

Last Prisoner Project Announces Stephanie Shepard as Acting Executive Director

Last Prisoner Project (LPP) announced that Stephanie Shepard has been named its Acting Executive Director.

WASHINGTON, D.C., DC, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Last Prisoner Project](#) (LPP), a nonprofit organization dedicated to freeing those incarcerated for cannabis offenses, today announced that Stephanie Shepard has been named its Acting Executive Director. Shepard, who has served as Director of Advocacy and a member of LPP's leadership team, succeeds Executive Director Sarah Gersten, who will continue to serve on the organization's Board of Directors.



Stephanie Shepard, Acting Executive Director, Last Prisoner Project

Shepard brings both professional expertise and deeply personal experience to her new role. In 2010, she was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for a first-time, nonviolent cannabis offense. Since her release, she has become a leading voice for justice reform, using her own story to shed light on the enduring harm caused by cannabis criminalization and to advocate for those still behind bars.

“

I know what it means to lose years of your life behind bars for a plant that is now legal. That experience drives me every day to fight for the people still incarcerated.”

Stephanie Shepard

“I know what it means to lose years of your life behind bars for a plant that is now legal,” said Stephanie Shepard. “That experience drives me every day to fight for the people still incarcerated. I also know what it means to come home and try to rebuild everything from scratch. Freedom is just the

beginning — real justice means clemency, expungement, and opportunity. I am humbled to lead LPP's extraordinary team and carry forward Sarah's vision. We will not rest until every last cannabis prisoner is free.”

“It has been the privilege of my career to help build Last Prisoner Project into a leading force for

cannabis justice,” said Sarah Gersten. “I’m confident that with Stephanie Shepard stepping in as Acting Executive Director, the organization will continue to grow and deepen its impact. I look forward to supporting the organization’s continued progress as a member of the Board of Directors and to advancing justice for those whose lives have been impacted by the failed war on drugs.”

Since its founding, LPP has been at the forefront of the movement to release individuals imprisoned for cannabis-related convictions, provide reentry support, and advocate for policy changes. Under Gersten’s leadership and through Shepard’s advocacy work with the organization, LPP has grown into the preeminent voice for cannabis justice, achieving major victories, including:

Securing the release of dozens of individuals serving extreme sentences for cannabis-related convictions.

Launching the Cannabis Clemency Initiative, which has resulted in hundreds of petitions for clemency filed across the country.

Leading advocacy campaigns that have helped advance cannabis clemency and expungement at the federal and state levels, with over 200,000 records cleared since 2021.

Building a national network of reentry support, connecting released individuals with resources to find housing, employment, and community.

Educating lawmakers and the public about the ongoing human cost of cannabis criminalization through high-profile media campaigns.

“We are deeply grateful to Sarah for her vision and dedication in building Last Prisoner Project into a leading voice for justice,” added Tahira Rehmatullah, fellow Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of Last Prisoner Project. “As Stephanie steps in as Acting Executive Director, we’re confident her leadership and lived experience will continue to strengthen and expand that legacy.”

“Stephanie brings both credibility and compassion to the role of Acting Executive Director – qualities that are essential to advancing Last Prisoner Project’s mission,” said Dean Raise, Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of Last Prisoner Project. “I look forward to working alongside her as we continue the fight for justice for those still incarcerated.”

“We are entering a crucial moment in the fight for cannabis justice,” Stephanie Shepard added. “As cannabis becomes legal across the country, we can’t leave behind the people still paying the price. Last Prisoner Project will continue to fight for justice, dignity, and the right to start again.”

###

About Last Prisoner Project:

Last Prisoner Project (LPP) is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to reforming our criminal justice system through progressive drug policy. Through legal intervention, constituent support, advocacy campaigns, and policy change, we aim to release every last drug war prisoner and to repair the harms of this discriminatory and counterproductive crusade.

Donations to the Last Prisoner Project can be made [here](#).

Will Mesinger

West End Strategy Team

+1 518-338-7119

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/860104496>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.