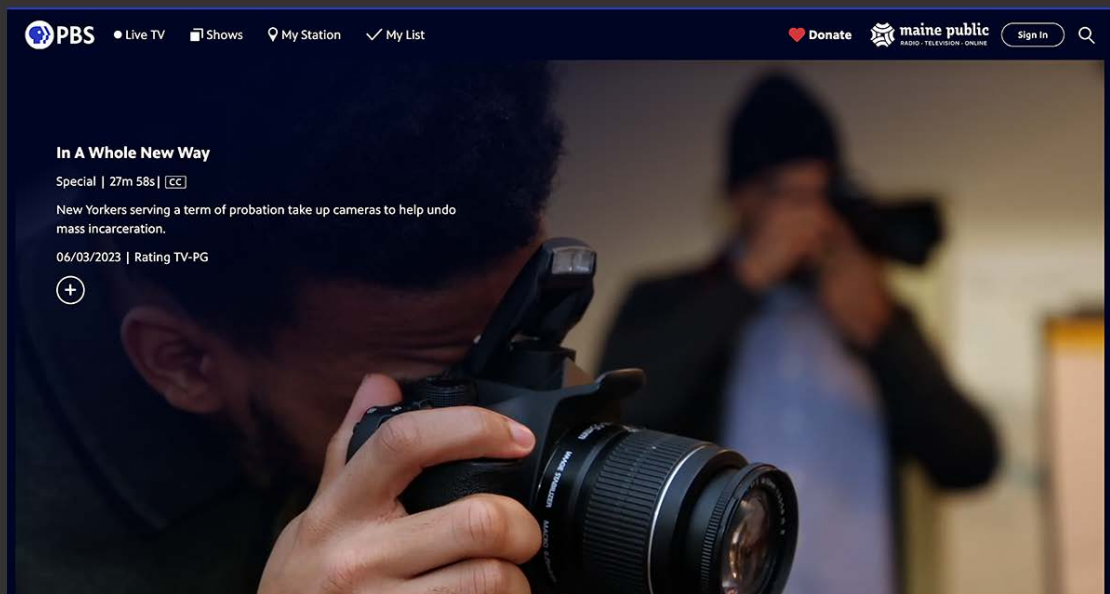




*We leverage participatory photography to change national conversations about public housing, criminal justice, immigration, and climate change.*

## Five Years Later: The Whole New Way Continues



## A SEEING FOR OURSELVES IMPACT REPORT

Summer 2026

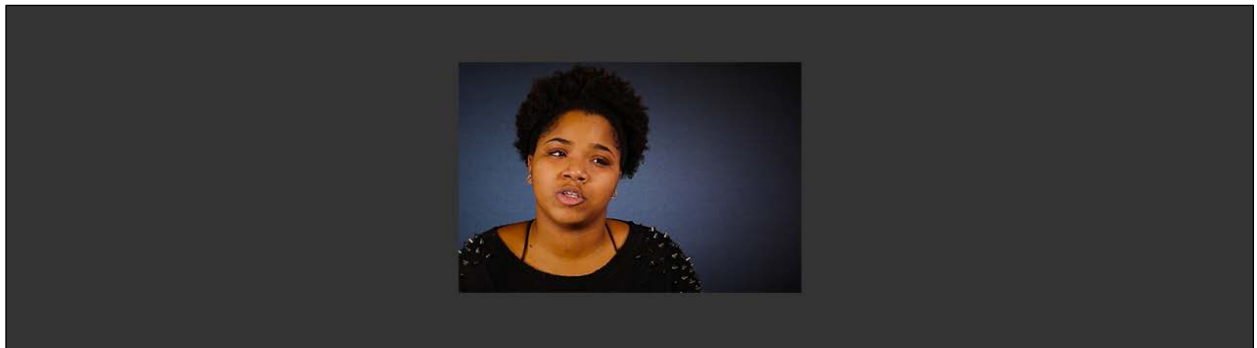
**From Executive Director Jonathan Fisher:**

As we of the nonpartisan nonprofit Seeing for Ourselves conduct impact campaigns around our most recent initiatives, immigration and climate change, the time seems right to check in on our criminal justice project conducted at New York City's probation department from 2018 to 2021.

Equipped with cameras and a novel artistic technique for changing the way they are seen, hundreds of individuals had set out in a whole new way to return the sanction it its rehabilitative roots—only to find themselves transformed. (Their experience would eventually inspire individuals to participate in both the immigration and climate change programs.)

Embraced by the community corrections industry here and abroad, this initiative continues long after our own departure to feature thousands in stipends paid by NYC, successful gallery exhibits, careers launched, untold opportunities in the form of paid teaching gigs and photo shoots along with photograph sales—and, no surprise, less crime.

I'd like to share a few highlights of that effort, how it helped folks like Emily, and how it continues to bear fruit years later.



Seeing for Ourselves had three members when founded in 2010. By now, I'm the last one standing, making external support critical to its mission.

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT THE FILM

*"Captivating!"*

—United Nations Association Film Festival

*"Despite the undeniably important reality behind the action taken by the subjects of this documentary, "In a Whole New Way" feels uplifting and hopeful for a better future. Eloquently narrated and thoughtfully put together, this documentary proves people can effect change. That if communities come together, we make the world a better place."*

—Infinity Film Festival (London)

*"The work has shifted the way we view communities impacted by the justice system."*

—Peaceful Prisons Podcast

*"A pioneering path to criminal justice reform."*

—Palo Alto Weekly

*"Such a thoughtful and life-affirming documentary!"*

—Steve Woolworth, Past President, International Community Justice Association

*"Moving, important, inspirational, and eye-opening, you won't to miss this short film about one of the most pressing issues of our time."*

—Thomas Memorial Library, Cape Elizabeth, Maine

## FUNDERS TO DATE

# SIGMA



Support from these entities allowed the program to go forward in 2018.

# ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



Tennis great John McEnroe offered participants the paid opportunity to shoot his charity event in 2018.

# ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) staged a plenary screening and panel discussion by program-participant-turned-manager Andre Whitehead, filmmaker Jonathan Fisher, and two New York City probation officials at its annual meeting in 2023. (Sharun Goodwin, second from right, now heads up the city department.)

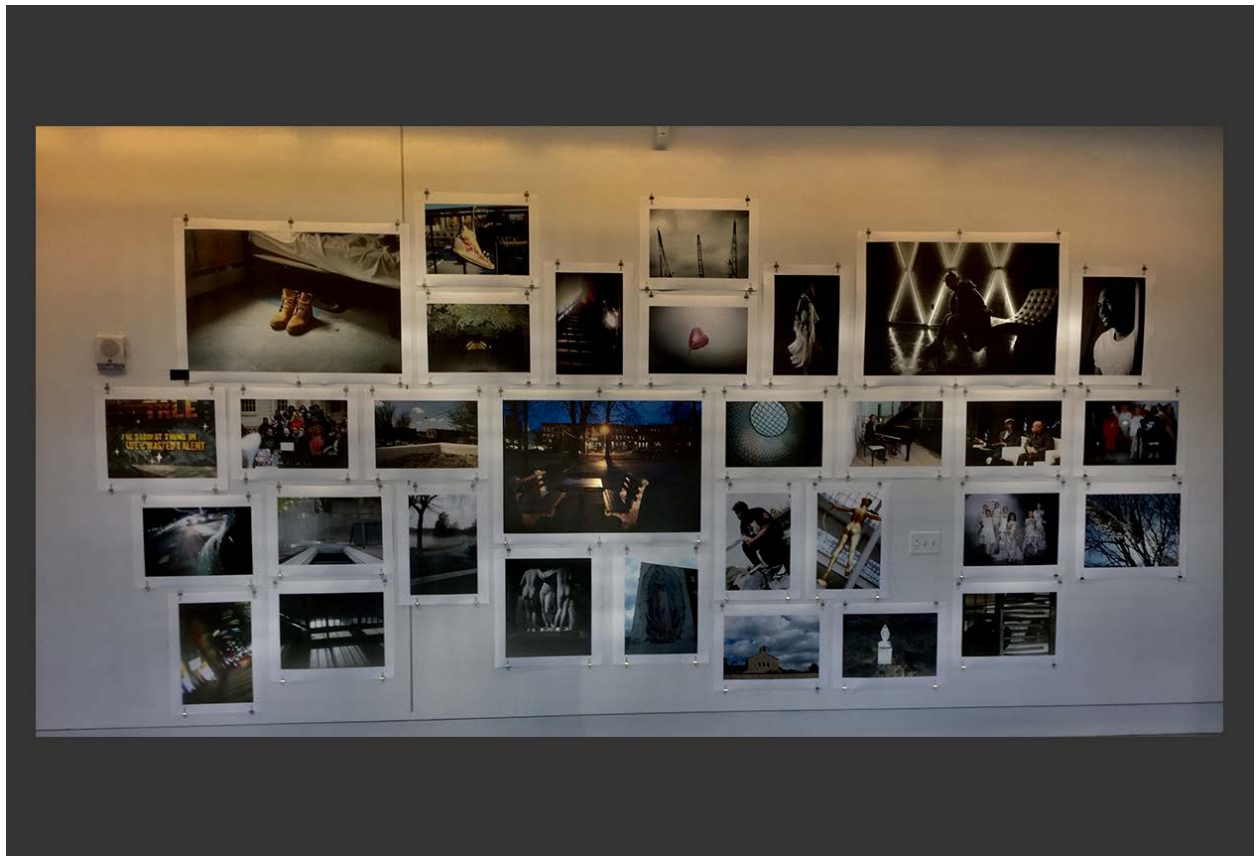
Exclaimed a probation executive from elsewhere in attendance, “I’m almost speechless! The transformation you’ve documented is profound. Every professional who wants to make a difference should take this lesson to heart. We hear every day, ‘There’s no hope.’ This is the antidote to that.”

## LOCAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

The photographers' works were exhibited in galleries around New York City. Local and national media covered the progress. Our short documentary dropped in 2021 shortly after we ended our involvement at the probation department. Our book followed in 2023. Articles about the initiative were published by both the British and American community corrections industries at the end of 2024. And this year, with new leadership at the department, the program accelerated, with former participants in charge.

### TIMELINE

|           |                                                       |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018      | Program launches in partnership with probation agency |
| 2018-2019 | Gallery exhibits                                      |
| 2020      | National media                                        |
| 2021      | Film premiere                                         |
| 2021      | Seeing for Ourselves turns over program to agency     |
| 2021-2022 | Film plays festival circuit                           |
| 2023      | Book published                                        |
| 2023      | Film aired by PBS                                     |
| 2023      | Film screening and panel discussion at APPA plenary   |
| 2024      | British and American journal publications             |
| 2026      | Latest gallery exhibits                               |
| 2026      | New impact campaign begins                            |



One of the exhibits was staged at the Hunter East Harlem Gallery in March, 2019.



Local TV covered the effort, here featuring probation official Rodney Levy (C) and participant Andre Whitehead (R). Offered host Sandra Bookman (L), "This program is really changing lives and hopefully helping to change the criminal justice system."

Crime

What if the probation office was a place of joy instead of fear? New York City shows how.

"We're trying to dispel some of the historical trauma that has been in place between probation, law enforcement, and the community," one probation official said.



Andre Whitehead, shown here near the South Bronx NeON, took advantage of photography classes offered at the probation office and discovered a new career path.

JESSICA GRIFFIN / Staff Photographer

by Samantha Melamed  
Updated Jan 10, 2020

Sign In / Sign Up

<

ADVERTISEMENT

1. COUNTY JAIL INMATES >

2. LIST OF JOB POSITIONS >

3. ABANDONED HOMES FOR SALE >

4. FREE GOVERNMENT GRANTS >

5. VITAMINS TO IMPROVE MEMORY >

6. BANK OWNED CARS FOR SALE >

7. TRENDY CLOTHES FOR OLDER WOMEN >

8. WOMEN LOOKING FOR MEN >

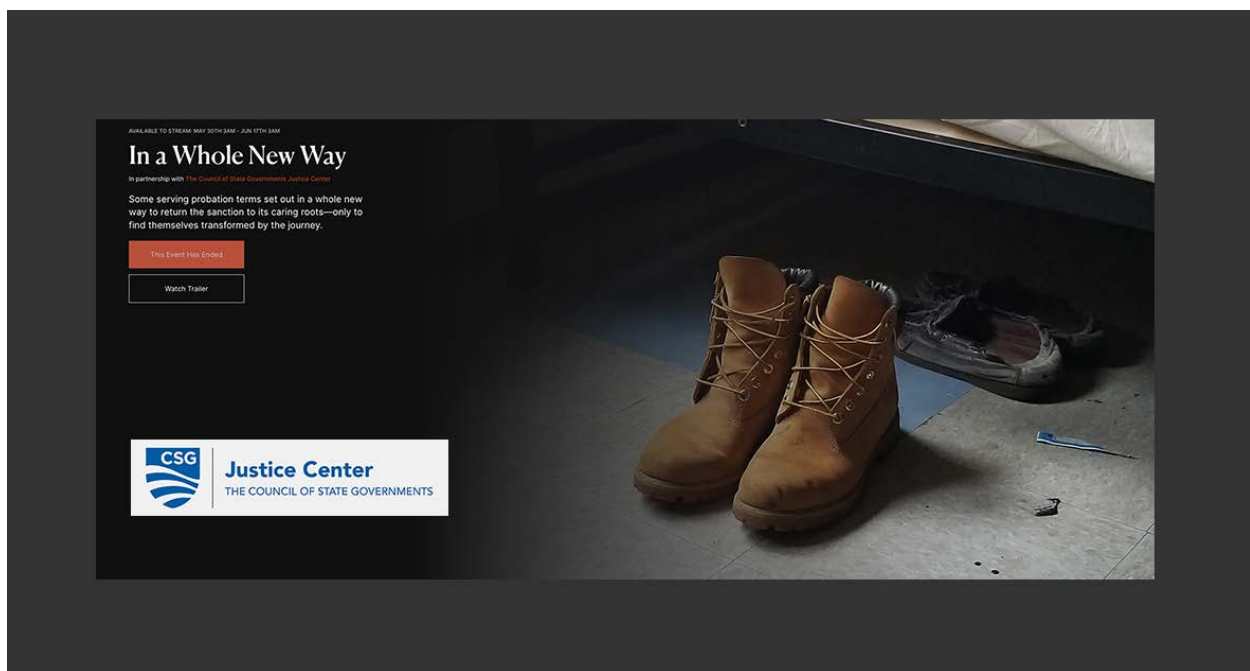
The program even reached the out-of-town press.



Our film, pre-approved by the probation department and program participants, premiered at the Manhattan Film Festival in June 2021 and went on to win over seventy awards in over two hundred festivals the word over. It then aired on PBS in 2023.



Our companion book launched in 2023 and also won widespread acclaim. Opined national probation authority Joe Arvidson, “Otherness in criminal justice has to be addressed—and photography is a great way to get at that. *In a Whole New Way* leverages the visual arts to break down barriers and truly utilize the power of perspective-taking.”



A screening and Q&A was held for state governments in 2023.



The industry journal of both the British (L) and American (R) community correction industries invited Seeing for Ourselves to tell the story at year-end 2024.

**Award-Winning Participatory  
Photography 2010-2025**

A Young Artistic Practice Addresses Climate  
Change and Other National Concerns

**"Fascinating!"**  
—*Circle of Blue*, Climate Thought Leader  
Feb. 3, 2026

**Opening Reception**  
**April 2 • 6-8pm**

235 Duffield Street  
(1 Willoughby Square)  
7th Floor  
Downtown Brooklyn

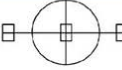
ID required for entry

# fxcollaborative






• PUBLIC HOUSING • CRIMINAL JUSTICE • IMMIGRATION • CLIMATE CHANGE



**SEEING**  
FOR OURSELVES

**Exhibit Dates: April 2 through May 28**

Post-opening viewing by appointment only  
212.627.1700 or [receptionist@fxcollaborative.com](mailto:receptionist@fxcollaborative.com)

The photography was featured in an inspiring retrospective of all Seeing for Ourselves photography in April-May 2026.



Five years after we completed our programming and departed, the participatory photography project is still expanding. An exhibit near City Hall took center stage in June 2026, as reported on the probation department website. In the entire panoply of rehabilitative activities offered through the probation department's Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON), this project takes center stage.

A PROGRAM OF THE  
NYC DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION

# NEON PHOTOGRAPHY

## SUMMER 2026

*CAPTURE YOUR SUMMER. TELL YOUR STORY.*

NeON Photography is a citywide program offering hands-on photography training, creative expression, and real-world experience across all five boroughs.

**SUMMER COHORT**  
JULY 27 – SEPTEMBER 4, 2026  
(6 WEEKS)

**IN-PERSON ONLY**

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE & LOCATIONS**

- MONDAY – BROOKLYN**  
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
345 Adams St
- TUESDAY – STATEN ISLAND**  
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
340 Bay St
- WEDNESDAY – QUEENS**  
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
162-24 Jamaica Ave
- THURSDAY – BRONX**  
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
198 E 181st St
- MONDAY – HARLEM**  
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
127 W 127th St

**STIPEND AVAILABLE!**

**WHO CAN APPLY**

- NYC residents 18 years or older
- Able to attend all 6 weeks of the program
- All skill levels welcome, including beginners!

**WHAT YOU'LL GAIN**

- Camera & editing fundamentals
- Visual storytelling & creative direction
- Photo walks & real-world shooting experience
- Portfolio development
- Group projects & exhibitions
- Stipend for participation!

**REGISTRATION**  
JUNE 30TH – JULY 20TH

**SCAN TO APPLY!**

**JOIN NeON PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Build skills. Express yourself.  
Connect with your community.

For requests regarding language interpretation services, please email [language.services@probation.nyc.gov](mailto:language.services@probation.nyc.gov) or call 212 510 3875. For accessibility accommodations, please email [disability.facilitator@probation.nyc.gov](mailto:disability.facilitator@probation.nyc.gov)

Now completely directed by former participants, “NeON Photography” continues to recruit new adherents.

# THE BECKONING OPPORTUNITY

The work isn't finished.

With the photography program succeeding beyond our expectations in New York City, we can now complete the task of sharing the experience with the rest of the country through a renewed impact campaign.

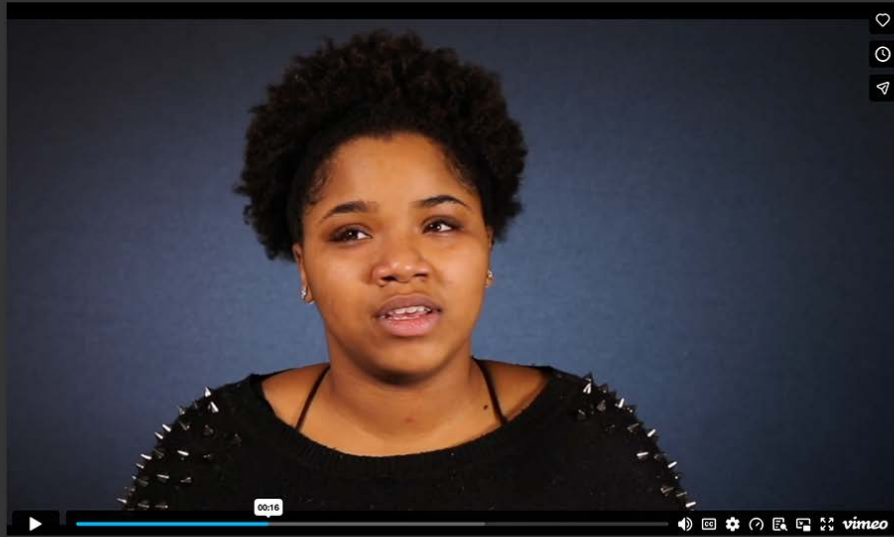
We possess something extraordinarily rare in criminal justice: an award-winning PBS documentary and a widely honored companion book about the very same initiative. Together, they provide a ready-made platform for helping probation agencies across America rethink the practice.

Leveraging these works has every chance of returning America's dominant criminal justice intervention to its original rehabilitative purpose where it remains punitive and so repairing its tattered reputation.

And that will in turn allow the sanction to be more widely viewed in our country as an effective alternative to locking people up—more humane, less costly, and better at keeping them and the rest of us safe.



By supporting the program's renewed impact campaign—whether by hosting a screening, underwriting new PBS broadcasts, bringing the program to your community, or simply donating—you can fulfill the legacy of those New Yorkers who took it upon themselves to chart a new justice path for all Americans.



If you haven't caught the film trailer yet, [take a peek](#).

Seeing for Ourselves isn't hard on crime or soft on crime. We do pride ourselves as being smart on crime.

Observers across the political spectrum agree that American prisons for the most part simply warehouse inmates, doing them no favors while ultimately endangering the rest of us.

For those who qualify, isn't it time to try a whole new way?