

PARTICIPATORY DEFENSE

Do you have a loved one facing criminal charges?



When a family member or a friend is facing criminal charges, it can be an overwhelming time for those who care about them. You are not alone, and there is something you can do to help.

Participatory Defense is an opportunity for friends and family of those accused of crime to come together with folks in similar situations to share resources and to learn what they can do to assist in the defense of their loved one.

Participatory Defense meets at 6:00 pm on Tuesdays, at the McGruder Family Resource Center
(in partnership with Free Hearts)

2013 25th Avenue North Nashville, TN 37208

For more information, please call 615-862-5296 or visit our website

<http://publicdefender.nashville.gov/>



FREE HEARTS

PARTICIPATORY DEFENSE

Welcome to Participatory Defense – a community organizing model for people facing charges, their families, and communities to impact the outcome of cases and transform the landscape of power in the court system. While most of us are not attorneys, and while this is not a legal clinic, we do work as a group to figure out where your case (or the case of your loved one) is procedurally, and to identify what steps you can take each week to have as positive an impact as possible on the outcome of the case. These meetings are half support group, half strategic planning session. As a collective, we don't have all the answers, but that's okay. The point is to work together to find those answers.

For the Individual Facing Charges

It is our hope that the support you receive from this group enables you to make decisions around your case, such as whether to take a plea or not, without the coercive impact of feeling alone. If you, your family or someone you know is involved in Participatory Defense, you can rest assured that there is a team of people who are supporting you and providing the strength you need to stay vigilant in a pressure-filled atmosphere.

For the Family/Community Group:

For those of you here to share with us the situation of your loved one, thank you for your courage, and please know that you are not alone. Please also know that we believe you have the power to change the fate of a loved one. You can be the main vehicle that shows the entire court system that the person facing charges is more than a case file. You can also be an important source of information for the defense strategy. (Note: we sometimes have family members who attend meetings but don't feel comfortable speaking up at first. This is fine! Take your time and speak up when you're ready.)

Confidentiality

Please know that this is not a confidential meeting. As such, please **DO NOT discuss the details of the incident**. This is very important.

Weekly format

Each week, we'll write the name of the person facing charges on a white board, ask for status updates, and work together to come up with some next steps. The other families in the room get to know the person on the board through a mother, father, brother, sister or friend. And when a family wins a case, and their loved one comes home – that person who has been in custody erases their name. It is a special moment. In the meantime, remember that this is a marathon and not a sprint, but that there is a finish line.