

PRESS ADVISORY

CU CITIZENS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE TO HOST FORGIVENESS WEEKEND & DEMAND END TO RACIAL DISPARITIES AND SO CALLED “WAR ON DRUGS”

Forgiving felons who've served their time, ending racial disparities in our criminal justice system and fighting the so-called “war on drugs” is the theme of **“Forgiveness Weekend: Double Jeopardy or a New Beginning?”** a conference presented by CU Citizens for Peace and Justice February 18 –20 at Salem Baptist Church, 500 W. Park St. in Champaign. This event is free and open to the public.

“The residents of Champaign County are not spared from the horrible disparities and corruption that result from arresting and incarcerating people in the name of fighting terror and drugs,” said Danielle Schumacher, CU Citizens for Peace and Justice organizer and executive director of Illinois NORML. “It’s terrorism for local police to want to purchase unsafe taser electro shock stun guns for use on local citizens. The eavesdropping charges against Martel Miller and Patrick Thompson were an example of racial disparities in our state’s attorney office, and three apparent suicides at the County Jail have shown that something is terribly wrong here.”

“This event will bring together people interested in working to change the mindsets and laws that are currently resulting in an unprecedented number of poor people and black people behind bars,” said Carol Ammons, CU Citizens co-founder.

Local, state, and national experts will present workshops about felony disenfranchisement, racial disparities in the war on drugs, expungement, interacting with police officers, non-violent resistance, and more.

Speakers include: IL State Representative Constance Howard on how to get your criminal record expunged and how to take action on SB 3007, a bill that would expand expungement in Illinois.

Cliff Thornton, founder of Efficacy, will present on “Perceptions of Race, Class, and the War on Drugs,” and call for a multi-racial movement to end the war on drugs before it ends life as we know it.

Rev. James Bevel, legendary Civil Rights Movement strategist, will conduct a workshop on non-violent resistance and deliver an address entitled, “The Faith Community as Watchdogs for Social Justice.”

The UIUC chapters of Students for Sensible Drug Policy and NORML will show a documentary called “Busted! A Citizen’s Guide to Surviving Police Encounters,” and a local defense attorney will be on hand to field questions and concerns.

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