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Three Women Join Forces To Disrupt The School To Prison Pipeline

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Pictured above (L-R) are Theresa Hardy of Inspirational Workshops, Kela Hall of the KD Hall Foundation and Monika Mathews of the Life Enrichment Group Young Queens' Program at the Echo Glen Juvenile Center last Friday.

Three Black women, who are all founders of non-profits operating in King County, came together with one mission in mind — to disrupt the school to prison pipeline for girls of color last Friday at Echo Glen Juvenile Center.

KD Hall Foundation, Life Enrichment Group and Inspirational Workshops all serve youth between the age 12-25. The KD Hall Foundation was established in 2015 and has worked with college students and women in areas of leadership, economic development, experiential learning and providing them an opportunity to be paid and receive college credits. Life Enrichment Group young queens' program has been running for over 16 years in King County working with youth; with a focus on girls. Inspirational Workshops, established in 2017,

works with youth on equipping them with the tools to break down biases and barriers between students and teachers, and to expand trauma-informed and restorative practices in schools.

My Job, a local non-profit that helps prepare incarcerated youth for meaningful careers, held an intimate conversation at Echo Glen last Friday to kick off Women's history month which featured Theresa Hardy of Inspirational Workshops, Kela Hall of the KD Hall Foundation and Monika Mathews of the Life Enrichment Group Young Queens' Program. The women shared their personal stories with the school to prison pipeline and how they used their past experiences to propel them to where they are today; advocating for youth, women and people of color.

Mathews says that the opportunity to work with young women at Echo Glen was something she's been working towards for a while.

"Echo Glen Has been on my radar and on my strategic plan at Life Enrichment Group for a little over 5 years," said Mathews. "It is surreal to see it come to pass."

While each woman has their own organization that focuses on youth, the trio knew that it was important for them to come together and share their common struggles to overcome adversity, and their stories really seemed to strike a cord with the young women in attendance.

"To be able to set our ego's aside to come together for a better future for girls who may feel hopeless was everything to me and literally brought me to uncontrollable tears and left me speechless," says Hall.

Hardy, who was inspired by the heart-felt moment, agrees.

"The program was a transformative event for the young people and for me," says Hardy. "The event contributed greatly to positively changing life trajectories! My heart is full!"

The women say this was just the beginning as they will continue building relationship and working with Echo Glen.

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