











Justice Nest Monthly Newsletter, July 2025

Unlocking Justice, Rebuilding Generations

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<u>Unlocking Justice, Rebuilding Generations</u>

Dear Friends,



Dear Friends, Every month, we share updates with you but this month, it feels deeper. It feels personal. We saw 10 more mothers leaving prison and being reunited with their 19 children. In this July issue of our newsletter, we bring you stories of justice served, second chances embraced, and lives transformed. What stands out most for me is not just the incredible outcomes of reduced sentences, freedom from wronaful convictions, or reconciled families but the humanity behind each case.

ii Ms. Miriam Wachira

What I love most about this work beyond the legal victories and powerful testimonies is the people. Every time we step into a prison, a courtroom, or a mediation room, I walk away with new friends, fierce allies, and passionate champions for justice.

This past month reminded me again just how powerful community can be. From our paralegals who advocate behind bars, to volunteers like Olivia who carry truth with compassion, to our donors who stand with us even when the journey is long this is the Justice Nest community.

- Dive in to read about:
- ✓ A 35-year wrongful conviction overturned
- ✓ A mother reunited with her child after 6 long years
- ✓ Young lawyers stepping up for restorative justice
- ✓ How your support continues to shape lives

I hope these stories remind you, as they reminded me, that justice is not just a system it's a collective act of love, courage, and belief in change.

Thank you for standing with us.

With purpose and gratitude, Miriam Wachira

Founder & Executive Director, Justice Nest

Feature Story: Breaking Chains, Building Futures.

Behind every prison wall, there are stories waiting to be rewritten. At Justice Nest, we don't just hear these stories, we step into them, walking alongside those the system has failed until justice is served. Today, we share glimpses of lives transformed through our Prison Paralegal Program and Children & Mothers Diversion initiative, proof that with the right tools and compassion, even the most broken situations can find redemption.

35 years imprisonment scraped

A.K.M., a 22-year-old shop attendant whose entire future nearly disappeared into a 35-year sentence for a crime he didn't commit. When he came to us, his voice trembled with the exhaustion of maintaining his innocence. Our paralegal Moses saw what the court had missed, A.K.M.'s credible alibi.

Through careful appeal submissions, we watched the High Court overturn his conviction, that heavy 35-year imprisonment weight, lifted in an instant.



"I knew I was innocent from the word go. I was not at the scene of the crime on that material day. I just did not know how to raise it legally in court. Thanks to Justice Nest, they helped me express myself through submissions and finally justice was served. 35 years imprisonment scraped off like that ahsanteni" says A.K.M.

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This is the power of our Prison Paralegal Program, where we train inmates, and correctional officers to understand and navigate the legal system and hold the hands of those imprisoned and in pre-trial remand.



📸: Trial Advocacy Training in Shimo La Tewa, Mombasa- Group 2

Wrongful conviction overturned: S.O. experienced this firsthand, wrongfully convicted after a domestic dispute. While serving what should have been a 30-year sentence, S.O. became one of our trained paralegals. With guidance from fellow inmate S.M., he filed an appeal that exposed the flimsy evidence against him. He is free now.

Reduced sentence, 4 years saved: For I.S.A., justice came in the form of a reduced sentence. After pleading guilty to burglary, the court gave him the maximum 7 years without considering his remorse or circumstances. Our team successfully petitioned for a review, and the High Court acknowledged what we already knew, that justice should leave room for rehabilitation. His sentence was cut to 3 years, giving him back four precious years of his life.

A family reconciled: But justice isn't always about courtrooms and sentences. Sometimes it's about healing what's broken outside the legal system. When 62-year-old J.K. faced charges stemming from a painful family conflict with her son, our Children & Mothers Diversion and Restorative Justice Program saw an opportunity for reconciliation rather than punishment. Through patient mediation, we helped mend their relationship until her son chose to withdraw the charges entirely. "You helped us find our way back to each other," J.K said, her son's arm around her shoulders at their final mediation session.



: A Mother and Her Children

A mother reunited with her children after 6 years: This same program gave M.B., a young mother separated from her toddler son for six years, the chance to rebuild their lives together. While serving her she transformed sentence, herself through education and vocational training. Recognizing her rehabilitation, the High Court granted her probation under the prison decongestion policy. Now she holds the child she was taken from, crochet needles moving with the same determination that carried her through prison, only now, she stitches together a future instead of just dreaming of one.

These stories of wrongful convictions overturned, excessive sentences reduced, families reconciled, and lives redirected, are why Justice Nest exists. Our Prison Paralegal Program arms those inside with the knowledge to challenge injustice, while our Children & Mothers Diversion & Restorative Justice Program creates alternatives to incarceration that heal rather than punish. Together, they form our belief that true justice doesn't just punish the guilty, it protects the innocent, recognizes redemption, and values human connection above all.

Because when we unlock a mother from incarceration due to poverty related crime or minor offences, we don't just free her, we save an entire generation that depends on her. And that is what changes everything.

Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Olivia Kamau – A Truth and Compassionate Force for Restorative Justice.

Olivia Kamau, a University of Nairobi law graduate, embodies the transformative power of compassionate legal advocacy. At Justice Nest, she channels her passion for criminal law and human rights into defending vulnerable women and children, driven by her conviction that justice should restore rather than punish. Her prison visits revealed how systemic failures criminalize poverty rather than intent, yet she finds hope in restorative justice, mothers reuniting with children, alternative dispute resolutions (ADR), and second chances that rebuild lives.

Two cases profoundly shaped her perspective: a woman suffering from battered woman syndrome, punished for momentary retaliation after years of abuse, and an incarcerated mother denied free bond who lost her baby.



📸 Olivia Kamau: Volunteer Lawyer.

These tragedies fuel Olivia's vision for a justice system that sees people beyond case numbers. Beyond her legal work, she unwinds with butter chicken and *Friends* marathons, jokes about her "Truth Seeker" superpower to detect lies, and admits Harvey Specter gave her unrealistic courtroom expectations.

Practical yet passionate, Olivia champions policy reforms, like automatic non-custodial sentences for mothers, and post-release support programs. Her message to aspiring lawyers: "The law is demanding, but you are equal to the task." As she prepares for Kenya School of Law, Justice Nest celebrates her unique blend of heart, humor, and unwavering commitment to a justice system that heals families. Olivia reminds us that true justice isn't just about the law, it's about people.

With Gratitude: To Everyone Who Made July a Month of Impact

As we reflect on the past months, one truth is clear: this work is only possible because of *you*.

To the partners who believed in the impossible,

To the donors who trusted us with their resources,

To the volunteers who showed up when no one else would,

To the paralegals inside prisons who continue to fight for justice from within, **Thank you.**

You stood with us as we trained prison paralegals in Mombasa, as we reunited mothers with their children through our Children & Mothers Diversion & Restorative Justice program, and as we walked into courtrooms not for victory, but for restoration.

We've seen change begin with simple acts: a phone call, a message, a contribution, a connection. Every step we've taken toward a more humane and equitable justice system has your fingerprints on it.

As we move into the second half of the year, our gratitude runs deep, and our vision grows clearer. Together, we're building a justice system that doesn't punish poverty, but protects possibility.

With hope, with purpose, with all our hearts, we say thank you.

January-July 2025 Impact Overview

| Program | Trained | | Clients Released | Children Reunited |
|---|---------|-----|---------------------|----------------------|
| Prison Paralegal Program | 33 | 685 | 110 | - - |
| Children & Mothers Diversion & Restorative Justice Program | - | 44 | 15 | 38 |

Thank you for supporting us, offering second opportunities, and for bridging the justice gap.

!!! You might also like:

Breaking Free, but Not Free: HM Released Today, Now the Real Fight Begins [Read More]

Justice Restored:
Reuniting Families
Through Fairness and
Compassion [Read More]

The Journal of the Delaware State Bar Association; Global Lessons for Justice. July/August 2025. No 1.
[Read More]

Written by: Veronica J. Finkelstein, J.D.

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<u> Upcoming Events /Announcements: Honoring World Prisoners' Justice Day</u>

Name: Prisoners' Justice Day (PJD)

Date: 10th August 2025

Justice Nest Theme: Unlock A Mother Save A Generation

World Prisoners' Justice Day, observed annually on **August 10th**, traces its origins to a tragic event that exposed the harsh realities of incarceration. The date was chosen in remembrance of **Eddie Nalon**, a prisoner who died by suicide in 1974 at Millhaven Maximum Security Prison in Canada after being denied medical care and left in solitary confinement. His death sparked outrage and became a symbol of the systemic neglect faced by incarcerated individuals.

The following year, on August 10, 1975, prisoners at Millhaven organized a one-day hunger strike to honor Nalon and protest inhumane prison conditions. Over time, the day grew into an international movement, with activists, advocacy groups, and incarcerated people worldwide using it to demand **justice**, accountability, and humane treatment for prisoners.

Today, **World Prisoners' Justice Day** serves as both a **memorial** for those who have lost their lives behind bars and a **rallying cry for reform**. It calls attention to issues like overcrowding, abuse, lack of healthcare, and the overuse of solitary confinement. At **Justice Nest**, we honor this legacy by continuing the fight for a justice system rooted in **dignity**, **fairness**, **and true rehabilitation**.

We will be holding a legal awareness on this day in Lang'ata Women's Prison, and Shimo La Tewa Mombasa prisons where we will cover topics like understanding prisoner's rights while in custody, bail and bond terms, plea bargaining, inter alia. We will also have one on one consultations as well as a question-and-answer session.

Join the Movement



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Thank you for standing with us as we fight for justice, dignity, and hope.



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