



FEBRUARY UPDATE FOR RETURNING HOPE TO RETURNING CITIZENS PROGRAM

Wow, wow, wow!

Final totals are now in for helping returning citizens into their own housing during January and providing furniture to them (along with move in costs and home furnishings) and what a record setting month it was!

A whopping 26 furniture grants in January, for a grand total cost of \$19,595.00, were provided for people getting into their own residence.

That's a record and we couldn't be happier as it means independence for all those people and they're doing great on their path of success with a steady income etc.

We're very proud of all 26 of them as listed below in the January invoice from Al's Furniture:

SERVICE • REPAIR • PARTS
ALL MAKES • ALL MODELS
AL'S
FURNITURE & APPLIANCES LLC
 Refrigerators - Stoves - Washers - Dryers - Mattresses
 We Sell & Install New Hot Water Tanks
 Non-Profit Agency Welcome

Serving this Community Since 1980

Phone (313) 526-2400 • Fax (313) 526-8660

QUAN	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE
	HARRIS CORDARO	460-
	GREG THOMPSON	1095-
	GUY FERGUSON	585-
	ROBERT SMITH	1095-
	MONIE ARNOLD	715-
	SHANICE HARDY	1095-
	BARBARA SWICHAUD	1125-
	SHERRITA COOPER	1055-
	JOSEPH PRICE	465-
	ROCKY WADIE	585-
	RAUL GUERRERO	760-
	ELIJAH MIDGORT	555-
	TAMARES WESLEY	290-
	ALEN SNELL	225-
	SASHANTI MORRISON	685-
	SHARIKA MAY	1008-

SERVICE • REPAIR • PARTS
ALL MAKES • ALL MODELS
AL'S
FURNITURE & APPLIANCES LLC
 Refrigerators - Stoves - Washers - Dryers - Mattresses
 We Sell & Install New Hot Water Tanks
 Non-Profit Agency Welcome

Serving this Community Since 1980

Phone (313) 526-2400 • Fax (313) 526-8660

DOB
 JAN
 2002
 \$19595
 TOTAL

QUAN	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE
	LOITA CHAPMAN	1115-
	JASON JENKINS	370 ⁰⁰
	ANTHONY JOHNSON	560-
	DAVIDA CHALOFFERD	1095-
	JAMONE ARMSTRONG	635-
	MARQUAN FRANKLIN	1095-
	KRISTINA RUSSELL	300-
	MATTHEW GREEN	1095-
	TERRA CASTON	500-
	TARA SULLIVAN	1100 ⁰⁰
	TOTAL	\$19595
	TOTAL	\$19595

Service Man AL Warranty _____ Date JAN 2002

An amazing month and the year is off to a great start! I hope you enjoy the wonderful stories of success contained in this Newsletter for some of the people we helped in January:

SONYA, SASHANTI and JASMINE:

Females make up about 6% of the Michigan prison population. We make it a high priority to be well known inside Michigan's only women prison, the Huron Valley Women's Correctional Facility, so everyone is aware we're there to help upon release.

Women often have more hurdles to overcome including resuming their role as single mothers or trying to find jobs in male dominated industries such as factory workers.

Thankfully we are helping more and more females. Just yesterday we helped three women with their security deposit to get into their own home and further assisted with furniture and home furnishings.

A shout out to the wonderful success of hard-working Sonya, Jasmine and Sashanti. Way to go women!
Much continued success lies ahead.



TED:

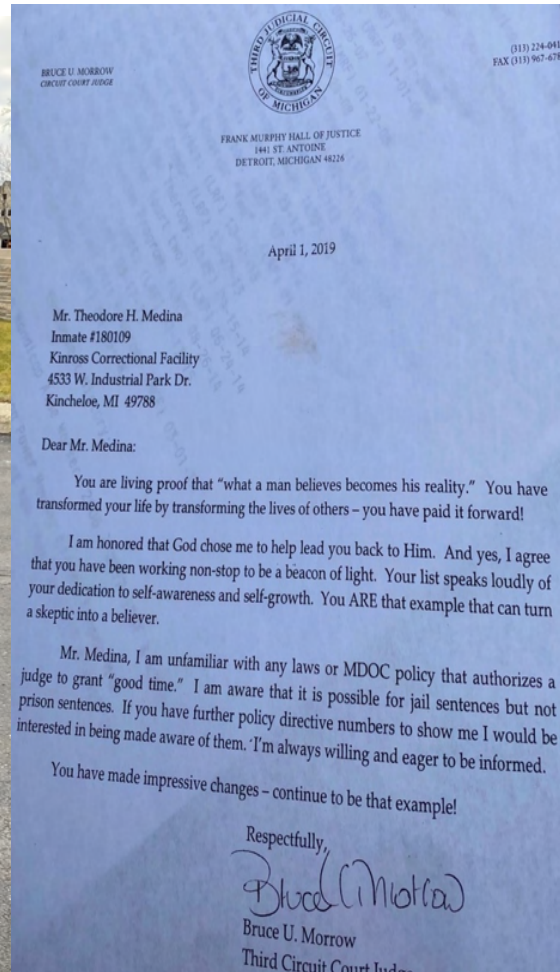
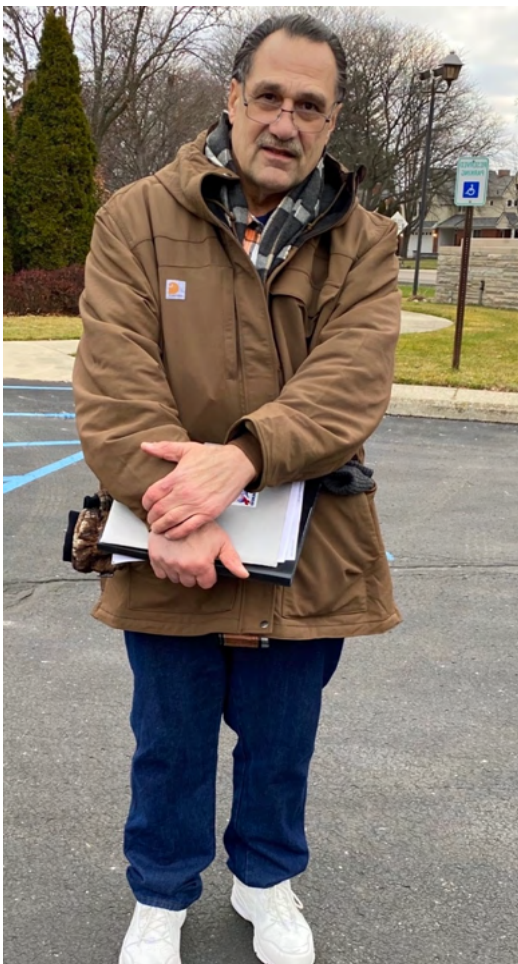
It's quite unusual to have a letter from the Judge, who sentenced one to prison, stating the individual has "transformed his life in prison by transforming the lives of others" (see full letter below):

Ted definitely took advantage of his 18 years in prison to accomplish a lot, including his self-growth and in helping many others along the way as well.

We met Ted right after his release from prison. He'd already been reinstated with Ironworkers Union Local 25 and was working a temporary job until being placed with a position via the Union.

He is incredibly organized, has goals in place and the future looks very, very bright for Ted.

We look forward to continuing to assist him on his journey of success!



ELIJAH:

Having a job before being released from prison is obviously a great situation and occurs when one learns a skilled trade, via the Vocational Village program offered at two of Michigan's prisons.

Elijah served 16 years and was released on December 13th. Within three days he'd started his new job as he obtained certification in Computer Numerical Control (CNC) in prison and had a job lined up.

CNC is a computerized manufacturing process in which pre-programmed software and code controls the movement of equipment.

He's earning good money in an apprentice program but will also get a very solid raise once that is completed.

Elijah's very smart, nice, and hardworking and we're glad to be a part of his reentry process.

We look forward to getting him into his own housing and helping him with a used vehicle to assist his getting to work.

What a great story of success!



SHAKIRA:

Working two jobs and going to school to obtain a GED is not that unusual when you've come back from prison and doing all you can to be successful.

And success is often a feeling that has not occurred much in their life up to now.

Shakira is rightfully proud now of her current success which includes being at the top of her class in her GED course and her success also includes being capable of paying all her monthly bills on her income from her two jobs, and just a day ago she moved into her own rental home.

Incredible accomplishments and success and she couldn't be prouder and happier, as we are for her. We're assisting with furniture for her new home along with all the home furnishings she needs.

Job well done Shakira and her smile says it all!



LARRY:

Try to imagine:

You entered prison at 25 years of age, in 1974. You are now 75 years old.

You are released from prison and given no guidance, and no training to use a cell phone or a computer etc.

You have no money, no friends, no clothing, and most of your entire family that you knew before prison are all gone.

Imagine trying to navigate this frightening new world.

Larry is experiencing this after almost 49 years in prison.

The worst thing he ever did has defined his entire adult life, but he is far from the person he was at 25.

We're doing all we can to assist him and provided gift cards for new clothing, winter coat, boots, toiletries, food etc.

We hope to get him into low-income Senior Housing soon.

And we will be an ongoing shoulder for him to lean on because he definitely needs one.



BYRON:

Sometimes all that is needed to help launch someone down a path to success, is just a little assistance.

As it was with Byron who wanted to obtain a Commercial Driver's License when he was released from prison.

He needed a computer to assist him with his online training etc. but he had no income at that time.

Along with providing him help with work clothes for his training and other basic necessities he needed, we did provide a computer. It was definitely a great investment as Byron just texted us the following:

“Just letting you know what a great help you are to me. The laptop and the other assistance you provided, gave me the opportunity to obtain my CDL and with that I was able secure a great position with Swift Transportation with very good pay. Thanks for all your organization does! It is so greatly needed, and I can't thank you enough.”

Our pleasure Bryon and congrats on the job etc.!



MONTE:

The momentum of change can begin while in prison, but the key is keeping momentum going once one returns to their community.

Monte definitely took advantage of offerings in prison from college courses and learning certain skills by doing Commercial Driver License coursework etc.

He's kept momentum going since he was reunited with his wife and children last month. He's been like a Pac Man game, gobbling up as many certifications that are available at the Detroit Training Center including Heavy Truck Operator, Welding, Forklift Operator etc.

He's completing his welding certification next month and will then plans to obtain his CDL while also taking college courses.

Monte has accomplished a lot in a short period of time and there is nothing but continued success coming his way.

A wonderful example of changing his path to one of positive accomplishments!



TAVARES:

JLWOP = Juvenile Life Without Parole.

Convicted as a youngster and being sentenced to life with no chance of release.

The law has changed making it more difficult to impose such a sentence and allowing those who are JWLOP to seek release from prison.

Tavares was sentenced to life in prison as a 17-year-old way back in 1994.

On Tuesday, he was finally released from prison after 28 long years!

He's starting over as an adult, with enthusiasm, and we are there to assist him. He's living with his sister, about to get a job, and he's looking forward to his future as are we.

We've helped him get going with a phone, gift cards etc. and will remain in his corner and assisting him along the way.

JLWOP no more. Thank goodness!



Darius and Nathaniel

Lots of shout outs with the story of Darius and Nathaniel who just came back from prison a couple of days ago.

It's one thing to find a job quickly but it's quite another to have a job in place BEFORE walking out of prison doors.

They were employed before being released! They learned skills in prison (Darius-truck driving. Nathaniel-computer programming machines) and American Axle hired them months ago.

So, shout outs to American Axle and MDOC prison training as well.

Darius and Nathaniel are eager to start work next week and determined to be one of our greatest success stories. We're certain they will be, and we began assisting within a day of their coming home.

Nathaniel also has a scholarship to attend community college for free and will be pursuing a degree as well.

Big, and great, things ahead for both of them!



TONYA:

Sometimes those coming back from prison don't discover us until they have been out for a little while.

Some are struggling at that point. We get them immediate assistance and prop them back up. Others are doing okay but need an extra push to get them in a better position.

Tonya was in the latter category. She'd been working at Prestige Engineering for about six months and saved to move into her own place on Dec. 1st.

Her Parole Agent sent her our way the other day as Tonya couldn't afford any furniture/home furnishings.

We quickly took care of that and are also helping her with a vehicle and removing her ongoing struggle in getting to work.

We're happy to now help Tonya on her wonderful path of success!



MICHAEL:

Being in prison for 16 years, it's not like you get a lot of positive feedback to make you feel good about yourself.

Thankfully, less than a month out, Michael found himself a good job at Applebee's and getting positive feedback has been critical for his success.

He's been there a week now and we met up again yesterday to help with more basic necessities and work clothes/shoes and Michael could not have been happier.

There were no smiles when we first met as he was very concerned about finding work etc. This time he was grinning ear to ear as he said about Applebee's:

"They like me. I love working there. They feed me also. I really enjoy it!"

Positive feedback and an enjoyable job have made all the difference in his disposition, and we couldn't be happier for Michael!



JIMMY:

Many returning citizens have great cooking skills but it's one thing to be a chef and quite another to be employed as one given the difficulties in getting work while having a criminal background.

Thanks to many Detroit area restaurants willing to give these individuals a second chance including Sweetwater Tavern, The Jamaican Pot, Selden Standard, Dot's Stable, Phoenicia, Good Times on the Ave, Madhouse Bar & Grill etc.

After being released from prison, Jimmy eventually obtained employment as a chef at the stylish fine dining restaurant of BESA in Detroit.

The Executive Chef there said "Jimmy is a hard worker and a great addition to our staff. We're grateful to have him aboard and look forward to giving him a path to grow with our team."

We've helped him Jimmy with various things and look forward to continuing to do so.

A big thanks to BESA restaurant for giving him this great opportunity!



Barbara:

It's a great time when we've unpacked a large quantity of boxes as shown in the photo below (no worries, all boxes soon recycled!).

Those boxes were filled with home furnishings (pots/pans, dishes, silverware, drinking glasses, pillows, blanket, sheets, pillowcases, mattress pad, washcloths, and towels) that we are providing to a lot of returning citizen who are now self-sufficient and moving into their own place to call home.

We're on pace this month to break our record for the number of people in that category and we couldn't be happier.

Even if it means unpacking all those boxes this week alone.

Yesterday we helped Barbara move into her own place and provided home furnishings, furniture and move in costs for her.

She's doing great as in only two months since her release, she has a great job, bought a used car, and moved into her own residence.

A wonderful and exciting time for her!



WILLIAM:

Sometimes, with those coming back from prison, things are going great with a wonderful job, a home, ability to save money etc. and then – BAM!

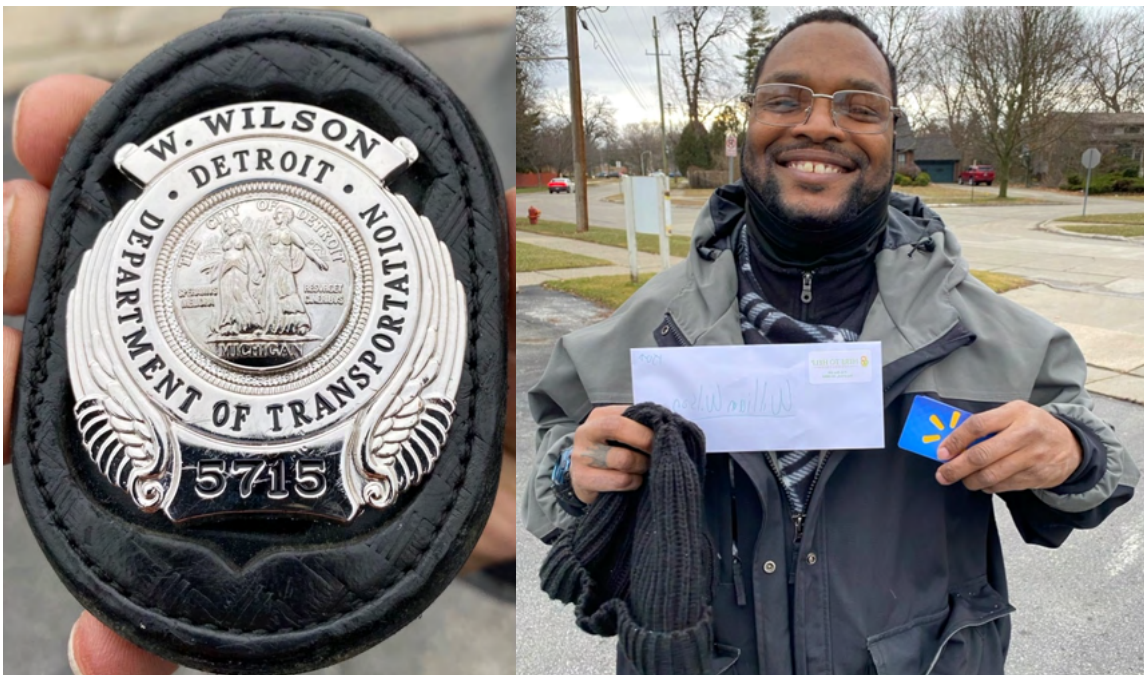
Something outside their control happens and the bottom falls out!

William had a perfect job as a bus driver with the city of Detroit and was doing great and then he's involved in a car accident caused by a distracted driver, and he's injured, undergoes surgery, can't work, has limited income, becomes homeless etc.

He's healed and gone through physical therapy and will finally be cleared to return to work next week. He couldn't be more excited!

We helped him with basic necessities and will be getting him into his own housing etc. When we met he couldn't have prouder of showing off his badge with the City of Detroit and talking about his job.

We're very happy for him and glad to see him back on his path of success!



**JOSEPH F., JOSEPH A., DEWAN, COREY, DARTANYON,
and FERNANDO:**

There's one issue that's an incredibly huge stumbling block to those coming back from prison:
TRANSPORTATION.

It's one thing to get a job, it is another to be able to consistently get there ever day.

This week alone we have helped Joseph F., Joseph A., Dewan, Corey, Dartanyon, and Fernando with issues they were having with their vehicles that impacted their ability to get to work.

Down payment on insurance, large car repair bill, impending repossession due to behind on car note, gasoline issues etc.

We removed these transportation obstacles for all six of these hard-working people, and much smoother sailing ahead now!



SHANICE:

Years in prison have a way of eliminating smiles.

It takes a while, once released, to be in that position of smiling again and being happy with what's occurring in your life.

As you can see in the accompanying photos of Shanice, smiles are back with her.

She's doing very well since being released last September into Federal halfway housing, which is when we first met and began working together.

Shanice quickly got a job at Dakkota Integrated in Detroit and has been there ever since.

Yesterday we helped her move into her new home by paying her security deposit, and providing her with furniture, and home furnishings.

She's done great since being out and the smiles have indeed returned in full force!



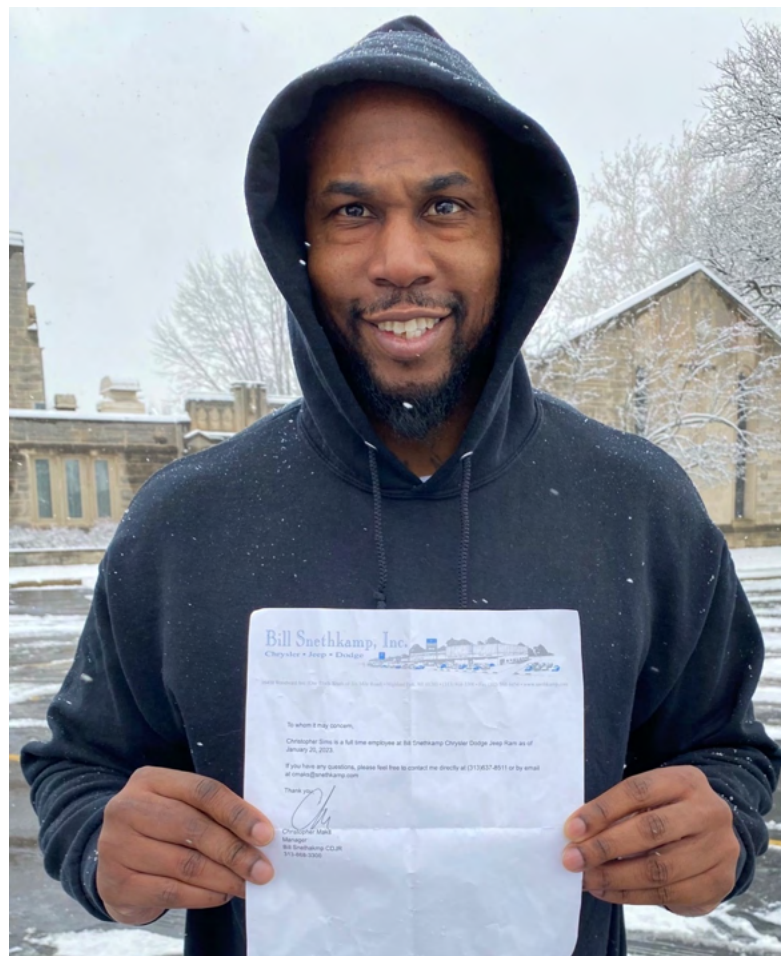
CHRISTOPHER:

When you've been earning 94 cents a day for work in prison, there's a certain level of joy and confidence that occurs when a returning citizen is hired for a job and paid a nice hourly rate.

Christopher was just released from prison and is already earning good money. He couldn't be happier at his new job at Bill Snethkamp Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram as he proudly displays in the photo.

Things are quickly looking up for Christopher who also learned plumbing skills while in prison and will eventually pursue an apprenticeship position. For now, he's doing great at his current job!

We're helping him in many ways with basic necessities including work clothes and transportation etc. and he is on his way to a great future!



RENARD:

Often, after a multi-year prison sentence, friends will have scattered, and elderly family members pass away.

Suddenly there's not much connection to what used to be community.

One positive connection to the past is often the car one had owned prior to incarceration.

When Renard went to prison he was the proud owner of a great 2011 Chevy Malibu. Upon release he was very excited to continue his usage of that car.

And he did. He got a great job with The Patch Boys (drywall work) and the car was running great.

Until it wasn't.

Suddenly it needed a costly transmission. We took care of things for Renard knowing how critical that car was to get to work and, also, the happiness it brought him.

He was excited and sent a photo and said:

“Me and my baby!”



LeVert:

Determination is obviously important for those coming back from prison in their effort to be successful.

We've had the pleasure of meeting a lot of people who are very determined including yesterday when LeVert, during a major snowstorm, took numerous busses from his west side location to our east side meeting place.

It was slow going but he made it as he was coming to obtain assistance with work attire (especially winter clothing/boots etc.) as he pursued his Commercial Driver's License training.

A great pursuit for him that he is determined to achieve and obtain a good job and be self-sufficient and successful.

We have not doubt, with his determination, that he will do so very soon!



ROBERT SMITH:

Everyone has their own unique situation in coming back from prison.

Some have a longer path on their road to success as there may be stumbling blocks such as losing a job one is doing great at, but it's uncovered that they have a felony conviction.

Or finding it hard to save money at jobs paying around minimum wage, or having to pay for costly car repairs etc.

But perseverance gets someone like Robert to the point of moving into their own home, having their own furniture, their own home furnishings etc.

It was a long road of living in transitional housing for over 15 months, struggling to save money etc., and now a fantastic feeling for Robert of being self-sufficient and independent as he moves into his own home.

We are glad to have been able to assist him in various ways.
Whoo-hoo for Robert!



Aron:

It's always great to see people pursue a career path after exiting prison.

One of the more popular paths of pursuit is training to be a barber and it's a great investment for the future.

Aron first learned to cut hair in prison. He served as an amateur barber during his long 35 years in prison after he'd been sentenced for a crime committed at only 16 years of age.

He started his official barber school training this week and we were glad to assist him in various ways to make that transition easier, including providing him a laptop for his classwork as well as repairing his vehicle so he can get to and from school.

Aron is all set and he's determined, excited, motivated, and ready for success!



Great stories and a great month for our returning citizens program.

Have a wonderful February!

All the best,

Bob