

# Restore Justice Foundation

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://restorejustice.org/proxi-serves-up-second-chances/>

### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Last Thursday, Restore Justice held its second annual Stories of Second Chances lunch at [Proxi](#), a new restaurant managed by renowned restaurateur Emmanuel Nony. The sold-out event gave our 102 guests a chance to learn about critical issues faced by people serving extreme sentences in Illinois.

The event was held this year in honor of Barbara Flynn Currie, current House Majority Leader of the Illinois General Assembly, and champion for Restore Justice. Executive Director Jobi Cates recognized Leader Currie for her unflagging commitment to the hard work of criminal justice reform, and for her nearly four decades of leadership as an advocate for families, children, and the states most vulnerable people. Last year, our event was held [in honor of the late Abner Mikva](#), one of our founding board members.



*Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie speaks about the work of criminal justice reform 2017 Nick Robins/Restore Justice*

For its main program, attendees of Stories of Second Chances heard from Marshan Allen and Joseph Rodriguez, both of whom were sentenced as children to serve life without parole. Both Marshan and Joseph were released through the [landmark Supreme Court case](#) *Miller v. Alabama*, which deemed the sentence of juvenile life without parole unconstitutional cruel.

At the time of their release, Marshan had served 26 years in prison, Joseph had served 35. In conversation with Jobi Cates, they told stories about the conditions of life behind bars, shared their hopes for the future, and helped dispel the myth that violent offenders are uniformly irredeemable.

The event concluded with final words from Restore Justice Treasurer Howard Conant, Jr., President Kevin Gallagher, and Jobi Cates.



*Joseph Rodriguez (right) describes his experiences in the Illinois prison system and his hopes for the future in a panel discussion with Marshan Allen (center) and Jobi Cates 2017 Nick Robins/Restore Justice*

As the year closes, the Restore Justice team is reminded how much of its work is made possible by the willingness of good people to open their hearts and minds to the difficult truths about criminal justice in Illinois.

To that end, events like Stories of Second Chances do more than shine light. They help Restore Justice raise the funds we need to train new advocates for criminal justice, draft and advise on legislation, and support the work of bringing meaningful reform to Illinois broken systems.

Stories of Second Chances, and the outpouring of support and donations to the cause of justice reform, was an incredible way to conclude the year. With 2018 just around the corner, the Restore Justice team would like to close out by thanking a few of the many, many people who made Stories of Second Chances a success:

Restore Justice Foundation  
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First Name

Last Name

Email address:

Street Address

City

State

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Submit your email address to be notified of crucial legislative action items, fundraisers, and news about our progress.

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