



# THE ROCK

## REENTRY ROCKS' SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO CREATE THE LIVES THEY ENVISION



**A Word From Executive Director Sharon Richardson:**

When I first began this journey many years ago at STEPS to End Family Violence, no one would have ever been able to convince me that I would be in the place I stand today. I needed to take my experience of incarceration and turn it into a solid rock for my family and the families of returning citizens. I have always believed that no matter what, prayer changes things. This is the result of faith, hard work, and the fact that the lives of justice-involved women matter. I am and will always be my sister's keeper and often see myself as the 'Wounded Healer'. Reentry Rocks is not your average reentry program. It is a place that helps and teaches women how to process pain and trauma through creative arts programming. In this newsletter, I challenge you to support Reentry Rocks. In 2023, I am inviting everyone, anyone to embark on this journey with me. I promise you that your lives will never be the same. Reentry Rocks is stepping and emerging into a new phenomenon, and we will RISE and continue to extend the *olive branch* to all women transitioning home.



**THEN & NOW**



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*Sharon Richardson*  
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# REENTRY ROCKS IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!



All we can say is **October 13, 2022** was a night to remember. We would like to thank District 33 Council member Lincoln Restler, all of our supporters, donors, board members, and our production team. We also want to thank our contractors, graduates, sister organizations, our family and friends for coming out to the Grand Opening. Also, great thanks to our Mistress of Ceremony, the renowned Reverend Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin, who had Reentry Rocks 'ROCKING' the whole evening. Now that we are open for business, our classes are back in session. Look out in for newly creative ideas at Reentry Rocks in 2023.



## A new future in Dumbo

Thanks to our 'angel investor', we are honored to be in Dumbo, Brooklyn. Reentry Rocks is providing services, programs, and opportunities for all justice-involved women in the Metropolitan New York area. We are the first nonprofit of its kind in the area and we are super excited about the energy and the possibilities we bring. Reentry Rocks continues to empower women to create the lives that they envision for themselves.



**BOARD MEMBER  
SPOTLIGHT:  
Melissa Mahabir**



~ Social Worker

~ Board Member at Reentry Rocks

~ Interim Director of Operations at  
Women Building Up

~ Advisory Group Member at  
Survivors Justice Project

Melissa met Sharon at STEPS to End Family Violence in 2015. Melissa was a social work intern and Sharon was just hired as the first reentry specialist for the organization's new re-entry program. Melissa and Sharon have worked long hours together, collaborating, and getting to know one another. When Sharon dreamed of starting her own reentry organization, Melissa was thrilled to support her. Melissa would sit with Sharon at her father's house and talk about what they would do. She worked alongside Sharon from the very beginning; helping to shape her ideas. Together the two of them envisioned what Reentry Rocks could look like. Melissa may not have known then that she would become a Board Member.

Yet, it seemed a natural fit for Melissa to support the design and development of the 501 (c)(3) which would be named Reentry Rocks. Melissa stated "As a board member, I get to work with Sharon and the other committed and amazing board members to support Reentry Rocks' mission, sustainability, and growth." Melissa has proven to be a mentor, a sister, and a friend to Sharon and encourages her to be the best version of herself. When Melissa was asked what she sees for Sharon and Reentry Rocks as a whole, she said, "Sharon is a true visionary." "I see many of the women graduating and coming back as mentors for the next group of women. Reentry Rocks is going to do great things."

Tamanika Evans is a special part of the Reentry Rocks team. She was the valedictorian of Internship Class 3, graduating in 2018, and is an integral part of Reentry Rocks. After Ms. Evans graduated, she was hired to be the office assistant for Reentry Rocks. She was quickly promoted to the position of Office Manager and now serves as the Senior Office Manager for Reentry Rocks. Ms. Evans currently facilitates the Culinary Internship Program and has been working tirelessly to organize our new office. Ms. Evans comes with a wealth of knowledge about foster care, family court, and the family reunification process. She has more than ten years of expertise as a mental health professional at psychiatric hospitals. She is a proud mother of four and grandmother of two. Ms. Evan's career aspirations involve running her own mental health program and creating a tiny house community. She often talks about fusing the two. Reentry Rocks is incredibly grateful to have her on our team.

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT:  
Tamanika Evans**



# ALUMNA HIGHLIGHT: BRIGITTE HARRIS

*This is what success looks like. Brigitte Harris graduated from the Culinary Internship Program in December 2018:*

"I remember Reentry Rocks in its planning stages. I started both creative art programs in September 2018 and graduated on December 6th, 2018. I had just had 6 surgeries (3 of them on the same foot) and was in the process of healing and looking for meaningful work. I had moved out of the homeless shelter. Sentenced to Dance helped me with movement and the chronic pain I was experiencing. The dance program helped me learn how to move through the pain. I worked on healing my body using yoga and stretching. I participated in the Culinary Internship because I wanted to open a restaurant but wasn't sure how to go about it."

"The program taught me what I needed to do because in NYC there are a lot of rules to legally sell food. I am now in the process of becoming a small business owner. Sharon referred me to another entrepreneur program called Defy Ventures. I am in the second phase of the program where they are helping me solidify my business. I have an SBA mentor and have registered my business name. I decided to open a food truck first and grow my reputation and brand before opening a brick-and-mortar location. I hope Reentry Rocks continues to grow and help other individuals realize that just because life is difficult after release, you can be successful. I would advise anyone interested in becoming financially independent to join these programs and start making positive changes in their life."



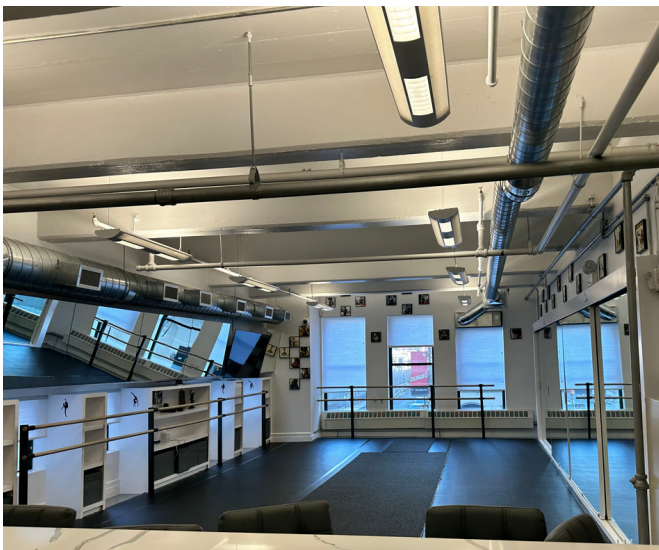
## ALUMNAE SHOUT-OUT



These are just some of the graduates that have come through the doors of Reentry Rocks. Many of these women have graduated and successfully gone on to start their own businesses and nonprofit organizations. We are excited about having a reunion in 2023 with all of our former participants. For anyone that has graduated from Reentry Rocks, we want to say we appreciate you for trusting us with your transition. Seven internship classes have graduated and two of them were during the pandemic. Two Phase 2 classes also graduated and both of them were during the pandemic. Four Understanding Your Anger classes have graduated, and 2 of them were during the pandemic. Staying connected with many of our former participants and meeting them where they are, reaffirms our commitment to helping women achieve their goals, become leaders, and rebuild their lives.

## 2022 year in review

**2022** was not easy for Reentry Rocks. We began our year with a health scare from our Executive Director as well as some of our staff. As we recovered and prepared for our winter 2022 classes and faced funding challenges, we were unexpectedly granted our own space by an angel investor who allowed us to develop our dream in Dumbo, Brooklyn. For the next 8 months, it was all hands on deck. Suddenly, we were under full construction and it took several weeks of planning, preparation, fundraising, sweat, tears, and hard work to build an office from the ground up (complete with a teaching kitchen and dance studio). We managed to maintain a counseling presence during this time and immediately after our opening, we were able to begin our Internship classes and Understanding Your Anger. We were also blessed with quite a few media opportunities in 2022. Reentry Rocks was featured on A & E and Channel 11 News.



## Coming in 2023 to Reentry Rocks

### Reentry Rocks Business Incubator

**PHASE II** is the second part of the Reentry Rocks Entrepreneurial Internship Program. Part 1 is instructional. PART 2 is our business incubator and is by invitation only.

**PHASE III** is part 3 and the focus will be tax law and how it affects your organization or business.

**Applications for Phase II will be announced.**

### Also coming in 2023

Zoom Cooking Classes

Mentorship Program

Participant Reunion/Luncheon

Staff Retreat

Photoshoot

Financial Literacy/Computer training

Shoe Closet/Clothing

Sentenced to Dance

Elevated soft/hard skills

Community training

## Resources for our community

### Connections 2022

- <https://www.nypl.org> - (put in search bar connections 2022) This is a complete, comprehensive resource guide for the justice-involved (male or female).

### Homelessness

- If you are homeless and need help visit: [www.portal.311.nyc.gov](http://www.portal.311.nyc.gov) or call 311 or 212-639-9675 to request assistance for someone who is homeless. They will provide immediate referral services.

### Emergency Food Assistance Program

- <https://access.nyc.gov/programs/emergency-food-assistance/> - for urgent food and hunger needs in NYC. You can also call 311 for immediate assistance

### **\*\*Emergency Services**

**If you need immediate medical services, dial 911**

**\*\*If you or someone you know is suicidal or in emotional distress,**

**contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**

**Both services are in operation 24 hours a day.**

## WARNING SIGNS

of depression and Suicide

- **I Don't Matter Syndrome**  
*depressed mood, hopelessness, despair, self-doubt*
- **Won't Be Around Activities**  
*making a will or giving away valuables*
- **Making A Way**  
*researching or purchasing a weapon, lethal meds*
- **Lowering Inhibitions**  
*drug and alcohol use leading to impulsivity*
- **Isolation**  
*avoiding loved ones, quitting job*
- **All Is Well Now**  
*sudden and radical change to a more calm and peaceful demeanor*

## CONTACT US

Email us at: [info@reentryrocks.org](mailto:info@reentryrocks.org)

Visit us at: [www.reentryrocks.org](http://www.reentryrocks.org)

Call us at: **(718) 269 - 4150**

### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**@ReentryRocks**

## SUPPORT US

We rely on support from our community and those who believe in our vision to keep our programs going and to support our larger goals. Any gift to our 501c3 organization is tax-deductible.

Thank you for your support!

**Give now at**

[www.reentryrocks.org/donate](http://www.reentryrocks.org/donate)

## VOLUNTEER WITH US

Reentry Rocks is always looking for volunteers! If you are interested in helping recently released individuals, advocacy, or supporting survivors of domestic violence, email us. Please provide a brief description of yourself, your interest/skills, and your availability.

We will get back to you as soon as possible.

**email: [info@reentryrocks.org](mailto:info@reentryrocks.org)**