

PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 23, 2022



## **Improving the Local Criminal Justice System is an Area of Focus at Upcoming TEDxCharleston**

NORTH CHARLESTON, SC – This year’s TEDxCharleston, to be held March 23 at The Charleston Music Hall after a two-year hiatus, will feature two leaders from the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) with unique perspectives on improving our local criminal justice system. Kristy Danford, Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) Director, and Keith Smalls, CJCC Community Representative and Founder/ Executive Director of My Community’s Keeper Mentor Group, have both dedicated their lives to pursuing a more equitable and effective criminal justice system.

Ms. Danford is a data-guided, collaborative reformer with over two decades of experience. As founding Director of the CJCC, she joined Charleston County in 2015 and helps lead the County’s transformative efforts to safely reduce local jail use, face inequities, and engage the community in improving the local criminal justice system. Among other previous roles as a Probation and Parole Agent and Court Programs Manager, Ms. Danford served as a Senior Associate with the Crime and Justice Institute, having worked nationally on legislative reforms and guided improvement efforts in local, state and national justice organizations seeking better outcomes.

Mr. Smalls spent nearly two decades incarcerated in the South Carolina Department of Corrections. Shortly after Mr. Smalls release, his then 17-year old son was shot and killed in North Charleston by two teenage boys. Mr. Smalls joined the CJCC in 2018, first representing formerly incarcerated individuals and more recently survivors of crime. In addition, Mr. Smalls was elected to serve as the first-ever Community Representative Vice-Chair of the CJCC. Mr. Smalls currently works as a Violence Intervention Prevention Client Advocate for the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) where he provides support for gunshot victims and their families.

“Improving our local criminal justice system is paramount to improving the overall well-being and safety of our community. The CJCC’s work has been a great example of how to successfully engage the community and advance intentional, data-guided strategies for improvement. Director Danford and Co-Vice Chair Smalls work tirelessly on these issues and I am delighted their unique perspectives will be shared on the TedX stage,” stated Deputy County Administrator Eric Watson, Charleston County Public Safety Directorate.

"Our event is meant to be a platform for inspirational change-makers who are impacting the Charleston community with their big ideas. Both Kristy and Keith focus on a significant issue both here in the Lowcountry and nationwide, and bring unique perspectives to the challenges and opportunities for criminal justice reform. They ideally suit our objective of offering meaningful dialogues based on ideas worth spreading." said Mike Sottak, organizer of TEDxCharleston 2022.

To learn more about TEDxCharleston, visit <https://tedxcharleston.org/>.

###

### ***About the CJCC***

*The CJCC is a collaboration of elected and senior officials, law enforcement leaders, judicial and court leadership, behavioral health professionals, victim and legal advocates, and various community leaders working in service of the Charleston community. The mission of the CJCC is to assist in making sustainable, data-driven improvements to Charleston County's criminal justice system and thereby improve public safety and community well-being. The CJCC is currently jointly funded by Charleston County and a Safety + Justice Challenge grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For more information, visit [www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org).*

### **MEDIA CONTACT FOR CHARLESTON COUNTY CJCC:**

Adina Baer Gross, Communications & Community Outreach  
843-259-9820; [abgross@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:abgross@charlestoncounty.org)