

Report on EJI Activity

2022






Thank You

We are enormously grateful to everyone who has supported the work of EJI over the last year. As basic civil and human rights have come under attack in unexpected and unprecedented ways, we are working harder than ever to challenge bigotry, inequality, injustice, excessive punishment, and over-incarceration in America.

Throughout the year, we have provided direct legal services to hundreds of people who have been condemned to execution, wrongly convicted, or unfairly sentenced. We are actively documenting and challenging horrific conditions of confinement in jails and prisons. We have also increased and greatly expanded our public education efforts and brought hundreds of thousands of people to our sites, which confront our nation's history of racial injustice and the legacy of slavery.

In 2022, we also embarked on an exciting new initiative that focuses on poverty. In recent years we have seen growing income inequality, which has had tragic consequences for the poor. The pandemic revealed how many vulnerable people in America die needlessly, suffer from unjust treatment, and experience severe deprivation that cannot be reconciled with a nation as wealthy as the United States. Our new Anti-Poverty Initiative seeks to confront three components of poverty: food insecurity, inadequate healthcare, and unjust incarceration of the poor for unpaid fees and fines. With your support, we believe we can create and model new kinds of interventions that make a difference in the lives of the most needy people in our nation.

New reports that educate the public, new meeting spaces to facilitate important conversations about race, and court victories that secure freedom and relief for people in prison are all part of what we celebrate this year even as there is so much injustice that requires our attention. Everything we do is possible because of your generous support and your commitment to the issues we address. We are grateful that you stand with us, and we are happy to provide a brief report on our work. Thank you.

WITH HOPE


Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director

Addressing Poverty in America





Hunger Relief

This year, the pandemic and inflation resulted in even greater income inequality and stress for people living in poverty in the U.S. To help address this, in September 2022, EJI launched three new programs aimed at reducing poverty in America.

The first anti-poverty project focuses on hunger relief. Alabama has one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the country, so we are starting here. Because

many people struggling with food insecurity live in rural parts of the state—where there are often fewer programs available but even higher rates of poverty and hunger—EJI’s hunger relief program provides families in need with financial assistance for groceries and essential items like cleaning supplies and diapers. So far, we have worked directly with nearly 300 families, many of whom have small children or relatives needing additional care.

Our hunger relief program is currently active in most counties across Alabama, and we aim to expand the project in the next year. In order to provide direct and immediate assistance, EJI staff have traveled across the state to personally meet those in our program. We are incredibly grateful to have been able to support single parents and grandparents raising small children, elderly people and people in poor health, and many

other families with special needs.

EJI has also partnered with anti-hunger organizations, local community groups, food banks, and local ministries across the state to strengthen their capacity to provide food and assistance to thousands of families in need. Doretha Heard, with Helping Hands Food Ministry, which works to combat food insecurity in Macon County, Alabama, stressed the impact that the last few years



have had on her community:

“Since the pandemic, we have struggled to keep up with the demand for food while facing challenges with transportation, refrigeration, extreme weather conditions and volunteer support.”

We look forward to expanding and continuing to learn from our

hunger relief program in the new year, and EJI is hopeful that this direct assistance model can help inspire new ways of addressing food insecurity across the country. “In a nation as wealthy as our nation, it is fundamentally unacceptable that there are millions of people who are dealing with hunger and food insecurity,” said EJI Director Bryan Stevenson. “Hunger is not an issue that we have to accept in America.”





New EJI health team members Dr. Margaret Hayden, Meghan Hunter, Laquarria Nevins, H. Mawande Mzongwana, Siphosihle Mzongwana, and Dr. Sanjay Kishore.

Health Care

People with low income and people formerly incarcerated often face serious health issues related to poverty, trauma, and inadequate services. Their increased need for health care is aggravated by less access to basic services and health resources.

States like Alabama have refused to expand Medicaid, leaving hundreds of thousands of people without health insurance. Since the onset of the pandemic, death rates in poor communities have been dramatically higher than the national average.



Thousands of people are released from prisons each year with chronic health issues, trauma, addiction disorders, and no health insurance. In many cases, these individuals have no place to go to receive care.

EJI is committed to addressing this crisis. Our Anti-Poverty Initiative includes a major new project focused on health care. We are thrilled to have hired a team of physicians, nurses, and

other health professionals who are working to build a health center and a mobile clinic that will allow us to offer free health screenings and care to thousands of people in Alabama. Our initial focus is on people recently released from prison where violence, poor health care, and trauma have made the formerly incarcerated vulnerable to chronic diseases and acute illness.

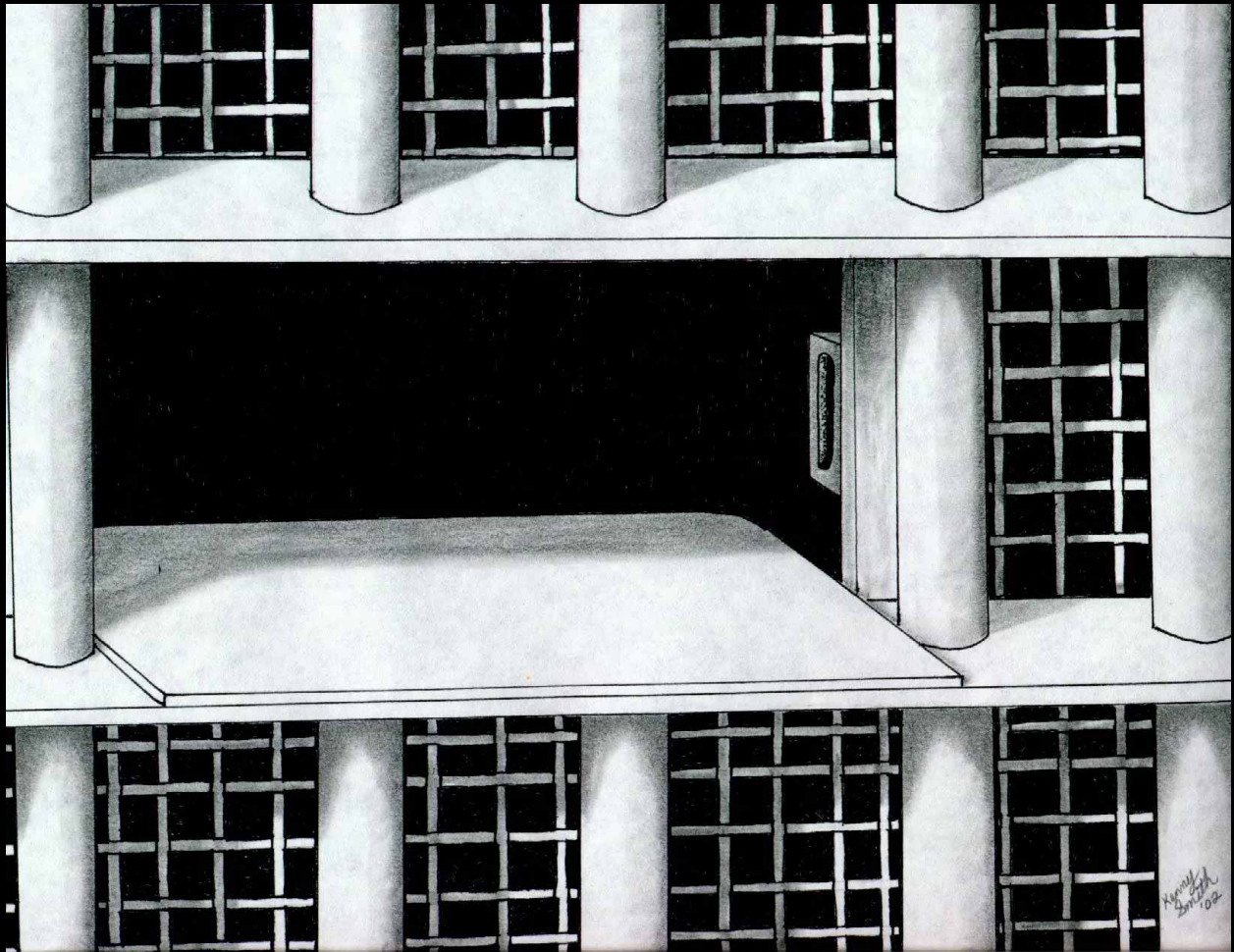


Unjust Fees and Fines

In December of this year, police arrested an 82-year-old woman in Valley, Alabama, for her failure to pay a \$77 trash bill. She was handcuffed, jailed, and needlessly humiliated. Thousands of poor people have faced similar situations; local authorities throughout Alabama continue to jail people who cannot afford to pay fines and fees—despite the constitutional prohibition against putting people in jail because they are poor.

In 2023, EJI will begin helping people manage unjust fees and fines for misdemeanors and

traffic offenses. We believe that, by removing the threat of arrest and imprisonment that menaces people who are unable to pay court fees and fines, we can directly reduce recidivism, keep thousands of people from going to jail, and help low-income people manage limited resources more effectively. Our project on fees and fines is an effort to reduce the impact the carceral system is having on communities and provide desperately needed help to the poor who are unfairly targeted by overly harsh and punitive local governments.



Art by Kenneth Smith, who survived an execution attempt on Alabama's death row in November 2022.

Advocating on Behalf of the Most Vulnerable

Suspension of Alabama Executions



EJI currently represents dozens of condemned prisoners on death row. We have won relief, reduced sentences, and obtained freedom for scores of people wrongly convicted or sentenced to death since our founding. We are committed to ending the use of the death penalty, which has proved to be a costly, tragic, and unjust practice that has made the United States an outlier on human rights.

In November 2022, after the state of Alabama carried out two failed execution attempts and a torturous multi-hour execution of a third person, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey announced the state would be suspending executions as the Alabama Department of Corrections conducts a “top-to-bottom” review of its protocols.

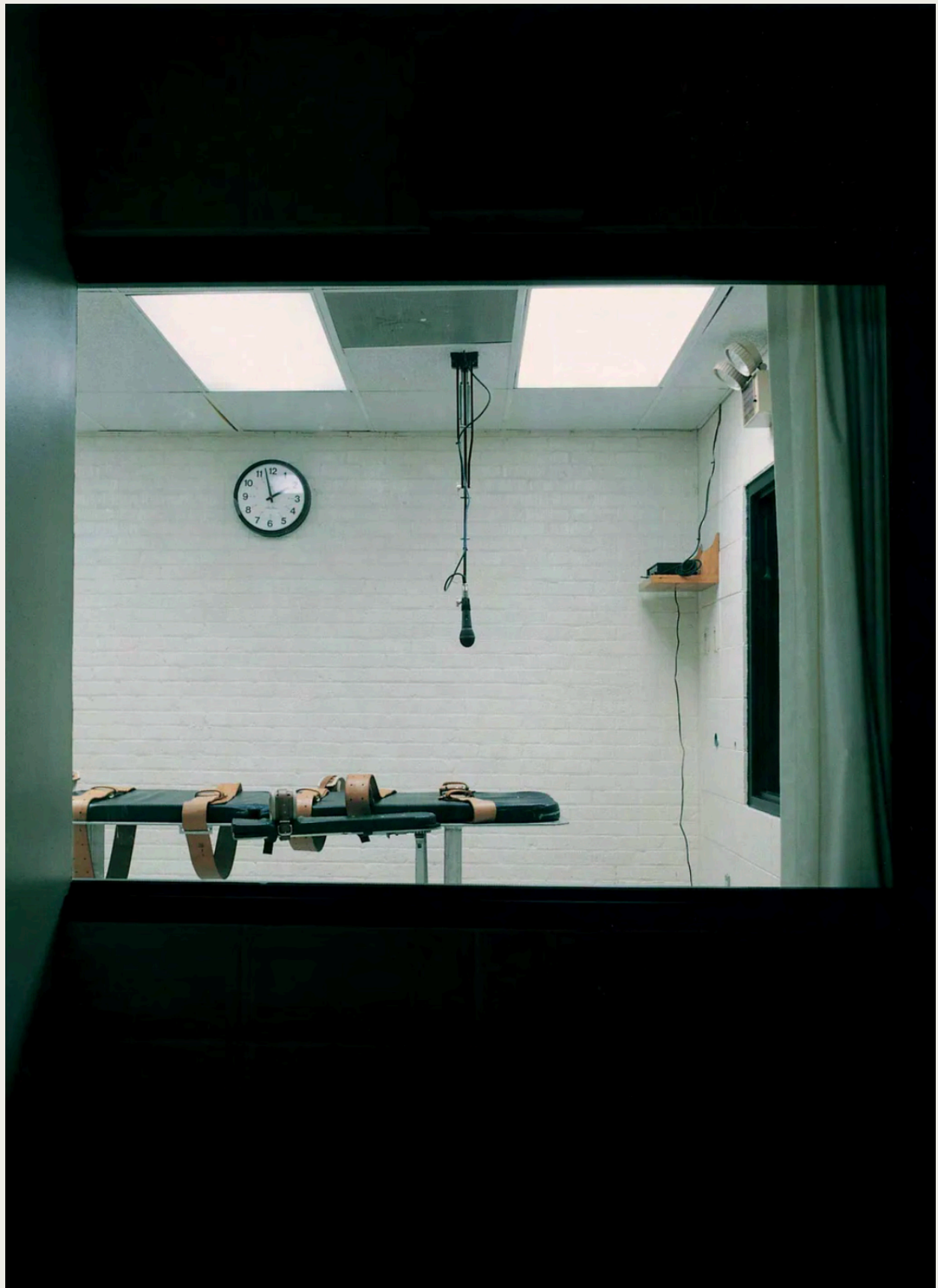
The suspension is a welcome and huge relief to many of us who fight against executions. What has happened during executions in Alabama is unconscionable, unnecessary, and completely avoidable. State officials have surrounded executions with secrecy and have been dismissive of concerns and obligations which come with the great responsibility to engage in lethal punishment.

Our work on behalf of condemned men and women in Alabama remained vital this year as the state sought to carry out numerous executions despite uncertainty and unreliability surrounding Alabama's protocols

and procedures. EJI attorneys continue to advocate on behalf of the incarcerated poor in state and federal courts.

This year, EJI client Joshua Russell was spared execution and removed from death row. He was initially sentenced to death for a crime that occurred in 2011. EJI represented Mr. Russell on appeal, challenged the constitutionality of his conviction and death sentence, and won him a new sentencing trial. In September 2022, at the conclusion of his new trial, Mr. Russell was sentenced to life without parole and no longer faces a risk of execution.





Children in Adult Prisons

EJI continues to challenge the excessive punishment of children who have been prosecuted as adults and condemned to die in prison or given extreme sentences. We are representing people in multiple states who have been unfairly sentenced. This year marked the 10-year anniversary of *Miller v. Alabama*, EJI's landmark victory before the Supreme Court that struck down mandatory death-in-prison sentences for children.

Since EJI's work on behalf of children sentenced to die in prison began, 25 states have banned such sentences for juveniles. Today, we continue to advocate on behalf of children prosecuted as adults, including providing formerly incarcerated people with job training, education, housing, and assistance with other support services upon release.

Thousands of children who were automatically condemned to die in prison for juvenile offenses have been resentenced because of *Miller v. Alabama*—and in the decade since the decision, more than 880 people sentenced as children to die in prison have been released.





Former EJI client Donald Brown, who was incarcerated for 43 years. Mr. Brown now works on the EJI team.



EJI won Ian Manuel's release after he was condemned to life imprisonment at the age of 13. In 2021, Mr. Manuel published a memoir titled *My Time Will Come*.



EJI Senior Attorneys Angie Setzer (left), Talmadge Hayes (center), Tatiana Bertsch (middle right), and Sia Sanneh (far right) along with former EJI client Talmadge Hayes. Mr. Hayes was sentenced to die in prison as a child but was released after three decades of imprisonment.

Prison Conditions

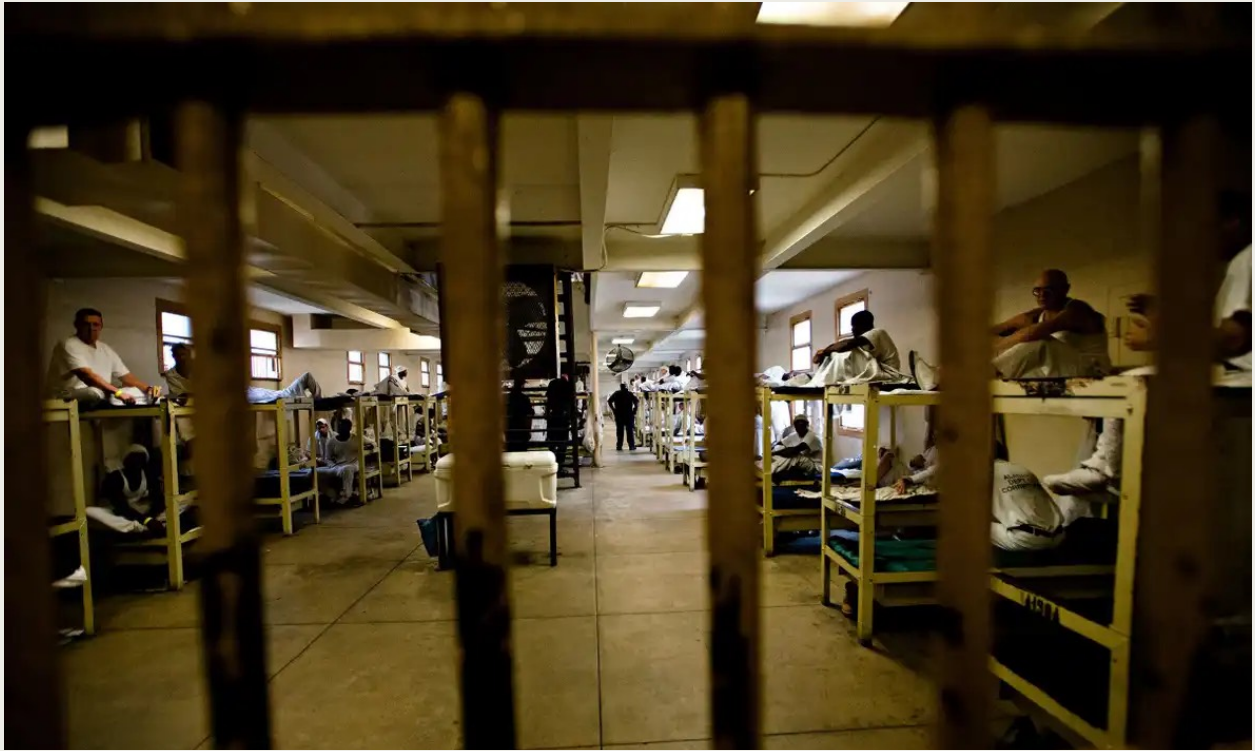


This year we continued to challenge unconstitutional conditions in Alabama jails and prisons, which are the most violent in the country.

Understaffing, systemic classification failures, and official misconduct and corruption have left thousands of incarcerated

individuals across the state vulnerable to abuse, assaults, and uncontrolled violence.

At least 18 people were killed in Alabama's prisons this year alone, making 2022 the deadliest year in the Alabama Department of Corrections's history. In November of this year, a long-serving



correctional officer resigned and called on federal authorities to intervene in the state's prison crisis, which he said is putting incarcerated people, officers, and the public at risk.

EJI continues to investigate and document the inhumane conditions in Alabama's prisons,

particularly as the state has announced plans to build new prisons.



Advancing Racial Justice Through Public Education and Advocacy

Critical Acclaim for the Museum and Memorial

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"[O]ne of the most powerful and effective new memorials created in a generation."

- The Washington Post

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"The most moving experience that we had while in Montgomery. I did not see a single person leave the museum without tears rolling down their cheeks."

- Berger Bungalow

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"One of the most impressive exhibits—and one of the most significant memorials—to be found anywhere on the planet. It simply doesn't get better than this."

- Architect Magazine

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"There is nothing like it in the country."

- The New York Times

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"As a Southerner and an American . . . I consider this to be one of the great memorials of the world and a must-do experience for every woman, man and child."

- Walter Magazine

Museum and Memorial

Since opening last fall, EJI's new Legacy Museum—which provides a comprehensive history of the United States with a focus on the legacy of slavery—has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors as well as international attention and acclaim. The new museum has been featured on MSNBC's The Sunday Show with Jonathan Capehart, NPR's All Things Considered, CBS Sunday Morning, and the Vox Conversations podcast.

We are proud to have expanded the art gallery in the Legacy Museum this year with new major works from some of the most celebrated Black artists in the world, including Glenn Ligon, Elizabeth Catlett, Simone Leigh, Gordon Parks, Jacob Lawrence, Faith Ringgold, and Winfred Rembert.

Tony Norman, a columnist for the Pittsburgh Gazette, said the

museum offered “the most comprehensive story imaginable about the Black experience in America.” He added:

“Every element at the Legacy Museum is connected to what comes before and after, creating a seamless narrative argument about the truth of race in America.”





In April 2022, EJI also expanded the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. The new exhibit, Community Reckoning, features a sculpture by artist Branly Cadet that represents thousands of people around the country engaged in community remembrance work, as well as steel duplicates of 65 marker monuments.

The new wing at the National Memorial dramatizes the work of local citizens helping their communities remember and reckon with history. The marker

monuments detail specific narratives about lynching violence and recognize communities around the country who have memorialized these local histories as part of EJI's Community Remembrance Project.

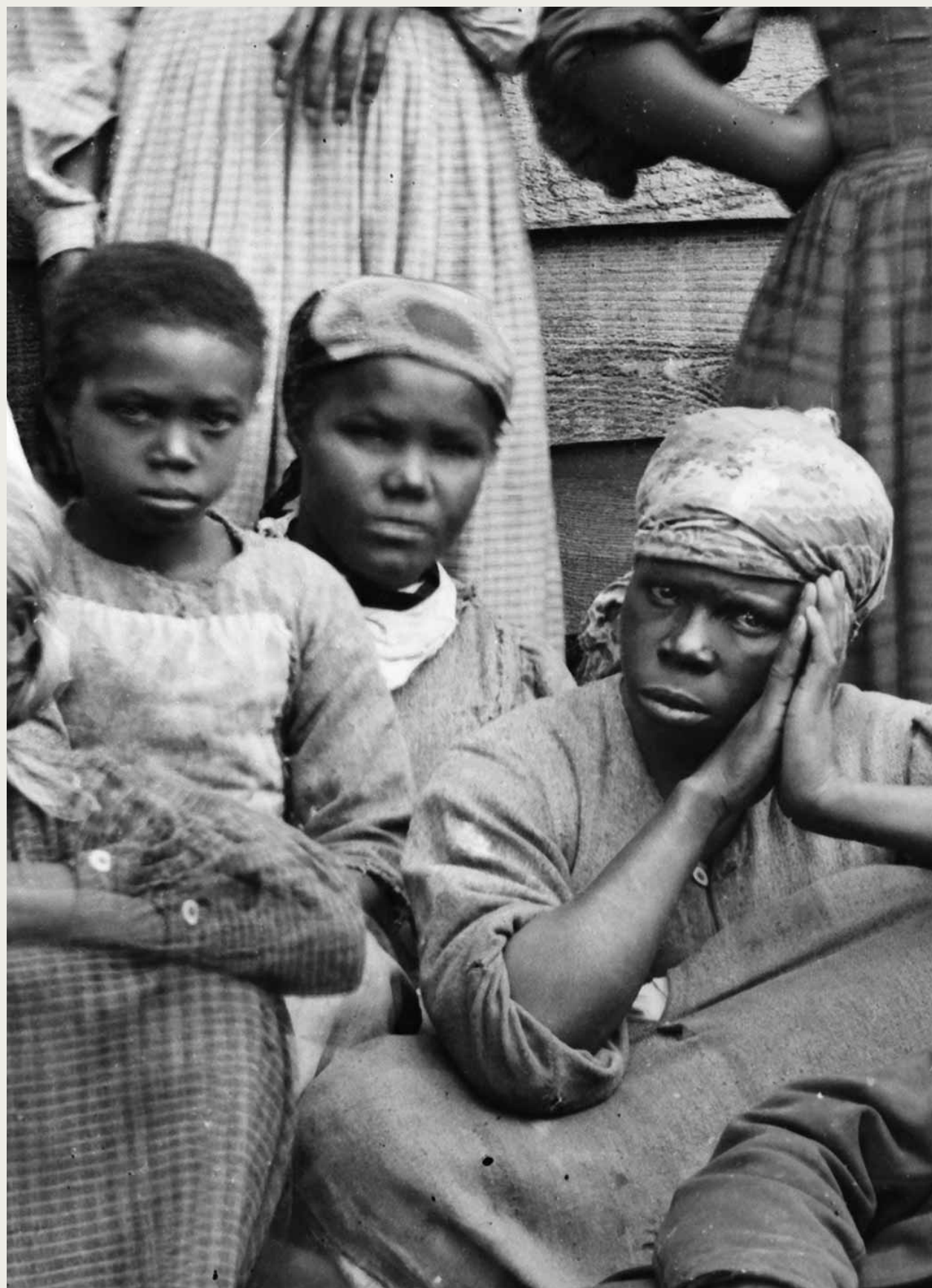
We are incredibly grateful to the thousands of visitors who have come to our sites in Montgomery, Alabama, over the past year to engage truthfully with our history of racial injustice, and we look forward to hosting many more people in the next year.



Racial Justice Education

We were thrilled to publish a [new report](#) on the Transatlantic Slave Trade this year, which examines the period between 1501 and 1867 when nearly 13 million African people were kidnapped and trafficked across the Atlantic Ocean to be enslaved, abused, and forever separated from their homes, families, and cultures. The report examines the economic legacy of the Transatlantic Slave

Trade and how American port cities from New England to New Orleans were shaped by slavery—a history that few have acknowledged. We hope the report and its accompanying videos will initiate more honest conversations about the history of slavery in America and how we can effectively address its legacy.





Bryan Stevenson speaks to guests at our Health Convening.

In April, EJI invited hundreds of healthcare providers from across the country to come visit the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, and reflect on how our history of racial injustice continues to influence health inequities for poor and marginalized communities today. Given the extraordinary work that healthcare workers have done in the last two years to respond to

Covid-19 and the health crisis we are still managing, we were honored to host this convening.

In November, EJI also hosted an Education Summit, which brought together nearly 200 teachers, heads of schools, college deans and presidents, and education leaders from across the U.S. Attendees were able to visit our sites in Montgomery before joining small-group discussions



Education convening participants gather in EJI's new Legacy Hall.

focused on improving education about our nation's history of racial injustice.

In November, we released the 2023 *History of Racial Injustice* calendar, the 12th edition of our award-winning calendar that documents historical events related to our history of racial injustice and its legacy. Hundreds of thousands of people have engaged with the content in our

2022 calendar over the past year and we have already distributed thousands of the 2023 calendar.



Anthony Ray Hinton spent nearly 30 years on Alabama's death row for a crime he did not commit.

Criminal Justice Education

Anthony Ray Hinton's critically-acclaimed memoir, *The Sun Does Shine*, was adapted for young readers this year. An Oprah's Book Club pick, *The Sun Does Shine* has been lauded by critics as an extraordinary testament to the power of hope sustained through the darkest times. Mr. Hinton spent 30 years on Alabama's Death Row for a crime he did not commit before EJI won

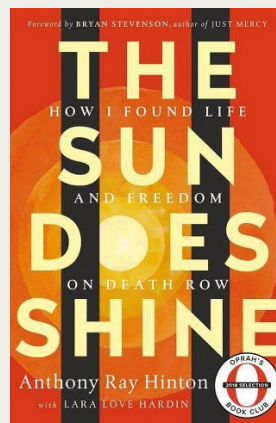
his release in 2015. Now, Mr. Hinton continues to work at EJI as a Community Educator, and is as a tireless and powerful advocate for abolition of the death penalty.

EJI staff have also presented our work to hundreds of organizations, communities, and decision makers both nationally and internationally, advancing the



discussion on criminal justice in America.

And as we continue to call for the abolition of the death penalty, this year we also educated legislators and policymakers across the country about America's flawed, unreliable, and arbitrary system of capital punishment.





Engaging Communities in Truth-Telling

Since 2015, EJI's Community Remembrance Project has engaged local communities across the nation in a campaign to recognize the victims of racial terror lynchings. This year, hundreds more community members joined us in acknowledging their counties' history of racial violence by collecting soil from lynching sites and erecting historical markers.

"We think it's important that truth and justice work become local and that every community that has witnessed the horror of lynching reckons with that history through memorialization."

- EJI Director Bryan Stevenson





The first historical marker of the year was dedicated in January 2022 in Gwinnett County, Georgia, and since then nearly a dozen other communities have unveiled new markers memorializing victims of lynchings.

A new marker on the OSU-Tulsa campus commemorating the 1906 founding of the Greenwood District was among those un-

veiled this past year. EJI partnered with the Terence Crutcher Foundation, Oklahoma State University at Tulsa, and the Tulsa Community Remembrance Coalition to dedicate the marker during a weeklong series of events honoring Terence Crutcher, who was killed by a police officer during a traffic stop in north Tulsa six years ago. Dr. Tiffany Crutcher, Terence's twin



sister and founder of the Terence Crutcher Foundation, said at the unveiling:

“We bear witness to the past. We honor the power of the present. And we vow to not betray the future. We shall not forget.”

our CRP work and fostering dialogue in more communities across the nation in the coming year.

We look forward to continuing

Creating Spaces for Learning and Reflection



In September of this year, we opened the Legacy Plaza in Montgomery, a 2.5-acre outdoor park designed to serve as a gathering space where visitors can reflect on their experience at the museum and memorial.

Designed to preserve the sanctity of the experience at the museum, the park is filled with landscaping and artwork, including a piece by local artist Kevin King, who said:

"I'm thankful that I can have a piece of artwork in this sacred space representing these civil rights heroes."

The plaza also includes a café with food from local chef Alana Dennis so that groups and families can share meals together at picnic tables set up throughout the park.

To help facilitate educational experiences for larger groups, EJI also opened several new meeting and event spaces in downtown Montgomery this year, which can be reserved in advance and accommodate groups of up to 150 people.



A sculpture in EJI's new Legacy Plaza.



Recognition for EJI's Work

EJI continues to receive a perfect score of 100 and a four out of four-star rating from [Charity Navigator](#) and an A+ grade from [Charity Watch](#). In addition, EJI has earned a score of 99 out of 100 on [WalletHub](#), and was named best charity for social advocacy in its list of best charities for 2023.

We are grateful to each of you for supporting our work in 2022. We are committed to continuing the fight for justice. With your help, we will keep working to end mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and racial injustice.



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