



IMPACT
AWARD FOR
HOUSING

JOANNE PAGE & STANLEY RICHARDS

FORMER AND CURRENT PRESIDENT/CEO,
FORTUNE SOCIETY

In the 1990s, it was common for the Department of Corrections to “release” incarcerated people at Queens Plaza in the early hours of the morning with little more than a two-ride MetroCard. Most did not have money, a place to sleep, or a plan, and Queens Plaza was a dangerous and drug-ridden place. **JoAnne Page**, who had become CEO of The Fortune Society in 1989, and **Stanley Richards**, who had begun working for the organization in 1991, would walk around the desolate plaza at night waiting to meet the latest group of releasees. They knew they could make a difference if there were a drop-in center to receive people newly released and connect them with services. But prospective funders required them to have a physical service site, and Fortune’s only office was in Manhattan. So Joanne and Stanley struck a deal with the owner of a donut shop at Queens Plaza to lease a table and chairs!

For over five decades, The Fortune Society has stood as a beacon of hope, compassion, and transformation for justice-involved people, providing counseling, job training, and other services, all driven by an unshakable belief in the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. As the past and present leaders of this remarkable organization, JoAnne and Stanley have been not only resourceful problem-solvers but also architects of systemic change. One key innovation has been the expansion of The Fortune Society’s mission to include the creation of housing for their clients—because housing insecurity exacerbates the cycle of recidivism, and stable housing is the bedrock upon which individuals can lay the foundation for their futures.

Through decades of professional partnership and friendship, JoAnne and Stanley have built and stewarded an organization that has improved the lives of thousands, providing justice-involved people homes from which to reestablish their lives and livelihoods, compassionate support, and, with the passage of New York City’s Fair Chance for Housing Act, protection against housing discrimination.



During JoAnne's 34 years as Chief Executive Officer at The Fortune Society, she grew the organization from 20 staff members to more than 500 as she expanded Fortune's programming and reach. Her drive to fight against oppressive systems developed early in life. She had a formative experience volunteering in a prison at age 18, noticing similarities between her

father's experiences as a Holocaust survivor and prisoners' struggles with the justice system. It became clear to her that serving the formerly incarcerated was her calling.

While studying at Yale Law School, JoAnne interned at The Fortune Society, where she fell in love with the organization's values and staff. Upon graduating, she joined the Legal Aid Society to do criminal defense work. After three years of seeing clients cycle back through the criminal justice system, JoAnne transitioned to a new position at the Court Employment Project (now CASES), where she developed New York City's first felony alternative-to-incarceration program.

JoAnne returned to The Fortune Society as its CEO in 1989, spurring three decades of transformational growth for the organization. Early

successes included launching Fortune's own Alternative-to-Incarceration program and expanding its substance use treatment program.

“JOANNE IS A GIFT TO THE WORLD. SHE HAS A HEART TO SERVE OTHERS AND IS DRIVEN BY HOPE, LOVE, COMPASSION, AND THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY.”

—STANLEY RICHARDS

By the late 1990s, the creation of housing for their clients became a priority, and through tenacity, resourcefulness, and partnership, JoAnne and her team were able to secure the funding needed to support their first housing venture. In 2002, Fortune Academy, better known as “The Castle,” opened in West Harlem, providing transitional housing and services to Fortune's clients. The project has not only helped countless formerly incarcerated individuals to transition back into society, but also become an integral part of the West Harlem community, hosting polling stations and school supply giveaways for its neighbors. Building on the success of The Castle, the Fortune Society has significantly expanded its portfolio of housing and service centers, opening Castle Gardens, Freedom House, the Mandela Community, and various scatter-site locations.

Stanley became CEO of The Fortune Society in 2024, building on a long and distinguished career that has not only improved the lives of the formerly incarcerated but also illustrated the power of the organization's commitment to the realization of human potential.



Growing up in the Bronx, Stanley endured a difficult childhood. After his mother died at an early age, he spent more time on the streets and fell into gang involvement, drugs, and truancy. He went through a cycle of arrest, jail time, release, and re-arrest—an experience familiar to many justice-involved people. But obtaining his GED and associate degree from prison allowed him to envision a different future for himself. Stanley went on to serve as the director of his prison's pre-release program prior to his own release in 1991, demonstrating an early commitment to helping incarcerated people.

Upon his release, Stanley found that the work experience he gained while in prison was not properly valued by much of society. There was one organization, however, that did appreciate his meaningful work:

the Fortune Society, then led by JoAnne. He became one of her first hires, as a counselor. Stanley's passion for the work, his vision, and his experience breaking his own cycle of incarceration made him a remarkable role model for those around him.

“STANLEY IS A GIFTED LEADER, WITH A VAST DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND A LIFE STORY THAT GIVES HOPE TO PEOPLE STRUGGLING AFTER INCARCERATION.”

—JOANNE PAGE

After joining The Fortune Society in 1991, Stanley went on to work his way through the organization's many areas of operation, to study nonprofit management at Columbia University and complete a Robert Wood Johnson fellowship, on his way to assuming the role of CEO in 2024. Stanley has also held positions at the Hunter College Center on AIDS, Drugs and Community Health and at New York City's Department of Correction, where he made history by becoming the first formerly incarcerated man to serve as First Deputy Commissioner. In 2014, he was recognized by the Obama administration as a Champion of Change for his commitment to helping individuals impacted by the justice system.



In partnership with JoAnne, Stanley has helped steer and manage Fortune's growth, build and strengthen its culture of inclusion and valuing others, and promote lifetime aftercare and low-threshold-access services. Today, The Fortune Society continues to carry forward its mission of providing housing together with robust social services for formerly incarcerated people. Just Home, a proposed supportive housing development on the Jacobi Hospital campus in the Bronx, is specially oriented to serve people with complex medical needs, and Castle III supportive and affordable housing in East Harlem, projected to open in 2026, and Castle IV supportive and affordable housing on the Upper West Side are both modeled after Fortune's LEED Gold Castle Gardens building, which opened in 2010.

We are delighted to honor JoAnne and Stanley with CHPC's Impact Award for Housing in recognition of their unique partnership and the positive impact it continues to make in the lives of so many New Yorkers.