



March 2017

GET YOUR SEATS NOW!

Defenders of the Innocent Event

Saturday, April 29, 2017 at Crowne Plaza Springfield

Click [here](#) for full event information and registration

Free Showing of “The Central Park Five” PBS Documentary

IIP, in partnership with WSEC/Network Knowledge and the Hoogland Center for the Arts, is hosting a special viewing of the award-winning Ken Burns documentary “The Central Park Five” on **Wednesday, April 12, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Hoogland Center for the Arts.**

The film tells the story of five black and Latino teens from Harlem who were convicted in 1989 of raping a 28-year-old white woman in New York City’s Central Park. DNA evidence and a confession by a serial rapist cleared the boys in 2002, after the five had spent as long as 13 years in prison.

Yusef Salaam, featured speaker at this year’s Defenders of the Innocent Event in April, was one of those boys. The film chronicles “The Central Park Jogger” case from his perspective and that of the other four teenagers whose lives were upended by a miscarriage of justice. Yusef’s mother, Sharonne, will join Yusef at the Defenders Event. Her tireless advocacy on behalf of her son and the other boys, stands as a reminder of the impact that wrongful convictions have on the family, especially when juveniles are involved.

This special viewing will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Hoogland’s Club Room with hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar reception prior to the documentary start at 5:30 pm. Intermission will include a Q&A with IIP attorneys.

Seating is limited for this free showing. Reservations are recommended by contacting illinoisinnocenceproject@uis.edu or calling 494-0823.

Post-Release Support for Exonerees

When our innocent clients are freed from prison, they leave with little more than the clothes on their backs.

As exonerees, they now face a whole new set of hurdles. Our clients need to find homes and work, rebuild relationships, and integrate back into an unrecognizable world. While exonerees may have access to ex-offender re-entry programs, they are **not** “ex-cons” – they are innocent people who were wrongly convicted and imprisoned. Yet, for many months to come their wrongful convictions will show up on background searches making them immediately ineligible for jobs and apartments. While exonerees may have worked in prison for decades, they will have established no credit history to make major purchases.

Exonerees need help to rebuild their lives after wrongful imprisonment but often don't know where to turn. IIP is beginning to chart a course. This academic year, two social work students, Bree Shinall and Sean Blackwell, have been building a model for post-release support of IIP clients. They have been studying how other innocence organizations handle re-entry, exploring Illinois resources and assembling a resource guide that can be made available when exonerees are released from prison.

Finding freedom in everyday life is a long and difficult road for exonerees. IIP is committed to doing everything we can to support our clients post-exoneration.