



# SAMI

## Students Against Mass Incarceration

Presented by : Alina, Dora, & Zen



# What is SAMI?

- SAMI (Students Against Mass Incarceration) -
  - SAMI is a student organization that aims to bring together students who are passionate about ending mass incarceration and strategize solutions to problems regarding mental health as well.
  - Our focus is advocating for people in poverty, POC, People with addictions and many more.
  - Reached out to organizations such as SURJ (Standing Up for Racial Justice) @ Sacred Heart and De-Bug Silicon Valley.
  - Fought against the new jail since 2021

# SAMI DEMANDS

## DEMANDS:

#1: Reallocate the \$747 million for Santa Clara County's new main jail towards mental health & re-entry services.

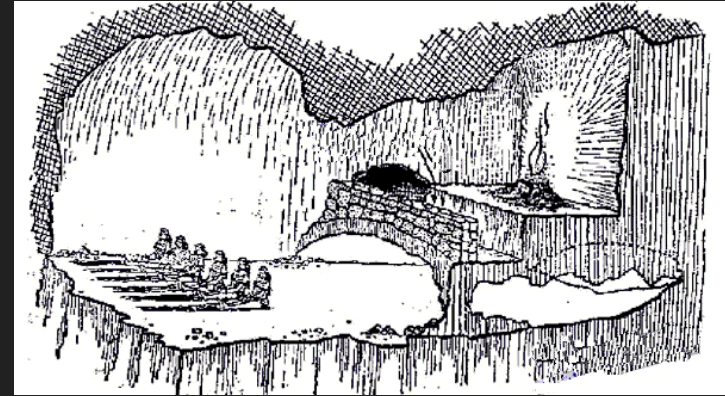
#2: The County creates a 10-digit phone line for TRUST (a non-law enforcement mental health crisis line), which is separate from the county's mental health service 9-8-8 hotline.

**TARGETS:** Decision-maker(s): County Board of Supervisors (focused on Sup. Otto Lee



# Plato- The Allegory of The Cave

- Our goals were well-intentioned, but still came from a place of ignorance since we didn't know the history of our movement just yet. We were still searching for the light in the cave.
  - There is a common misconception that jails solve problems in our society. We learn from our schools and our circles of influence that “bad people” go to jail & that people serving sentences deserve to be treated like second-class citizens.

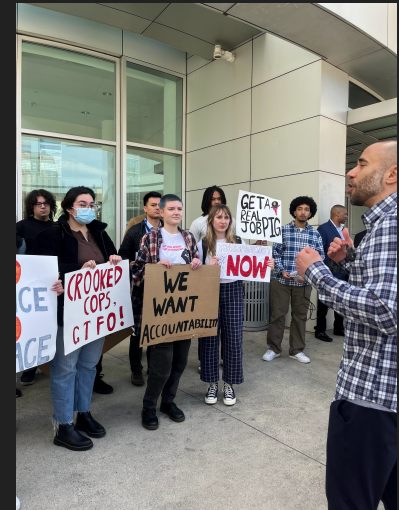


# Plato applied

- Ignorance is bliss, the injustice we don't acknowledge seems to not exist without our day to day lives
- Realization is that jail stripes people of fundamental rights
- Jail is capitalist scheme to marginalize people of color
- Jail enslaves the incarcerated for cheap labor

# What did SAMI do this semester?

- We tabled at least once a week
- Zoom calls with KAT and SAMI board at least once a month
- We had zoom calls with De-Bug and Jen Myrhe from SURJ
- Passed out fliers and hung flyers/class presentations
- Poster making/ poster making SAMI socials
- Press calls as well as press emailing
- Rally!



# America's Prison Systems: Explained



# Rally at City Hall San Jose

- overall experience was a 7/10
- it's very time consuming, especially for those who work
- prepping is definitely not something that can be done by one person (stressful)
- postponing rally - last minute changes
- Interviews were not as nerve racking as I had assumed
- expect the unexpected (constructions noise at city hall)
- getting people to show up is difficult



The day before the rally we found out that our first demand was met and we had to change our demands a bit as well as our speeches

# Media and overall feedback from after the rally

May 9, 2023

## Students oppose fund for jail



by [Irene Adeline Milanez](#)



Dora Gurrola, a Students against Mass Incarceration team member and rally speaker, presents SAMI's demand for fund reallocation from Santa Clara County's Board in front of City Hall on Thursday.

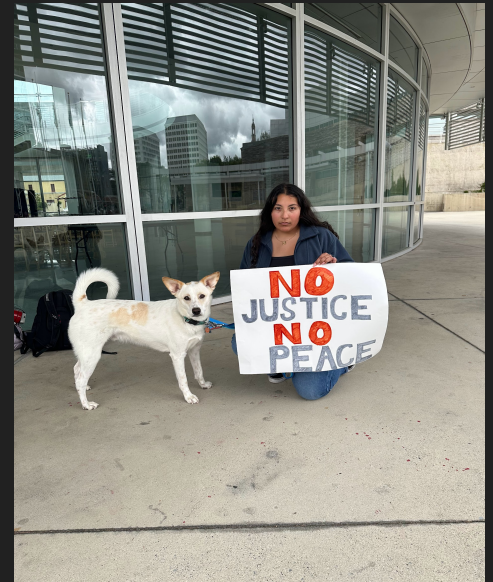
Students Against Mass Incarceration (SAMI) rallied in front of San Jose City Hall on Thursday morning to urge city council members to redistribute the \$747 million new jail budget towards mental health services.

SAMI is a student-run activist organization opposing the criminal legal system and advocating for individuals with mental health disorders, people in poverty and people of color who are disproportionately impacted by the legal system.

The county decided against proceeding with the new jail, according to the [County of Santa Clara Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Recommended Budget](#).

Sociology senior Kat Adamson, a lead organizer of SAMI, said people with mental health issues often don't receive fair treatment in jail as they are often harassed by guards, correctional officers or other inmates and are overall deprived of proper support.

- majority positive feedback, Spartan daily featured our rally as well as Telemundo



# **Santa Clara County Supervisor Ellenberg on SAMI's Rally & Demands**

“I strongly support the students’ mission to end mass incarceration. That practice has not yielded a safer community and has exacerbated trauma and likely contributed considerably to recidivism... While there have been public estimates of the likely cost of a new jail facility, there are no actual funds waiting to be allocated to a jail versus any other use...”-

Susan Ellenberg

May 4, 2023

# How we got out of the cave

- Reading the binders, doing research, and speaking with organizers well-versed in this topic exposed us to the light.
  - All jails do is lock people away and fail to address the root of the issue. Given our society's history of criminalizing mental health issues, we agreed with Jen Myhre in that the first step in solving this social problem is to reallocate the money dedicated to a new jail and transfer it into mental health services and re-entry services.



# Our experience this semester

- Our #1 demand being met was so big for us!
- Frustrating and overwhelming at times due to work overload
- Future SAMI plans ?
- Getting all the classwork done was extremely stressful
- Learned a lot, had new experiences

Discussion question: How would you end mass incarceration?



Thank You

OUR LIVES  
BEGIN TO END  
THE DAY WE  
BECOME  
SILENT ABOUT  
THINGS THAT  
MATTER

