



# HEAR FROM HER Lori Mellinger

**System Impacted Women Speak Series  
Brought to you by the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition**

From my own experience, I have to say the greatest barrier to reentry for women is a lack of good, safe, loving and kind places to parole out to. I looked for more than a year. My family looked as well. I happened upon where I am, in retrospect, through a divine appointment. Any and all of the obstacles we face are surmountable when we have a safe community surrounding us.

Do I feel that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice prepared me for life post-release? No, no, and no.

What am I up to these days? Being an Americorps VISTA for the United Way of Abilene, being a Big Sister at New Beginnings Baptist Church, being a sometime volunteer for FaithWorks, and being grateful that I'm not where I used to be.

The most challenging thing upon reentry was getting everything I needed to start my new life: documents, an ID, a Social Security card, clothes, transportation to and from appointments, etc. Once I got through those things, I felt like I was on better footing to tackle the rest of my issues.

## Get to know Lori!

What's your favorite book?

What's your passion?

What are you looking forward to the most?

**"Bird by Bird" by Anne Lamott.**

**Christ and women's reentry.**

**Everything.**

**For more information about women in Texas' criminal justice system, visit [TexasCJC.org/Womens-Justice](http://TexasCJC.org/Womens-Justice)**