

AUTHOR BIO



Donna Ann Smith-Marshall was born on "All Saints Day", November 1, 1966 and is a native of California. She is a wife, mother, writer, motivational speaker, activist and a publisher who is the founder and creator of FMA Publishing — www.fmapublishing.com and the author of **TIME ON THE INSIDE Behind The Walls In A Maximum Security Women's Prison From An Insiders View**.

Donna Ann Smith — at the time of her sentencing, was ordered to serve a prison term of 3 years, 8 months in which she completed 2 ½ years, from 1993-1995 after not returning in 1991 to serve a one-year county term in which the prison sentence was originally suspended. Donna Ann is an expert in the field of women and youth of incarceration as she has over 13 years of knowledge and experience living, working and interacting with inmates and civilian staff in maximum and medium security prisons and halfway houses. Within the more than 10 years of her release, she continues to see the newcomer and recidivism rate grow as women going into the penal system this year alone will increase to 13,500 — 5,500 additional women since she came out. This is a huge increase and travesty as women of all ages who are mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, aunts, even grandmothers and now more than ever our youth, are being separated from loved ones. You also see lives torn apart due to the separation of mothers from their children with the hopes of a grandmother, older sibling or some family member being able to care for the child or worse case, placement in an already overburden foster care system.

Donna Ann has lived and worked in the United States Largest Maximum Security Women's Prison — Central California Women's Facility—CCWF, Northern California where she handled many processes to include processing newcomers and parolees into prison, relocation of inmates to various housing units during their sentencing to balance out the inmate yards as well as resolve/prevent any conflict between inmates and secretarial services for kitchen management. Donna Ann was also responsible for processing non-inmate men and women — civilians to come into the prison to handle numerous business accounts within the Prison Industry Association – PIA, which is a government organization within the penal system that profits from manufacturing goods and services such as coffees, teas, shoes, jeans, upholstery, carpentry and many more service for Major U.S. Businesses while using cheap prison labor to produce this merchandise.

Donna Ann has been a viable part of inmate reform and youth prevention as she served on the CCWF Women's Advisory Committee —W.A.C., which works as a go-between for inmates and prison officials to build a better understanding of inmates needs and concerns and to organize various committees and organizations to prevent prison disturbances or outbreaks as well as assist in any community efforts to deter youth from a life of crime which will ultimately lead them into the penal system.

She played a vital role as a motivational speaker working with a group of inmates and an educator as a part of the Prison Preventors Group based out of the Live Oaks Medium Security Women's Correctional Facility, speaking at assemblies in middle and high schools about my life experiences and sharing various scenarios of "what would you do in numerous unconstructive situations and challenges that occurred in your life that could ultimately lead you into being sentenced to serve time on the inside?" Donna Ann provided a wealth of valuable information in an effort to talk about peer and family pressures to help them make wise choices in an effort for them to have a fulfilling and rewarding life, not a life that can and will lead youth down a path of destruction and despair which allows negative circumstances and influences to impact their level of thinking, understanding, education, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being and life which can be destructive overall. Donna Ann doesn't hold back sharing her life experiences of drugs, alcohol, promiscuous sex, teenage pregnancy, depression and crime as she believes when a person can share their mistakes in life, it not only helps their healing, but most often another's.

Donna Ann has worked with young men and women ages 9 thru 18 who are serving and/or have served time in Los Padrinos and Central Juvenile Halls — Southern California, which are supervised by the California Youth Authority — YA. While speaking with these youths, she used an approach of listening, counseling, educational studies, allowing them to express themselves in open forums, round table discussions, writing, drawing and encouraging them to take a proactive approach of taking charge of life by accepting accountability for their wrong doings, seeking help spiritually and mentally and never believing the "hype" that if you've done wrong in life, you'll always do wrong. Believing this form of negativism will surely diminish their hopes and dreams.

When speaking with students, she has developed a great method of talking, listening effectively and allowing students to speak freely and openly, but respectfully as it is important to be an authoritative figure with our youth but not sanctimonious forgetting to share our mistakes in life and making them fear us as they will shut down and be forced to listen to what is being said but not digest the valuable information and insight they need to journey into a productive lifestyle now and in the future.

Donna Ann has an art of speaking with youth which is why a great majority feel comfortable sharing their issues, concerns, ideas, hopes and dreams and she is proud to say that as a mother of teenagers and young adults she is very proud of them and that they are progressing very well. Yes there are challenges that we face as parents, guardians and educators; however in the end, our youth want and need to be respected, listened to and assisted in reaching decisions that will result in positive outcomes and we must become role models in providing valuable, constructive and beneficial tools necessary for them succeed.

Donna Ann has worked for the Internal Revenue Service-IRS and General Services Administration-GSA government agencies prior to going into healthcare which she then worked in management for King Drew Medical Center as a Program Director in Pediatrics and as a Supervisor for Child Health and Disability Prevention-CHDP and Healthy Families Program-HF at Molina Healthcare for a combination of 15 years between these employers.

Donna Ann is working to establish Lets Focus Development Center for Women, a Non-profit organization dedicated to assisting women in various services to include counseling, parenting, educational development, job training and placement and housing assistance in an effort to positively progress back into society just as she did as Donna Ann not only wants to write about the penal system but do her part in helping too make a change.

As an activist, Donna Ann is working on a Bill to restore the rights of former prisoners once they complete a successful parole without having to go through all the bureaucratic loopholes ex-inmates face and to establish Southern Californian's United for Women Prisoners — SCUWP to raise awareness about the conditions of incarceration, the degrading and humiliation, the lack of medical care, rehabilitation and the comfortableness of prison which conditions you to view it as a place of acceptance— for the most part home as well as the grueling conditions first hand that plague the majority of women behind the walls and their families.

Donna Ann believes women — everyone should "Live Your Best Life and Your Best Self" and she is so blessed to say that she is trying her best to live this motto. She knows first hand that it is a struggle to stay from behind the walls; however God, faith, belief in and love of self, responsibility, accountability, ownership and rehabilitation are a necessity to stay from doing "Time on the Inside" in an effort to not adapt a mentality and acceptance of institutionalism. She also wants to give a clearer understanding of daily life and survival when "Behind The Walls," to those in society that may not be sympathetic to the problems, challenges and needs that are faced by many individuals in the system that a need for compassion, rehabilitation and resources are a necessity to effectively change the lives of individuals who have been affected by the California Penal System.

Donna Ann was raised in the church from a little girl and knows that many don't know that God can and will change all things. She wants you to know that we must seek Him first and believe that He along with faith must be the key factor. Once we believe that God will fulfill all our needs, this is standing on faith and He truly will do so; however understand it is in His time not ours. As Psalm 145:18, says, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him; To all who call upon Him in truth." This is what we must do in order to succeed in this world; call on God, work together in Prison Ministry and community activism programs, learn to be forgiving and nonjudgmental and learn that compassion for others will ultimately lead to doing our part in making this world a better place for all of us.

Donna Ann currently resides in Southern California with her husband and four children.