

Mend

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Introduction - Mend, v2

Mend Mend

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INTRODUCTION

Mend: Introduction - Mend, v2



Welcome to the 2024 issue of *Mend*, where creative minds and inquisitive perspectives collide. Within these pages, you will find pain, struggle, strength, ambition, and words of power and wisdom. Many of us are going through or have been through the same or similar things. We realize that we are all different people from different walks of life trying to overcome similar obstacles. Project Mend shows us that we can all learn from each other no matter where we are or where we come from.

We are grateful to have these passionate writers express how they feel and what they've been through. This issue includes their powerful poems, short stories, and nonfiction—facts of life in raw, unpolished form.

Some pieces are about the prison system, and others are about life outside. Still others traverse more fantastical and spiritual realms. We, the editors of *Mend*, have the utmost respect for those who have shown us how to follow our passion and dreams through words.

We want to thank Professor Patrick W. Berry and the many special guests we met along the way: poet José A. Pérez, civil rights activist and best-selling author Michelle Alexander, and documentary filmmaker Too Black, among others. We admire their dedication.

Thanks also to Katherine Nikolau and Gabby Wilson, who helped us develop as writers, editors, and publishers. Additionally, we appreciate the efforts of Ilhy Gomez Del Campo Rojas, whose incredible design skills were invaluable in creating the cover of this issue and shaping a few of the layouts.

The *Mend* editors represent a healthy mix of a great-grandmother, a great listener, a trusted servant of the people, a poet/writer, a talented individual, a sparkly and bubbly personality, a fit veteran and computer nerd, the Queen, the Midas Touch, the Mediator, a compassionate helper, a role model as a hardworking and ambitious individual, a grad student, a professor, a retired grandfather-to-be, and a returning citizen who banded together weekly to complete this work.

Many of us on the editorial team were recruited by senior editor Troy White. We are grateful to him for involving us in the community and introducing us to this work.

The writers in this issue are strong-minded and positive,





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Attendees at a documentary screening of *The Pendleton 2: They Stood Up*

ideals Project Mend stands on. Attending workshops, interacting with other editors, listening to great ideas, and being involved in different activities—such as clearing our minds with meditation and yoga with the help of the Center for Community Alternatives' own Michaela Thorley—has been a blessing. Working with Professor Berry has been very helpful to us, and we're sure the rest of the editors feel the same way.

Working on *Mend* allows you to be yourself and shows you how you don't have to settle for just one thing—that you can open your mind to new, exciting things and open the door to a whole new way of thinking. This experience is truly making history for a lot of us.

If you have the determination, motivation, and passion for writing, editing, or publishing, then Project Mend is your first stop. If you want to learn how to express your feelings, thoughts, or opinions, this is where you need to be. We are very grateful for the opportunity to work on this project, learning writing and editing skills.

Coming together every Monday night to work on this issue was more than just an experience—it was an adventure. Our unique personalities harmonized to create a space filled with light and energy. We always smiled to see one another, to share Varsity wings and pizza, and to watch this beautiful issue slowly come into being through our collective efforts.

We're proud of all the editors and authors for their efforts and dedication to *Mend*. We hope you find as much joy in reading this issue as we found in putting it together. *Mend* is made possible through collaboration with the Center for Community Alternatives and

Photographs by Patrick W. Berry

HNY's Post-Incarceration Humanities Partnership, which is generously supported by the Mellon Foundation. Also, the project has been supported by the Engaged Humanities Network, the Humanities Center, a CUSE Research Grant, and the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition at Syracuse University.

Special thanks to Benay Bubar for offering insight into copyediting, Wendy Mansfield for providing suggestions on layouts, and the judges—José A. Pérez, Brian T. Shaw, David Todd, and Marvin Wade—for helping us select winners of the awards for best writing in this issue.

—Vince Moody, Michael J. Willacy, and Daquane Williams



José A. Pérez gave a public talk and workshop in Syracuse.

