

# VOCAL-KY Newsletter



## Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, March 14, 2023 @ 11AM: All of Us or None Kentucky Voting Rights Rally:** All of Us or None Kentucky will be hosting a Voting Rights and Restoration Rally to bring awareness to restoring voting rights to formerly incarcerated and directly impacted people throughout the state. **Where:** The Rotunda, 700 Capital Ave, Frankfort, KY. [RSVP HERE](#)

**Bi-Monthly Membership Meeting @ 4pm - 6pm:** Our general membership meetings are where we develop the knowledge, skills, and relationships required to fight for and win the resources and policies ourselves and our loved ones desperately need. **Where:** Heyburn Building, 332 W Broadway. **When:**

**March 23, 2023 , April 6, 2023 , April 20, 2023**

**Opioid Abatement Commission Business Meetings:** We mobilize leaders to go to Frankfort to hear updates from the commission regarding the application process and disbursements of settlement money, as well as continue to be sure funding is going to harm reduction, housing and care. **Where:** Capital Complex East, Frankfort, KY. **When:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 @ 1PM // Tuesday, April 11, 2023 @ 1PM // Tuesday, April 19, 2023 @ 1:30PM



## Member Spotlight: Stephanie Johnson

Wednesday, March 8 marked National Women's Day, and we want to take space to spotlight one of the leaders of VOCAL-KY.

Stephanie Johnson joined our membership in February 2023 and quickly became a dedicated VOCAL-KY leader. Stephanie has shown up and shown out by joining us for eight visits to Kentucky's Capitol in Frankfort to support our community partners. She shows up to our membership meetings and takes on extra responsibilities. Stephanie has a passion and desire for the work she does with VOCAL-KY. We are truly happy to have such a free spirited person on our team. So here's to Ms. Johnson – keep up the good work, keep showing up and showing out!

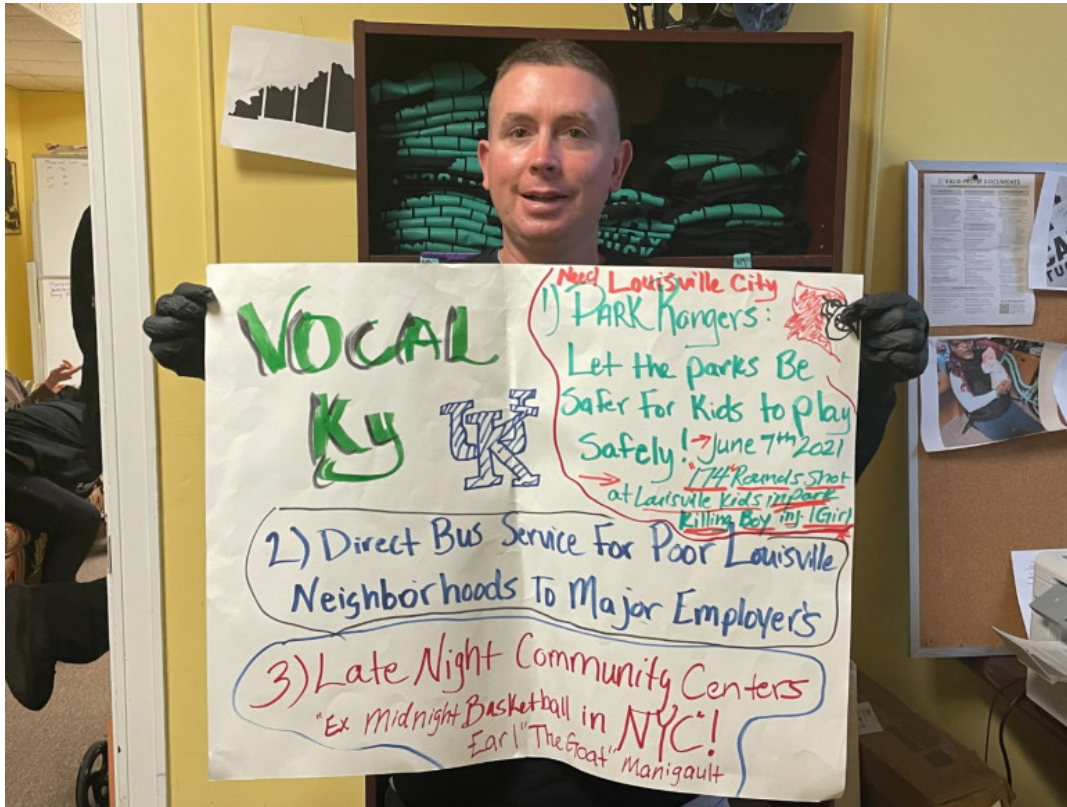
## Month In Review

The first few months 2022 have been busy for VOCAL-KY, as we build power and partnerships with allies across the state. We attended several advocacy days in Frankfort, including actions around [The Crown Act](#), the [Kentucky Day of Empathy](#), and [Kentucky ACLU's day of action](#), among many other mobilizations.

The week of Valentines Day, we joined the National Harm Reduction Coalition in hosting [a harm reduction symposium](#) in Frankfort. VOCAL-KY leaders [spoke on panels and with the press](#) about the need for harm reduction tools, like Narcan and sterile syringes, to keep people safe and alive. The symposium was a wonderful setting for learning and sharing space alongside practitioners, pharmacists, advocates, and services providers.

In addition to direct actions, VOCAL-KY's GROW team has been hitting the streets and building relationships with community members directly-impacted by our issues. Their efforts have turned out new members to our bi-weekly Membership Assemblies, where we discuss how to have one-on-ones, become civically engaged, and analyze how and why we work with the media. We're proud to be building power among Lousivillians and look forward to expanding that work across the entire state of Kentucky.

There's plenty more work to come, so be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to see our ongoing work!



## Member Q&A with Jared "Mike" Randall

**Q: What does VOCAL-KY mean to you?**

A: A way to help me get my voice out there, with the power in numbers, " I can go and speak myself and it's just me but with VOCAL-KY I know friends are BACKING ME."

**Q: What's your best moment so far with VOCAL-KY?**

A: Speaking in front of Metro City Council and having people from VOCAL-KY supporting me, also going to The State Capital in Frankfort, KY and having someone from VOCAL-KY holding a sign that the team had helped me make.

**Q: If VOCAL-KY could help get one big thing passed in the city, what would it be?**

A: Better public transportation with modern bus shelters on both sides of the street at major intersections for direct bus service for poor Louisville neighborhoods to major employers

**Q: What about Statewide?**

A: MIDNIGHT basketball with Tutoring so it gives kids something to do at that hour like Earl "THE GOAT" Manigault had done in NYC.



## What We're Reading

**New York Times:** [In Louisville, Federal Report on Abusive Policing Comes as No Surprise](#)

**Louisville Public Media:** [Fentanyl test strips save lives. Kentucky lawmakers may legalize them.](#)

**New York Times:** [One Year Inside a Radical New Approach to America's Overdose Crisis](#)

**Filter Magazine:** [We Need Harm Reduction Built for and Led by Youth Who Use Drugs](#)

**Courier Journal:** [Louisville police contract negotiations won't be made public. Why some want to change that](#)

## Who We Are

VOCAL-KY is dedicated to ending AIDS, the drug war, mass incarceration and homelessness by building the political power of low-income people directly impacted by the issues. We use community organizing and direct action to win policy change that will concretely improve lives and transform politics.

Led by former Mayoral candidate Shameka Parrish-Wright, VOCAL-KY is the first official state chapter of Voices of Community Activists and Leaders ([VOCAL-NY](#)). Since its founding in 1999, VOCAL-NY has passed dozens of bills, improving and saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers across [the state and](#) transforming New York City and New York State in the process. Through community organizing and building power amongst the most marginalized communities in New York, we made our core issues - ending AIDS, the drug war, mass incarceration and homelessness - core progressive issues in the state.