

## ***Chasing Gideon* Author Event Toolkit**

The enclosed toolkit contains everything you need to organize and successfully run an event with Karen Houppert, author of *Chasing Gideon*, a book that illustrates the scope and seriousness of the indigent defense crisis nationally, and makes the case that defending Gideon is essential and a true test of our nation's commitment to "liberty and justice for all."

Hosting this event will help build awareness among target audiences in your community about this critical issue and what we can do together to rebuild the system so that there is justice for all.

The toolkit includes:

- A [template event invitation](#) to circulate to your network;
- [A list of questions](#) the moderator can ask the author during the Q&A to spark discussion;
- A [sign-up sheet](#) to collect contact info from event attendees.

[LOGO]

## ***Chasing Gideon: The Elusive Quest for Poor People's Justice***

Please join **ORGANIZAION** on **DATE** for a conversation with author Karen Houppert as she discusses her new book, *Chasing Gideon: The Elusive Quest for Poor People's Justice*. On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark *Gideon v. Wainwright* Supreme Court case, which ensured that everyone accused of a crime gets a lawyer and a fair trial, Houppert will reflect on the progress that's been made in the public defense system and the very real problems that we still need to address.

Unfortunately, the promise of *Gideon* has gone unfulfilled, with underfunded public defenders who carry overwhelming caseloads and in turn, defendants who don't receive quality representation. The book makes the case that defending *Gideon* is essential and a true test of our nation's commitment to "liberty and justice for all."

***Please RSVP by emailing **NAME** at **EMAIL**.***

**When:** **MONTH DAY, 2013 | XX:XX am/pm – XX:XX am/pm**

**Where:** **ADDRESS**

**Who:** **Karen Houppert** was a contributing writer at the *Washington Post Magazine* for many years. Her work has appeared in *The Nation*, *Newsday*, the *New York Times*, *Mother Jones*, the *Village Voice*, *Salon*, and many other publications. She is the author of two other books: *Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—for Better or Worse* and *The Curse: Confronting the Last Taboo, Menstruation*. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland, where she teaches in the MA in Writing Program at Johns Hopkins University and is on the journalism faculty of Morgan State University. Her book on indigent defense will be published by the New Press in March 2013 to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*.

**NAME** (Moderator) **BIO**.

***~ Refreshments will be served ~***

## Questions for Q&A

Whoever hosts the author event should moderate a Q&A with the audience. To spark some discussion, consider kicking things off or interjecting with one or more of the following questions:

1. Why did you decide to write this book? Was this an issue you've always been passionate about?
2. What fact or story surprised you most as you were conducting research for this book?
3. Do you think people accused of misdemeanors (less serious crimes where the punishment is less than one year in jail) should be entitled to free lawyers if they can't afford them?
4. Public defenders understand that many of their clients are falling through the cracks every day. They can't change the system overnight. That has to be discouraging. How do you keep them from quitting?
5. What do you see as the most important reform that should be made at the state or federal level to improve the quality of our public defense system?
6. How is it that 50 years after Gideon we are still so far from fulfilling its promise and what are the greatest challenges we face in getting there?
7. Who are the key decision makers that can affect change and what can be done to incentivize them to make Gideon's promise a reality?
8. What can people like those of us gathered in this room do to help?

