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February 4, 2015

Judge Gershwin A. Drain
Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse
231 W. Lafayette Blvd., Room 123
Detroit, MI 48226

Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain:

I am writing you today to request leniency from you as you consider sentencing of Rasmea Odeh, on March 12, 2015, a woman that I know as an incredible community presence and active supporter of immigrant and refugee women in Chicago.

Currently I serve as the Executive Director, Multimedia Communications at Trinity United Church of Christ, here in Chicago, but my passion – my calling – since moving from Detroit in 1997, has been working with our Prison Ministry and with our social justice ministries. For the past five years I've also trained in Restorative Justice and work throughout the community as a Circle Keeper, currently working with young men in the Cook County Jail's York High School.

I am moved to write to you as a citizen that recognizes the importance of each and every resource that serves to better our communities, and in recognition of the incredible work that Ms. Odeh has done to bring a sense of home, of comfort, and of empowerment to women at the end of their rope . . . of their hope.

In November of last year, Rasmea was convicted of one count of Unlawful Procurement of Naturalization, for failing to note on her immigration application more than 10 years ago, that she had been convicted 40 years earlier in an Israeli military court . . . based on a tortured confession.

As a Restorative Justice practitioner, we try to look at justice from the side of victim, perpetrator, and community, with the goal of recognizing everyone's humanity, and to attempt a fair restoration.

My plea to you, your Honor, is to recognize the humanity of Ms. Odeh and to take into account her life work in assisting the refugees of the far too many conflicts we see in our world, as you consider fair restoration.

I serve a God of Mercy and Grace, and while I pray for leniency in Rasmea's case, recognizing the wonderful work she does in our community, I am also praying that God continue to fill you with the wisdom and discretion needed to " . . . do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

Thank you for your consideration, and God bless you,

Daryle Brown
Executive Director, Multimedia Communication

Trinity United Church of Christ www.trinitychicago.org
400 W. 95th Street Chicago, IL 60628-1120

Telephone (773) 966 - 1544

