

The background features a light beige color with various decorative elements. On the left, there is a profile of a woman with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a white headwrap. The right side is adorned with stylized plants, including a large leafy plant and a smaller one with a curved stem. Scattered throughout are several four-pointed starburst shapes and swirling lines in a darker brown shade.

# BLACK MAMMAS PROSPER: A PACKAGE TOWARDS WELLNESS

CREATED BY: FATIHA MASUM  
POLICY TRACKS: GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM  
AND ORGANIZING, LAW AND ADVOCACY  
DECEMBER 6, 2023



The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and programs to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* actions.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>

# MISSION STATEMENT

**Black Mamas Prosper: A Package Towards Wellness** is an initiative that aims to provide incarcerated Black mothers with material resources that will assist them in transitioning back into society.

Black Mamas Prosper curates workshops for volunteers to offer their love and time to assemble care packages with essential items such as hygiene products and governmental assistance applications.

I strive for this Social Action Project to implement the stepping stones for society to shift the ways in which it defines justice from a punitive lens to one of **rehabilitation** and **healing**.

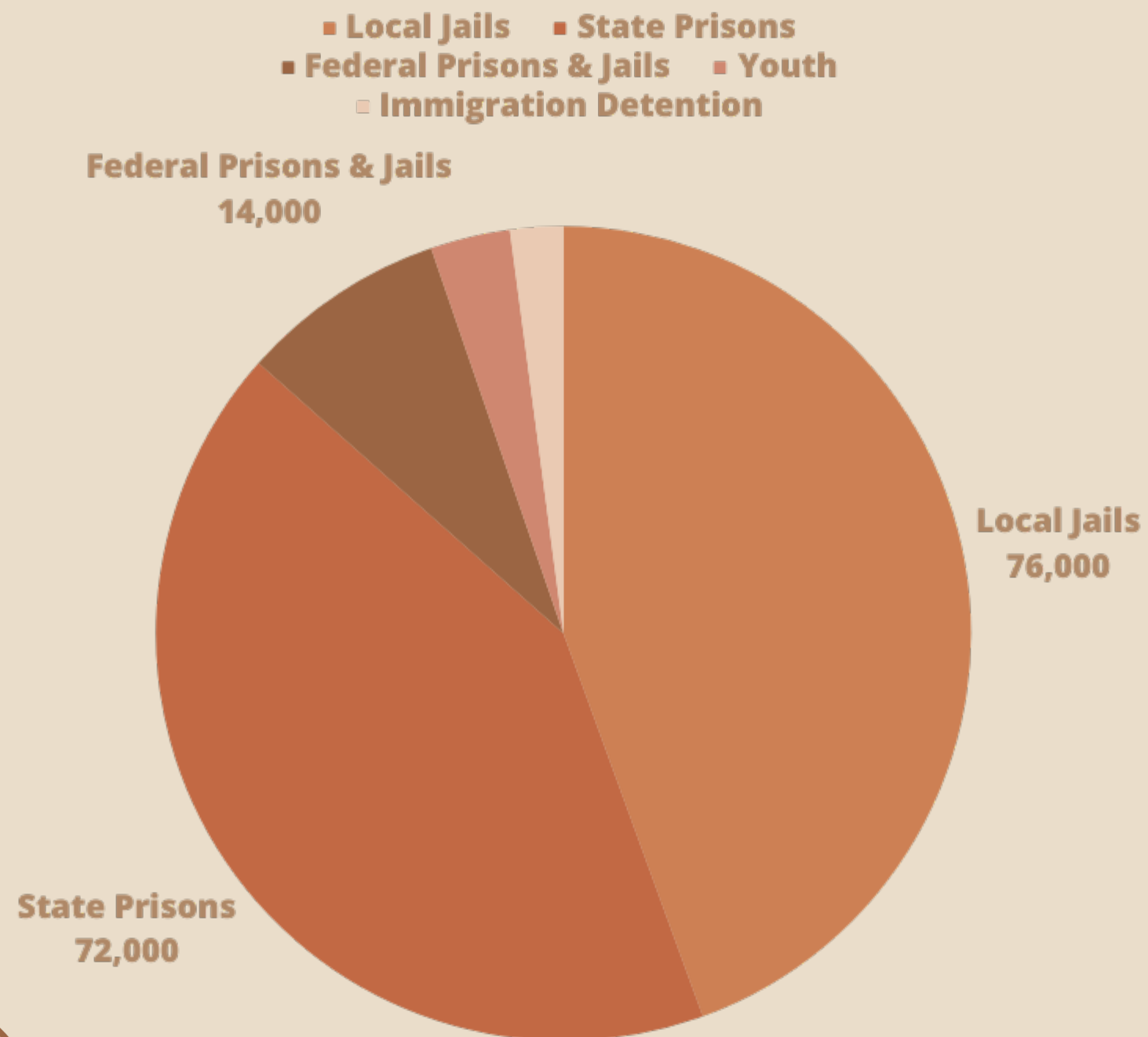


Black mother holding her child in her arms during a photoshoot



# THE PROBLEM

## Incarcerated Women in 2023



Source: Prison Policy Initiative 2023

- **58%** of all women in U.S. prisons are mothers, as are **80%** of women in jails. Most of these women are the primary caretakers of their children (Sawyer and Bertram 2022).
- Over a quarter of women (**26%**) experienced **homelessness in the year before the arrest** which led to their incarceration — a higher rate than among men (**16%**) (Kajstura and Sawyer 2023).
- Women are more likely to be **jobless (53%)** than to be employed **in the month before their arrest** (Kajstura and Sawyer 2023).
- **44%** of incarcerated women are Black, despite making up 15.3% of the U.S. female population (Vera Institute of Justice 2018).
- Black women experienced the most dramatic decline in imprisonment—**70%**—**between 2000 and 2021**. Yet, Black women were imprisoned at **1.6 times the rate of white women** in 2021.

# INTELLECTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

## DECARCERAL MOTHERWORK

“This concept captures how formerly incarcerated Black women labor to care for their children under the confines of state surveillance and bondage.”

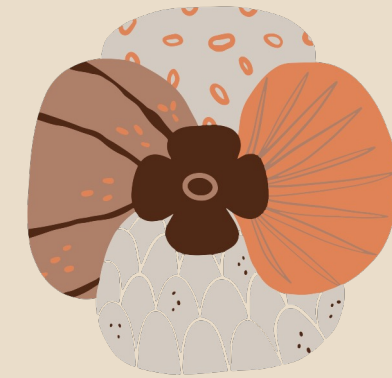
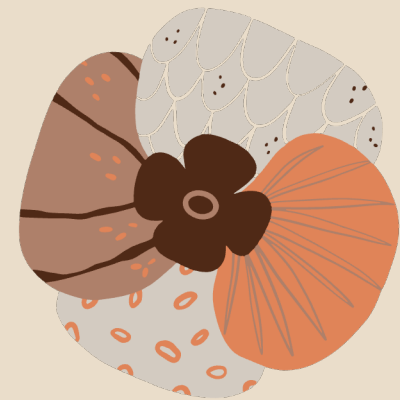
Gurusami, Susila. “Motherwork Under the State: The Maternal Labor of Formerly Incarcerated Black Women.” Oxford Academic, University of California, Riverside , 13 Feb. 2019, [academic.oup.com/socpro/article/66/1/128/4856032?login=true](https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article/66/1/128/4856032?login=true).

## COLLECTIVE MOTHERWORK

## HYPERVIGILANT MOTHERWORK

## CRISIS MOTHERWORK

# PROJECT TIMELINE



## SUMMER 2023: JULY

- Scheduled a meeting with Medinah Muhammad, who is the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.
- Discussed how to scale my project and deciphered the level of impact I wanted to make.

## SEPTEMBER AND EARLY OCTOBER 2023

- Connecting with potential social workers.
- Contacting various companies/brands for possible donations

## OCTOBER AND EARLY NOVEMBER 2023

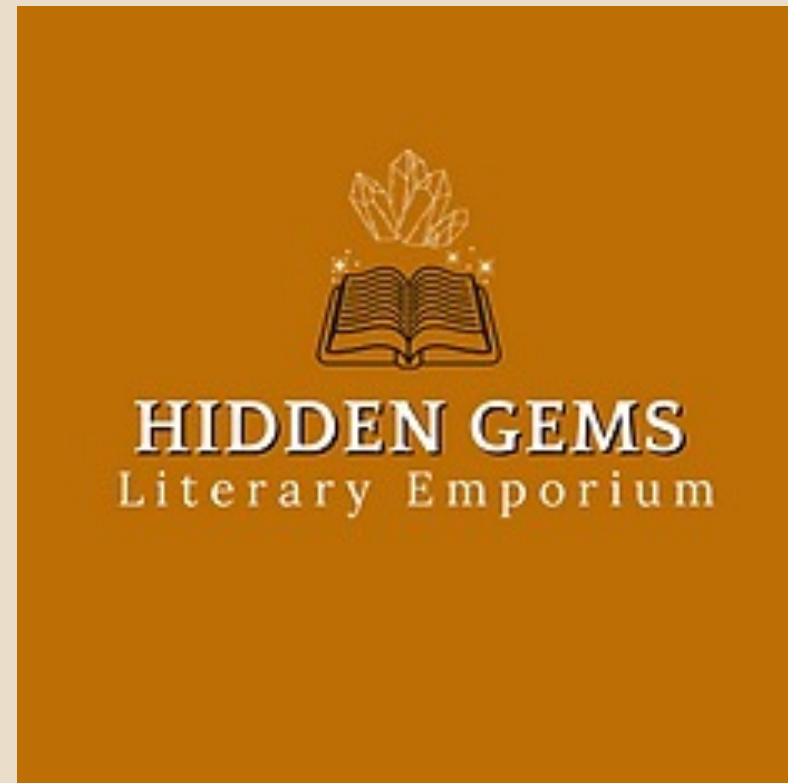
- Meetings with Nicole Williams to finalize items to be placed in packages and details about the workshop.
- Contacting Hidden Gems for book donations

## NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2023

- Promotions of workshop among Black Rutgers community
- Host Workshop
- Currently contacting NJ Correctional Facilities to send out packages



# PARTNERSHIPS



# PROMOTION - FLYERS



**Black Mamas Prosper Worskhop**  
A PACKAGE TOWARDS WELLNESS  
AN IWL SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT BY FATIHA MASUM

COME OFFER YOUR TIME TO ASSEMBLE CARE PACKAGES FOR INCARCERATED BLACK MOTHERS WITH LOVE!

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17 2023  
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
THE PAUL ROBESON CULTURAL CENTER



HOT COCOA AND BAKED GOODS WILL BE SERVED!

REGISTER HERE:



**Black Mamas Prosper Worskhop**  
A PACKAGE TOWARDS WELLNESS  
AN IWL SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT BY FATIHA MASUM

DONATIONS OF MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS, HYGIENE ITEMS, SOCKS, AND BOOKS ARE WELCOME!

DROP-OFF BIN LOCATION: PRCC ENTRANCE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17 2023  
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
THE PAUL ROBESON CULTURAL CENTER

REGISTER HERE:



**Black Mamas Prosper Worskhop**  
A PACKAGE TOWARDS WELLNESS  
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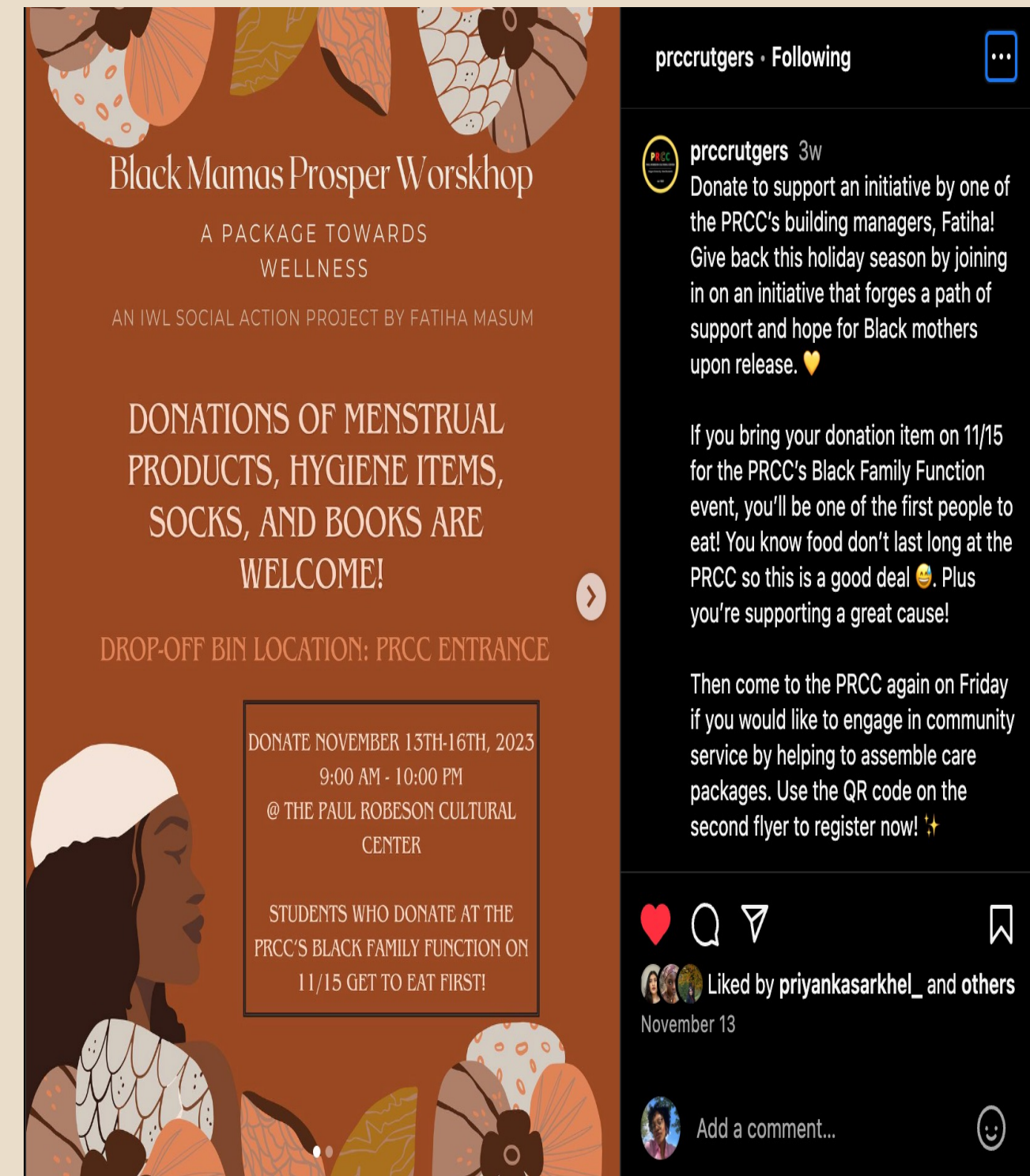
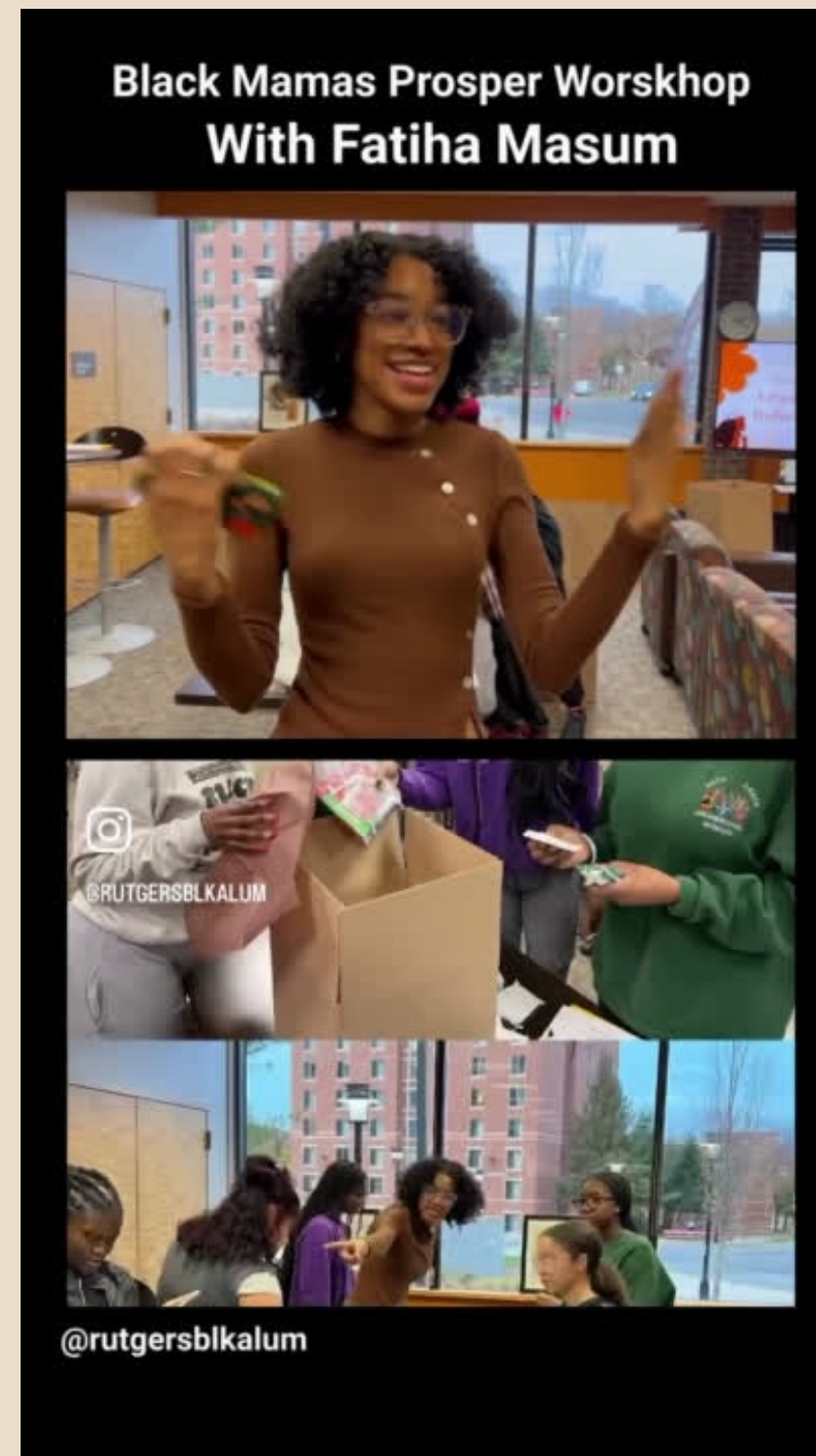
DONATE NOVEMBER 13TH-16TH, 2023  
9:00 AM - 10:00 PM  
@ THE PAUL ROBESON CULTURAL CENTER

STUDENTS WHO DONATE AT THE PRCC'S BLACK FAMILY FUNCTION ON 11/15 GET TO EAT FIRST!





# PROMOTION: INSTAGRAM POSTS





# IMPACT & EVALUATION



- Surpassed the original goal of curating 45 packages! The volunteers assembled **50 packages in total!**
- Outpour of donations from the Black Rutgers student community during the Black Family Function for Thanksgiving.
- **250+ impressions** on Instagram stories, **70+ likes** on PRCC post
- 14 attendees registered on attendance sheet --> exceeded on event day
- **Future:** Making Black Mamas Prosper an annual event for **Mother's Day** and the Holiday Season.



# FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

Having an intersectional and empathetic approach in looking at the humanities of Black mothers

This project centers on the belief that incarcerated Black mothers are deserving of redemption.

Creates a forum to question who we, as a society, believe are worthy of our utmost care.



Mother, Taylor Bates, looking at her daughter with adoration ([Richardson](#))

# LESSONS LEARNED

- Time Management and Pacing of Curation
- Importance of Genuine Connection When Networking
- Maintaining Purpose and Staying Grounded When Facing Rejection/Miscommunication
  - Prioritizing Accessibility





# SPECIAL THANKS



**Nicole Williams**

**Joshanna Holyfield**

**Bryanna Mason**

**Jakora Thompson**

**Dr. Mary Trigg**

**IWL Cohort '24**

**Medinah Muhammad**

**Kia Alexander**

**Kaila Boulware Skyes and Family**

**Dr. Bailey Eaise**



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