



# Report

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## Upcoming events

**Jan. 8, Fairhope** – Baldwin County Arise meeting, Fairhope Friends Meeting House, 6 p.m.

**Jan. 9, Montgomery** – Alabama Legislature’s 2018 regular session begins, noon.

**Jan. 9, Mobile** – Mobile County Arise meeting, Dauphin Way United Methodist Church, 6 p.m.

**Jan. 10, Anniston** – Arise issue preview and presentation on criminal justice debt reform, Community Enabler Chapel, noon.

## The staff corner



*By Chris Sanders, communications director*

National media have spent the last few weeks discovering what we’ve known for a long time: Alabama is full of caring people working to make our state better. It’s full of people like you – and we’re honored that so many of you stand with us as Arise members.

Your vision is our vision. We believe in an Alabama where all officials are responsive and inclusive, where all people respect the common good and our shared humanity, where everyone has a chance to get ahead no matter where they started.

Alabama’s future isn’t up to pundits or politicians. It’s up to Alabamians. It’s up to *us*, together. Let’s keep working to leave our state a better place than we found it.

## A few words from Kimble

# Arise’s future is in great hands

*By Kimble Forrister, executive director*



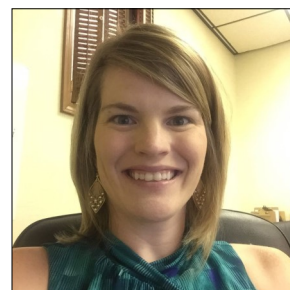
**I want you to be among the first to know: I plan to retire in 2018.** I wanted you to know before you saw the job announcement in January. If all goes well, a new director will take over in July.

speaking up for change across Alabama – truly own this organization. Our staff has a deep bench of experience, not to mention a couple of promising new hires. (*See below.*) Our board has been preparing itself to step up to the challenge of choosing the new director, again with Peggy’s help.

**We’ve been planning this transition for a couple of years.** In early 2016, Peggy Sand of the search firm Raffa guided the board and staff through an assessment of what should be in place by 2018 to ensure a smooth transition. I think we’re in a good place. First, we feel good that all of you – the 1,350 individual donors, the 150 member groups, the thousands of activists

**I believe we’re institutionally strong.** People rely on Arise to provide leadership on health care policy. They respect our take on tax and budget issues. Hundreds of people start their day with our Daily News Digest. Arise folks are woven into the web of policy change groups at state, *[Turn to Page 2]*

## Say hello to Debbie and Dev!



*Debbie Smith  
North Alabama organizer*

while Dev will join Jim Carnes and Carol Gundlach on our policy staff. Both Debbie and Dev will begin working with Arise in January.

**Debbie Smith** will be a north Alabama organizer for Arise, reaching out to

**We’re excited to welcome Debbie Smith and Dev Wakeley to the Arise staff!** Debbie will join Presdelane Harris and Stan Johnson on our organizing team,

individuals and member groups in the Huntsville, Gadsden and Talladega areas, as well as many other parts of northeast and north-central Alabama. Debbie is from Meridian, Miss., and has B.A. and M.S. degrees in speech communication from the University of Southern Mississippi. Before joining Arise, Debbie worked at the Mississippi Health Advocacy Program for six years to improve access to health



*Dev Wakeley  
Policy analyst*

*[Turn to Page 2]*

## A note from our board



By *Cindy Lowry*,  
President of the *Arise*  
Board of Directors

The Arise Board of Directors is grateful to all of you for your

commitment to addressing systemic poverty in Alabama and for your support of Arise Citizens' Policy Project and Alabama Arise in that effort. We want you to know that we acknowledge the awesome responsibility we are undertaking, and we are committed to finding the right person to lead this organization into the future.

As Kimble noted (*see column on Page 1*), we have been preparing for this and have worked with all of the dedicated staff to position the organization as strongly as possible for this important transition. Our consultant, Peggy Sand from Raffa Consulting Professionals, an executive search firm, is experienced in these types of transitions, and she has been working with us for two years to help ensure success.

In addition to our board, the search team is made up of existing and former board members to include institutional knowledge in the process. If you have any questions about our process or know someone who might be interested in applying, please feel free to contact me at [clowry@alabamarivers.org](mailto:clowry@alabamarivers.org) or our consultant, Peggy Sand, at [psand@raffa.com](mailto:psand@raffa.com).

We ask for your continued support and participation as we go through this process. The important work for the organization will not stop, and we need you with us as we continue to make Alabama a better place for all.

*Cindy Lowry is president of the Board of Directors of both Arise Citizens' Policy Project and Alabama Arise. She is also executive director of the Alabama Rivers Alliance in Birmingham.*

## Welcome, new staff!

[Continued from Page 1]

coverage for low-income and underserved Mississippians. Debbie lives in Fort Payne, and she enjoys spending time with her family and exploring the Lookout Mountain and Tennessee Valley areas.

**Dev Wakeley** will be a policy analyst for Arise, covering a range of issues including consumer lending, public transportation and death penalty reform. A Gardendale native, Dev was

born and raised in Alabama and earned his B.A. in philosophy from Franklin & Marshall College. He earned his J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law in 2017 and was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in October. During law school, he served on the Public Interest Student Board executive committee and the *Alabama Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Law Review*. While at UA Law, he worked on the Clemency Project for the Federal Defenders Program for the Middle District of Alabama and the Elder Law Clinic through the university.

## Kimble column

[Continued from Page 1]

local and national levels. We've helped define the issues and shape narratives on welfare reform, tax reform and health care. Our organizers are deeply connected to many local congregations and organizations. Our members don't just give money. You show up for Legislative Day and Annual Meeting and hundreds of local meetings in communities across the state.

**Our current strength reminds me of my lonely office back in 1993**, when the Ford Foundation got its first impression of Alabama Arise. Former Ford program officer Michael Lipsky said that as they were choosing 12 states to form a tax and budget network, they were a little concerned as to whether we had the capacity to do the work. After all, Michael said, when they called the offices in Maine and Alabama, the directors answered the phone for ourselves! (We were still a one-person office. Fortunately, they chose us as one of the 12 anyway.) A couple of years later, Michael was down here for a site visit when we held a press conference that was covered by nearly a dozen print and broadcast reporters. Michael marveled, "Can you imagine the group in New York getting this kind of coverage?"

**Well, reporters don't cover the State House in such numbers anymore**, but the number of Arise members

supporting our work has surged. Remember the downsizing we suffered after the 2016 election? We lost \$250,000 in grants and four talented staff, but members like you stepped up to help fill the gap. Y'all doubled your year-end giving. You came out for Legislative Day to push for an end to judicial override, which became the first bill Gov. Kay Ivey signed. You are the loyal base on which our new director will begin to build, like the base I inherited in 1991 when Arise had only 67 member groups and a reputation for "the best non-alcoholic reception in Montgomery."

**But I'm not quite gone yet.** While the search committee does its work, the rest of us face the challenge of a 2018 legislative session. Lawmakers don't really want to face tough decisions like Medicaid funding, prison health care and payday lending reform. Many would rather be raising money and campaigning for June primaries. It's up to us to keep speaking up for what really matters for Alabamians in desperate need of help.

**So rest up over the holidays.** Then let's roll up our sleeves and get busy when our lawmakers return on Jan. 9.

Yours in peace and hope,

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# Thank you for your support!

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*Arise Citizens' Policy Project thanks the following donors for their contributions received between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30, 2017:*

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# Arise keeps breaking records, and it's all thanks to you!



By Brenda Boman,  
development director

**You may have noticed that this month's donor list is unusually long.**

That's a good thing!

Because member giving isn't tied to a specific project or grant, your gifts provide the greatest flexibility, a definite bonus for a small-budget nonprofit.

**We're so grateful to those of you who helped us set a record in November** – both the generous donors who pledged \$50,000 to create a match opportunity and the members who rose to that challenge with donations that topped \$50,000 by the end of the month.

**We haven't reached our December budget goal yet, but I have faith in our members.** I know many of you are thoughtful givers who devote time

during the holidays to share gifts where they can help most. And I know you understand the importance of the research and advocacy that we use to promote long-term solutions to make life better for low-income Alabamians.

**I'm confident Arise will be ready to hit the ground running** with strong member support when the Legislature's 2018 regular session begins Jan. 9. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you!

## Donor list

[Continued from Page 3]

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