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**Maryam Bey**  
Reentry Specialist

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Maryam Bey is the mother of four children and is the eldest of five children. She married in Newark, New Jersey, raised her children in Newark and divorced in Newark. Maryam came to Newark at 15 years old in August 1967 during The Newark Rebellion. She was A Broken Spirit, fleeing from a father who raped her. Maryam's mother sent her to Newark to stay with a friend. She was confused, scared, hurt, traumatized and devastated. Maryam had no idea **God had a plan for her life.**

Maryam dropped out of high school in 1969 to give birth to her oldest daughter. She married in 1972 and gave birth to her second daughter and shortly thereafter she gave to her oldest son. She obtained her GED in 1974. Unable to locate a daycare center that was clean and that educated children, she started a daycare center in her home at the age of 24, the year was 1974. Due to the success of the center, the center was relocated to a larger facility the following year to accommodate its growth. Maryam had no idea **God had a plan for her life.**

From 1974 to 1984 Creative Garden Daycare Center flourished and expanded into an elementary school to the 5th grade. In 1981, Maryam gave birth to her fourth child. The school was closed in 1984 due to a divorce she was going through. She did not want her divorce to negatively impact the school's success. She was 34 years old. She enrolled her children in public school and became active in the PTA. Maryam worked for temporary agencies at minimum wage and acquired office skills to support her family. She still had no idea **God had a plan for her life.**

Between the years of 1994 and 2002, she obtained two degrees (an Associate's and a Bachelor's) from Saint Peter's University. She was a school board candidate six (6) times and on her seventh (7th) run, in 2001, with the support of Mayor Kenneth Gibson and James Benjamin, she won a seat for Newark Public Schools Board of Education. In 2002, she was elected as Newark Public Schools Board President and was the Host of "Parent Notebook" TV Show. Councilwoman Bessie Walker hired Maryam as her Legislative Aide. The Councilwoman initiated a Prison Reentry Program and placed Maryam in charge.

In 2006, an election year, Bessie lost her seat on the City Council. Maryam submitted her resume to several companies. She was hired as an Employment Counselor at The Kintock Group, a halfway house in Newark, NJ. She worked with brothers and sisters returning home from prisons across the country. The following year she was promoted to Case Manager. As a case manager she noticed every woman on her caseload, whether they were Black, White, or Latina, had been raped by a family member or someone they knew. They were Broken Spirits just as Maryam was at 15 years old. **God had a plan for her life.**

In the movie "The Color Purple" the character Sophia, played by Oprah Winfrey, made a profound statement.

*"All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my uncles. I had to fight my brothers. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men, but I ain't never thought I'd have to fight in my own house!"*

Maryam's clients were living this reality and because of her experience, she was able to support them in their crisis. What she knew for sure were it not for her "life experiences", she would not be prepared for the work she is doing today. Maryam's philosophy is "Our experiences prepare us for our purpose. Don't be embarrassed about them". She would remind herself of this especially when she became tired. Because of the experiences in her life, though they were traumatic, she was rewarded and inspired by God to create and operate a school, support her children, obtain her GED, earn two (2) degrees, develop conferences, purchased her home, became a school board member (and later president) and host of her first TV show, "Parent Notebook".

In 2016, Maryam created “Tell A Vision”, which is not just a local TV show that tells the visions of local heroes/heroines it is also a public speaking firm made up of inspirational leaders. She is blessed to have met and partnered with dynamic men and women from all walks of life resulting in a fantastic team that develops staff training, workshops and conferences on many topics which are not just limited to those who have been incarcerated but also includes those who want to transform their lives and help others. In the past, some team members have participated in drug use/distribution and living "That" life but have since become testimonies of success. Topics they cover include but are not limited to:

- After Incarceration
- Women’s Mental Health (which includes Sexual Molestation)
- Domestic Violence
- Gang Violence Prevention
- Support for Elder Prisoners
- Education
- Personal Responsibility
- No Excuses
- Attitude
- Power of the Hustle
- Entrepreneurship
- Real Estate Investment

Maryam Bey now understands that this is **God’s Plan for her life.**