gotten out of prison and are going to be dealing with the same stumbling blocks that I had to deal with. And so, it's always best to allow another individual to hear what you've been through because your story might mirror theirs. Not everybody's the same but a lot of the situations that we deal with as formerly incarcerated people, we have a lot of similarities. And so sharing mine will only help the next individual understand how to deal, how to cope, and how to move forward and not let the frustration wear em down.

# YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: ALI KHALIF



## **WHAT LIFE SKILLS OR VALUES HAVE YOU GAINED THROUGH YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NMT YOUTH PROGRAM?**

Okay, so things that I've adopted to my lifestyle, that I've gotten from No More Tears after being around them [returned NMT Alumni], is to really just respect everybody's view, really understand respectfully, and not interrupt each other or get mad at each other. It's not just a person, their background, their race, or anything like that. You can't really solve [misunderstanding or conflict] with violence because violence is just a shallow-ended thing. It's just the skin of the enemy. But when you actually understand them, it goes down to the core and, you can really evolve just through hearing what people have to say and helping them out.

## **HOW HAVE THE SKILLS THAT YOU'VE LEARNED IN THE YOUTH PROGRAM INFLUENCED YOUR PERSONAL CHOICES AND BEHAVIOR?**

Being raised out of East Oakland as an immigrant from Iraq, it was kind of tough to just navigate through with a lot of different people...The diversity of Oakland is really nice, but in Oakland, in the east, you gotta act tough to really have not, people not trample all over you and sometimes you gotta at least engage in some type of violence to gain some type of respect, to just go around. No More Tears really kind of really settled it in for me because it was a circle full of people with this type of history, and they went through the consequences so they could go deep in depth in the details of the consequences of really being that type of person...To be like a madman, just acting based on violence and just gaining respect through those means. But then in NMT, we practice using words and emotions to gain respect in those circles and I've used that personally to implement my way of getting respect out of other people...to not be like a mean person, a man of violence, but a man of words instead.

## **WHAT IS YOUR HOPE, PRAYER, AND/OR VISION FOR NO MORE TEARS MOVING FORWARD?**

My prayer for NMT is to really just expand. If you go out to the suburbs, they got these type of meetings on a regular basis, they got therapist, but we can't afford therapists. But like, this, really helps people. If people really unify, no matter the background, just sit down at a table and either side of what they love or hate but once they sit down at a table and talk to each other, and laugh at the same joke— every human has laughter in them. And you can just imagine, people just unifying and the table getting bigger and bigger and people loving one another and people not killing each other, people using words to settle a dispute— not with drive-bys or gun violence or anything like that. So, I believe that everyone should try their best to implement, in their lifestyle, [the lessons of] No More Tears and these circles in general.

# A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP: A YEAR OF GROWTH

Since the release of No More Tears President and co-founder in 2021, our organization has significantly expanded its efforts beyond prison walls, extending into the Bay Area communities most affected by violence and crime.

NMT continues to offer reentry services and support for returned citizens, including gate welcoming, dress-outs, transportation, financial support, housing, and statewide connections to reentry services. In 2022, the establishment of a Returned Citizen Support Group provided individuals returning home from prison with a peer community to navigate the challenges and celebrate the joys of reentry. Facilitators of the group are paid a living wage and participants are given a stipend to support reentry needs. This year, NMT also secured funding from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation to launch an innovative prison reentry program, providing intensive support for six months pre-release and post-release, empowering participants to be change agents in their communities.

NMT has also significantly expanded its youth and community programming in 2023. In April, NMT piloted our Community and Youth facilitator training series which certified 8 returned citizens to envision, plan, implement, and guide the NMT curriculum to youth and adult participants. NMT also developed a youth-oriented adaptation of our violence and crime reduction workshops and healing circle series. Then in June, NMT launched our bi-weekly Community Support and Healing Circles which are open to returned citizens, youth from communities disproportionately impacted by violence, crime and incarceration, and other members of the general public.

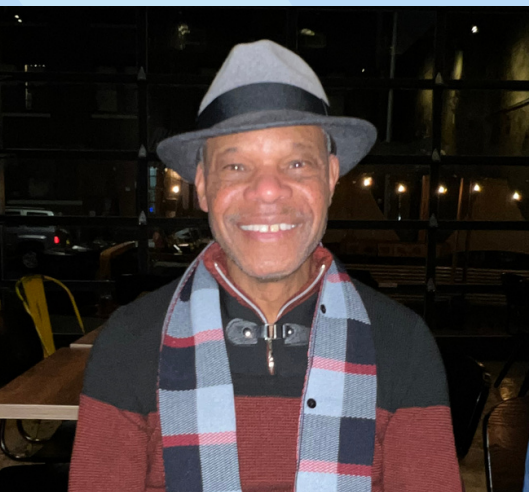
We would like to especially thank our 2023 partners which include the [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#), [California Wellness Foundation](#), [Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson's Office](#), [Alameda County Health Care Services Agency](#), the [University of San Francisco](#), [Oakland Technical High School](#), [Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency \(BOSS\)](#), [Oakland Department of Violence Prevention](#), and [San Quentin Rehabilitation Center](#). As our growth accelerates, we are continuously looking to establish new partnerships and relationships with other community-based organizations, schools, philanthropic foundations, and government agencies.

**Interested in partnering with No More Tears in 2024?  
Please email [isabel.parker@nomoretearssq.com](mailto:isabel.parker@nomoretearssq.com)**

Lonnie Morris,  
President

Mick Gardner,  
Executive Director

Isabel Tayag Parker,  
Program Director



**On June 10th**, No More Tears held our Appreciation Ceremony for program facilitators, staff, volunteers, alumni, and community partners. We also recognized all the incarcerated participants who have graduated from our inside programs to date, with an additional 52 participants graduating in October 2023!





# INTERN CORNER



## JASMINE WATSON

Jasmine is a senior at the University of San Francisco pursuing a degree in Sociology. She is passionate about education that acknowledges and is rooted in lived experiences. Her goal is to have a career that focuses on sharing the narratives of others to encourage systemic and social change.



## MAXWELL DRATI

Maxwell is a sophomore Politics major with a minor in African American Studies at The University of San Francisco. He is passionate about Criminal Justice and Education reform and wants to pursue a career where he can continue his passion for writing and change policy to help Black and Brown communities that are disproportionately affected by the problems in the Criminal Justice and Education systems

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