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**LINC, Inc. Celebrates 20th Anniversary Milestones Dinner with Keynote Speaker Amanda Knox, M.E. Roberts Program Graduates, and LINC Society Awards**

*Amanda Knox, exoneree, journalist, and author, will keynote the LINC, Inc. 20th anniversary celebration at the 6th annual Milestones Dinner, on February 3, 2020, celebrating M.E.Roberts Transitional Living Campus program graduates and recognizing inductees to the LINC Society.*

[Wilmington, North Carolina, January 7 2020] - Kim Cook, UNCW professor of Sociology and Criminology, met Amanda Knox at an Innocence Projects annual conference. They exchanged books - Knox’s **Waiting to Be Heard**, and Cook’s **Life after Death Row** - talked about their mutual passion for criminal justice system reform, and formed a friendship.

Cook, LINC, Inc. board chair, knew Knox would be a compelling speaker for LINC’s annual Milestones dinner. “Amanda makes it really clear that everybody deserves compassion, and that we, as a society, need to do a better job of supporting people as they overcome traumas, especially the trauma of incarceration,” says Cook. “I am excited she agreed to join us; a big celebration like LINC’s 20th anniversary merits a speaker with a big message.”

Between 2007 and 2015, Knox spent four years in an Italian prison and eight years on trial for a murder of which she was later exonerated. She now works to inspire people toward empathy and perspective instead of judgement. Knox’s work shares synergies with LINC, Inc's mission: rehabilitation instead of incarceration, restorative justice, and fighting misogynistic stereotypes in criminal justice, racial inequity in sentencing, interrogation reform, public shaming, public vilification, and media demonization of justice-involved individuals.

The 6th Annual Milestones Dinner will include induction of new LINC Society members LeeAnne Quattrocci PA, Cape Fear Memorial Foundation, Gifted Hands Services, and Autism Support and Programs. Graduates from the M.E. Roberts Transitional Living Campus will also be recognized.

“Amanda’s message of providing compassionate services and support aligns with LINC’s mission to provide a safety net for men and women returning to society after being in prison,” says Frankie Roberts, LINC, Inc. executive director. “For twenty years, we have been committed to turning setbacks into comebacks, and this year’s Milestones Dinner will celebrate everyone who contributes to our success in destigmatizing formerly incarcerated individuals.”

The event will be held Monday, February 3, 2020, at Hotel Ballast, 301 South Water Street, Wilmington, NC, with a 6pm reception and 7pm dinner. Tickets, sponsorship information, and reservations can be made at the [event website](https://lincnc.org/milestones) (<https://lincnc.org/milestones>).

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LINC, Inc. provides transitional living and case management services to meet the immediate needs of men and women returning from prison, assisting them in becoming productive members of the community. LINC, Inc. operates the [Marvin E. Roberts Transitional Living Campus](https://www.lincnc.org/residential-re-entry-program) which offers shelter, food, and clothing in a therapeutic environment for up to 25 men and 20 women, 25 and older, who have been recently released from State and/or Federal prisons or local jails. LINC, Inc., through its [L.I.T.E. Manhood](https://sites.google.com/lincnc.org/lite) program, works to educate and motivate youth to make positive life choices with culturally specific youth development services for African American young men ages 16-24. LINC, Inc., founded in June 2000 by Executive Director Frankie Roberts and co-founder Tracey Ray, is a Wilmington, North Carolina 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, a member of the New Hanover County Local Reentry Council, and the first North Carolina chapter of the statewide Second Chance Alliance.