

JULY 2024-JULY 2025



2024-2025 Annual Report





MISSION & VISION

WIND's Mission: Inspiring women with a history of incarceration or at risk of incarceration to design a thriving life journey using newly learned tools and strategies for success.

WIND's Vision: When women impacted by the justice system gain strategies and tools to lead productive lives, they can make better choices because they will have more choices. Every year, thousands of women return to incarceration because they don't have a way to address the root causes that sent them there in the first place: trauma and low self-esteem that led to substance abuse or the lack of education that prevents them from earning a living wage. The reasons are complicated.



It is an incredible honor to write the opening letter for this report and reflect on a truly remarkable year for WIND. Choosing just a few highlights from so many moments of growth and success is no easy task, but I'll do my best.

In the 2024–25 program year, we reached more than 400 women—the highest number in our history. Our original goal was to increase our reach by 20%, and we far surpassed it. That achievement alone is worth celebrating, but what makes it even more meaningful is how we got there: through the tenacity and leadership of our Program Manager, Victoria Williamson. Victoria and the program team forged new site partnerships to expand access to our programs, piloted new program content to deepen our ongoing support, and continued our commitment to correspondence programs for women at Cook County Jail, ensuring they receive the educational opportunities they deserve.

This year also marked an exciting evolution of our Bridge Program. We trained more than 20 new justice-impacted women in the WIND curriculum and created opportunities for current Lived Experience Leaders (LEs) to mentor trainees and share their expertise. Today, LEs also serve on all of WIND's committees and on our Board of Directors, ensuring their leadership and perspectives shape decision-making at every level.

Behind the scenes, we strengthened our operations—implementing a donor management system to better track contributions. And, with the help of the talented Ritika Ramesh and Maiya Wahl, launched consistent email and social media communication so that our supporters have a line of sight into the work we do.

Speaking of supporters, we are deeply grateful for both the time and financial contributions that make our work possible. Volunteers gave 350 hours of service this year, offering meaningful support that impacts women's lives every day. One of my favorite moments of the year was gathering LEs and volunteers at Curt's Café in Evanston for an evening of informal networking—an inspiring night of shared stories and community building.

We also received generous seed funding to launch a new apprenticeship program, designed to help justice-impacted women build workplace skills within WIND's supportive environment. We are especially thankful to the anonymous donors who believed in this next chapter of our work.

Celebrating these successes is easy—there is so much to be proud of. But we also know our work is far from done. The number of incarcerated women continues to rise at staggering rates, and the need for WIND's programs is greater than ever.

As you read this report, I hope you feel the same pride I do in being part of the WIND community—and I hope you'll continue to stand with us in the years ahead. Together, we can ensure that every woman we serve has the opportunities, tools, and support she needs to thrive.

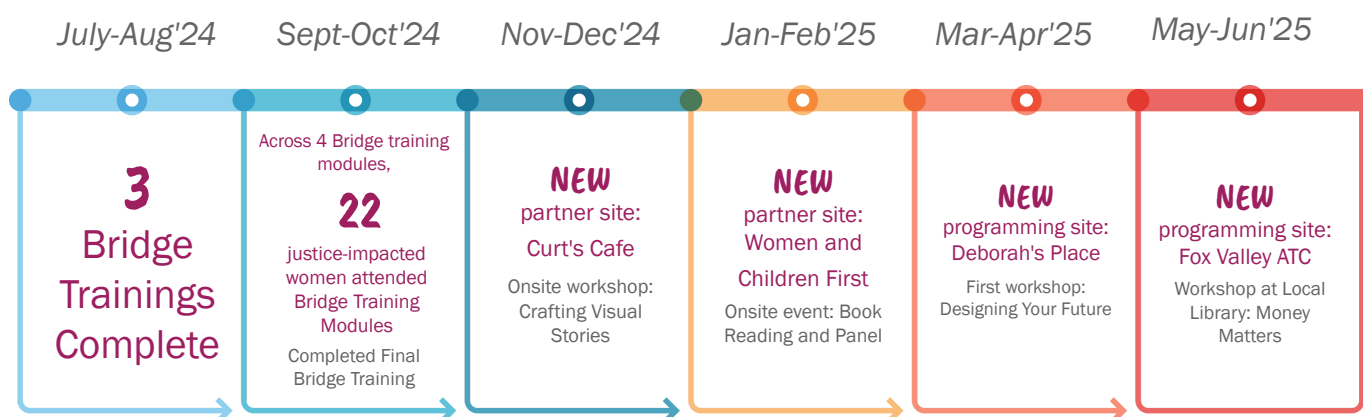
With gratitude,
Nicole O'Connell, Executive Director



(Left) Victoria Williamson, Program Manager
(Right) Nicole O'Connell, Executive Director

WIND's 2024-2025 Program Year resulted in extraordinary growth for the organization. This year was marked by significant expansion and impact, highlighted by the establishment of ten new strategic partnerships with key community-based organizations. These collaborations enabled WIND to extend its reach and introduce new programming sites, significantly broadening access to our programs. WIND proudly exceeded a majority of its ambitious program goals and outputs for the year.

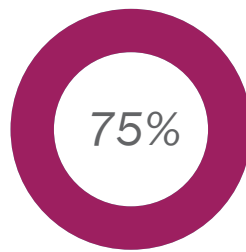
Key Milestones



Fast Facts



Build a partnership with two additional program sites



Surpassed goal, serving 419 participants across all programs



Provide four speaking opportunities, two facilitation opportunities each, two publishing opportunities for system impacted women





IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS

OUR COMMUNITY

- WIND served 419 Justice-Impacted women across 4 sites: Cook County Jail, St. Leonard Ministry's Grace House, Lutheran Social Services and Deborah's Place.
- Around 350 volunteer hours have been committed to WIND's workshops. Volunteers have dedicated their time, resources and care in ensuring each woman they work with is valued.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- WIND implemented three new curricula to our programming rotation: Digital Literacy, Womens Health (Mental & Physical), and Money Management at Cook County Jail.
- WIND expanded it's presence or began programming to ten new sites: Curt's Cafe, Deborah's Place and more.





OUR COMMUNITY

- WIND welcomed twenty-two justice-impacted women into the 2024-25 Bridge cohort, significantly expanding the programs reach and impact potential.
- Lived Experience Leaders (LEL's), participated in four key skill trainings/certifications, including Mental Health First Aid, ICS training and more.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- WIND hosted four community based events and four community based workshops around Chicago and the Chicago-land area. Covering topics like womens health, crafting, money matters, and more.
- WIND provided seven diverse platforms for LELs to share their voices and expertise, enhancing their leadership and advocacy skills. These opportunities included being interviewed for the WBEZ PrisonCast Podcast and more.



The Prison Policy Initiative's States of Women's Incarceration: The Global Context 2025 highlights a reality that should concern us all:

- “Women’s incarceration stubbornly remains at near-historic highs in the U.S., while the country’s overall incarceration rate has been falling.”
- “Only 4% of the world’s women and girls live in the U.S., but the U.S. confines one-quarter of the world’s incarcerated women and girls.”

These facts make one thing clear: our work is far from done. The demand for programs that equip women with concrete skills in a supportive environment is only growing. So, what’s next for WIND?

- Grow strategically – ensuring that as we expand, we also sustain the high-quality, meaningful programs and partnerships we’ve built.
- Roll out our apprenticeship program – creating developmental work opportunities for justice-impacted women.
- Diversify and expand our funding streams – because our crucial work is only sustainable if we can secure the resources to power it.

This is where you come in. How can you help us meet these goals? How can you be part of the next success stories WIND will share? What can you do to help us meet the needs of justice-impacted women?

Reach out today: windprogram.org/become-a-volunteer/





WIND'S 2024-25 SUPPORTERS

Adair Waldenberg
Allstate Foundation
Amy Kahn
Anonymous (2)
Barbara Shwom
Barry and Taffy Berger
Bianca Varlesi
Byline Bank
Christopher Family
Foundation
Craig Stehle
Deb Wood
Deborah Lazar
Deisi Coronado
Deisi R. Williamson
E. H. Fieschko
Ellen Barish
Evanston Community
Foundation
Fahtina AlAmin
First Presbyterian Church
of Wilmette
Holy Trinity Lutheran
Church
Jacalyn Pomerantz
Jackie and Bob Stein
Jane Atlas
Jean Zelt

Jeanne Herrick
Jenise Powell
Jenny Thornton
John Gavin
John Nitschke
Judette Kurasz
Judith Rice
Judy Markoff
Kathy Bell
Kelly Costello
LaTarsha Jones
Linda Morris
Lisa Eatman
Lynn Kelso
Mair Hill
Marcia Osher
Mariah Greer
Marsha Mintz
Nicole O'Connell
Northwestern University
ANCHOR Grants
Pat Gladden
Paula Camaya
Penny Hirsch
Phyllis George
Phyllis Lassner

Ritika Ramesh
Robin Richman
Sandy Smith
Seung Lee
Shawn Hutson
Sonja Moser
Stephanie Barry
Stephen Sudhoff
Tanja Chevalier
Terri Bernsohn
TracyMcKeithen
Trish Gilbert
Vicky Pickett





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors	Role
Tracy Lawson McKeithen <i>Executive Director - Family Promise North Shore</i>	Board Chair, Co-Founder
Kelly Costello <i>Adjunct Lecturer, Segal Design Institute</i>	Vice Chair, Co-Founder
Margaret Knell <i>Board Governance Consultant</i>	Secretary
Steve Sudhoff <i>Risk Management Professional</i>	Treasurer
Penny L. Hirsch PhD <i>Retired Professor, Northwestern University</i>	Board Member
Vicky Pickett <i>Director of Finance and Operations, Roycemore School</i>	Board Member
Jenise Powell <i>Pharmaceutical Sales Executive, Fresenius Medical Care</i>	Board Member
Mariah Greer* <i>Lead Resident Coordinator, Grace House Transition Home</i>	Board Member

Thanks also to former Board Member and founder Lisa D'Angelo for many years of service.

**Lived Experience Leaders*





WIND Advisors & Junior Advisory Board

WIND Advisors

Kathy Bell

Queen Brown*

Susan Garcia Trieschmann

Kim Hoffman

Latrice Johnson*

Ryan Lahurd

Ana Navaro*

Sally A. Nuamah

Barbara Shwom

Honor Teoudoussia

Junior Advisory Board

Alexandra Fitzgerald

Clark Bickford

Lithia Crafton*

Sofia Leon

Selena Ruffin

Monse Arreola*

Erin Elizabeth

Emina Huskic

Luciana Tysinger

Mylana Williams

**Lived Experience Leaders*





WIND'S 2024-25 VOLUNTEERS

Abby Alvarez
Afra Nawar
Akshaya Ganji
Alexandra Fitzgerald
Amy Tvetene
Angela Lopez
Anita Valentin
Arooba Lodhi
Avril Greenberg
Barbara Shwom
Callilla Issangya
Chethana Deeduvanu
Clark Bickford
Deb Wood
Deborah Lazar
Dee (Ann Marie) Levy
Deisi Coronado
Dylan Barth
Emina Huskic
Erin Elizabeth
Fahtina Alamin
Ghermawit Berhane
Grace Cassidy
Grace Overbeke
Gracey Nimmer
Hamid Sharfi
Hollis Bolton
Honor Cline
Ilma Iodhi

Irene Sosniak Savine
Jagoda Rachwal
Jaime Ponce
Jane Atlas
Jean Zelt
Jeanne Herrick
Jen Baker
Jenny Rabodzeenko
Judette Kurasz
Judy Fox
Kaprice Lindsey Daniels
Karen Aikens
Kelly Costello
Kyla Neely
Laura Castellanos
Laura Pigozzi
Lavanya Julaniya
Lisa McKeithen
Lolly Dominski
Louise Peace
Luciana Tysinger
Maiya Wahl
Marcela Ramirez
Marlise Fratinardo
Megan Calaway
Melanie Polkosky
Milea Lind
Monica Aur
Monica Throns

Mylana Williams
Nathaniel Yakushina
Pat Gladden
Penny Hirsch
Pragna Kurra
Rachel Solomon
Renu Zunjarwad
River Kim
Ruth Rosenblum
Sarah Carr
Sarah Squires-Doyle
Selena Ruffin
Shepherd Lee
Williams
Sofia Aleksandrova
Sofia Leon
Stefanie Norvaisis
Suzanne Lavin
Taylor Hughes-Barrow
Tracy McKeithen
Veronica Woodward





2024-2025 Annual Report

WIND Team

Nicole O'Connell, Executive Director

Victoria Williamson, Program Manager

Ritika Ramesh, Social Media

WIND Program Facilitators & Co-facilitators

Latrice Johnson

Queen Brown

Penny Hirsch

Kelly Costello

Honor Cline

Tracy McKeithen

Victoria Williamson

Dee (Anna Marie) Levy

Lithia Crafton

Charlene Johnson

Judette Kurasz

Glennetta Bell

Deborah Lazar

Ingrid Campos

Ilma Iodhi

Joan Tribblet

Aaliyah Smith

Ritika Ramesh