

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

We closed out the year in strong fashion as we helped on over 200 occasions during the month of December and in a variety of ways including getting people into their own housing for the first time; helping with the ever-necessary eyeglasses; economic support to keep people afloat while they have no income during the time they are obtaining their skilled trade training etc.

We helped a wide variety of people including Louis who was finally exonerated for the crime he was sentenced to back in 1988 and Lamaine who was sentenced to prison at the age of 15 and just got out at the age of 32 and needs much guidance for all that he didn't learn during those critical years.

We also received some tragic news regarding the passing of Robert, one of the nicest and generous people in our program and who'd been very successful in his return from prison. Our thoughts are with his family, including brother Darryl who has also been incredibly successful since leaving prison and a great mentor to many others.

Here are stories of some people we helped last month:

MACK:

Along with the thousands of returning citizens we have helped get to the point of self-sufficiency and into their own rental housing, there have been some who can proudly call themselves homeowners.

It's not easy to accomplish that coming out of prison given all the hoops that have to be jumped through including obtaining a mortgage, gathering funds for closing, and factoring in property taxes and insurance etc. into the monthly budget.

But some returning citizens definitely have home ownership on their goals list and are incredibly determined, organized and smart in getting everything in place to purchase a home.

At 3pm yesterday, Mack became a homeowner as he closed on his new house, and we met him right afterwards. He couldn't be happier (see photo), and we couldn't be prouder of all he's accomplished since getting out last Feb. We recall our first meeting when he stated his goal of home ownership. He got his license back, got his CDL and has been employed at a great job ever since.

We helped with his closing costs, getting his home fully furnished and providing all home goods that he needs. We're excited for him and he's definitely in a position to pay all his monthly expenses without a problem. Way to go Mack!



RANDALL:

We first met Randall way back in February of 2021 and worked with him for a while and helped him with casual clothing, work clothes, home furnishings, furniture, a computer for school, getting his driver license etc.

He was living with his fiancé at the time and was doing great. Until he wasn't.

Unfortunately, addiction is a difficult thing for many returning citizens for a variety of reasons including never resolving that issue in prison, suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder upon leaving prison etc. and not getting the proper help to assist with their mental health.

Randall fell back to his addictive ways and was struggling until he was able to get treatment and he's been sober for six months now. As he said, "My new addiction is in helping others."

He just got into his own housing for the first time, and we helped him with his move in costs and home furnishings and furniture and he was brought to tears when everything was provided to him.

He's thankful for another fresh start and confident in himself moving forward. He's working now at Ford Field and feeling good about everything and he's giving back to his community as best as possible.



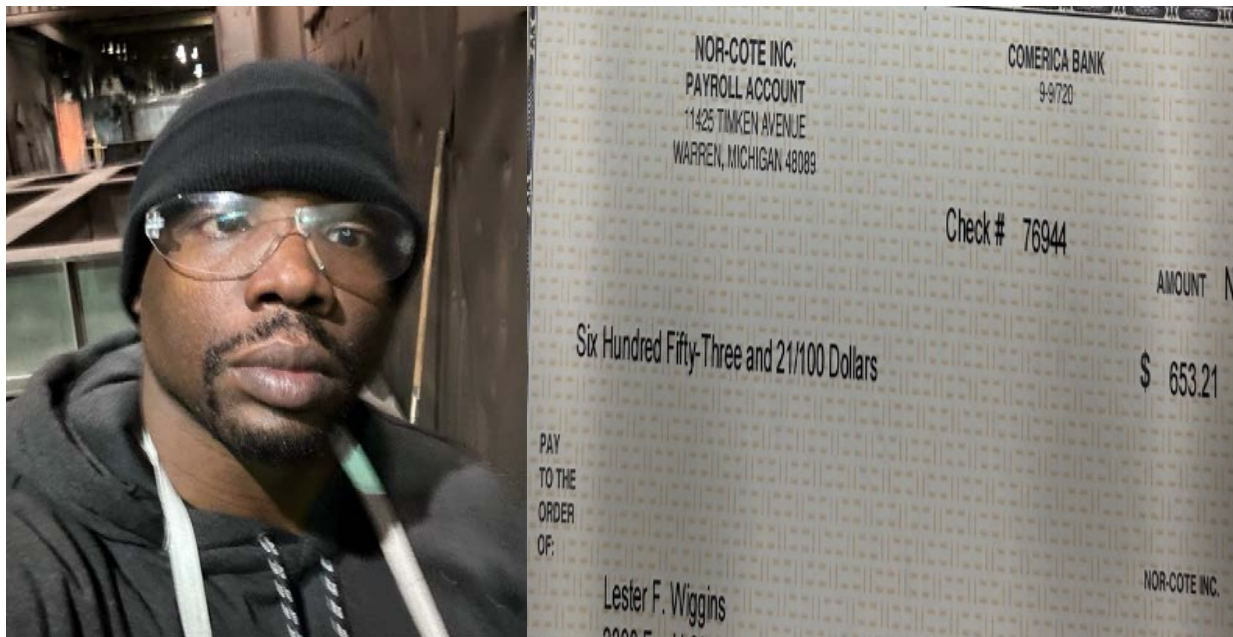
LESTER:

Working for a staffing agency cuts both ways. Those companies are good for helping get someone employed quickly, but the individual is an employee of the staffing company and not the company they have been placed to work at. They don't earn the same amount as the direct hires at the company, nor do they receive benefits etc. and they are usually in a temporary position without job security.

So, we often encourage those working via a staffing company to seek a direct hire position and we help them achieve that as well. Lester was working for Allegiance Staffing and placed at Renaissance Global Logistics to work in their warehouse but within a week his hours were reduced and became more sporadic as they were "overstaffed."

Thankfully he was able to become a direct hire at Nor-Cote Inc and enjoys the new job and is doing great. We've helped Lester in many ways including work clothes, casual clothes, furniture etc.

We will soon get him in his own housing now that he has job stability, is being paid well, and is self-sufficient. He's excited (he immediately sent us a copy of his first pay check), we're excited, and all is very good with Lester.



JASON:

Jason spent 17 years away in prison and had a lot of time to think, including about his daughter who was two years of age when he went to prison. He has many relationships to mend and cultivate now that he is out of prison and he's doing his best to accomplish that goal.

He is also very interested in re-starting his career as a welder as he is certified by the American Welding Society in all four tiers of expertise.

As he texted us after applying for our help: "I am very eager to start a career and work my way from the ground up as I sit here writing you full of ambition! Thank you so much and I look forward to meeting in person."

We just met with Jason, and he does have a very positive attitude but also recognizes there is so much he has to get used to when the world has moved on in various ways over the past 17 years. He is trying to grasp how to use his phone, including applying online for jobs as well as navigate the bus system as his means of transportation.

We have helped in various ways including job opportunities in his area of expertise of welding and something will pop soon, and he will be on his way to self-sufficiency. We are looking forward to seeing much success for Jason as he is organized, determined, realistic and smart. He accepts his past and has laid out his future very well.



JASMINE:

We've said it before regarding how important a positive attitude is for the success of returning citizens. And, of course, staying positive is not always easy given the roadblocks and hurdles those coming back from prison must get around.

But Jasmine is staying as positive as possible and has a very nice infectious smile. Though she has only been out a few weeks after spending three years in prison, she's doing the best she can at present, and she's living at the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministry.

Jasmine is already enrolled in the Heavy Equipment Operator program at the Detroit Training Center and accomplishing what we always recommend, and that is obtaining a skilled trade.

We helped her with her basic needs at the present time along with work clothing and greatly look forward to her future success as she completes her training and obtains a good job. We can then get her out of her transitional housing situation and into her own home as we can help her with her move in costs and everything else she needs to make that house a home. She's very appreciative of our help.

Keep that smile coming Jasmine! Good things and success are heading your way.



ANTHONY:

The second most popular skilled trade for returning citizens, behind getting a Commercial Driver License, is welding. There are many jobs available at a good rate of pay for welders.

We've helped a lot of people stay afloat while they are learning how to be a welder and then help them, once they get a job, with all the tools and equipment need for their new job. It is always a good investment for us as everyone goes on to be a successful employee and becomes self-sufficient on their new income.

We just met Anthony the other day and he's enrolled in the welding program via the Detroit Training Center and doing well. He spent 15 years in prison and is living with his daughter at present. We've helped with his basic necessities as well as assisting him get his van fixed (which he just received in exchange for some home repairs he did for a client) and getting insurance on the vehicle.

He will complete his welding program soon, get a good job and we'll then help him with all the additional tools/equipment needed for his new job, and he'll become completely self-sufficient.

Anthony is very proud of his current status, as he should be.



WILLIAM:

There are many different ways that returning citizens can conquer the largest impediment to success, and that is having their own vehicle to get to work, to visit family and reconnect etc.

Sometimes people receive a vehicle from a friend or family member, or the returning citizens may have had their own vehicle from years ago that has sat idle while the person was in prison. Often times, when getting a vehicle outside of our Working Cars for Working People program the individual needs immediate help with car repairs to get that vehicle into a safe and reliable working condition.

We do help a lot with such car repairs and especially when the individual, like William, is attending a skilled training program and needs that car to get to and from school and not fall behind or run the risk of having to discontinue the schooling.

We've helped William in many ways since he came back from prison including furniture, gift cards for basic needs etc. We just helped with his repair that took care of a safety issue and he can now get to his Commercial Driver License training without concern and he's close to completing his driving test and securing a great job.

He was very appreciative of our help with his car repair, and it was our pleasure to be able to assist him.



ROBERT:

It's an unfortunate fact that since we now have over 3000 people in our Returning Hope to Returning Citizens program, that on occasion we're going to receive tragic news regarding someone who we've been helping.

Such is the case with Robert Woods, who we first met over two years ago when he returned from prison. We helped him in many ways over the years and most recently, this past July, he had gotten to the point of qualifying for our help with a used vehicle.

Tragically, we received word a few days ago that Robert had unexpectedly passed away at 54 years age.

Robert was a very good person, who was devoting his time to helping others as he was employed at Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries (DRMM) and their Oasis residence in Highland Park that houses the homeless and those coming back from prison.

It is always a pleasure to help those helping others, and we always enjoyed assisting Robert. We are very saddened by his sudden passing and send our condolences to his family and his brother Darryl, who has been one of the most successful individuals in our program.

We are very sorry for your loss.



LOUIS:

It's always a bit bittersweet for us to help someone who has been exonerated after having served a lengthy prison time. Obviously it is great that the individual has been released from prison, but it is also quite sad to know they spent so many years locked up for a crime they did not commit.

Such is the case for Louis, who is now 65 years old and was incarcerated since 1988 for a crime he was recently found to be completely innocent of. He's currently living with his sister Darlene and after 35 years in prison, he's slowly adjusting to everything around him.

Thankfully he has family to assist him, and we are doing everything we can to help Louis ease back into society. He and Darlene are currently looking for a place to live and we're helping in that regard and can help with their move in costs to their new residence, as well as providing furniture and home furnishings.

Welcome home Louis. Sorry that it was such a long time coming but a shout out to the Cooley Law School Innocence Project and his attorney Marla Mitchell-Cichon for their devoted effort in righting a wrong and getting Louis freed.



JAMES:

When you go to prison at age 20 and spend the next nine years behind bars, it's not like you have a wealth of work experience and similarly your resume is pretty much empty.

So, when you can finally get a job that pays well and is full time hours, well it can be very exciting. And a little scary since everything is so new shortly after getting back from prison.

We try to create a level of ease for returning citizens beginning a new job but it obviously something that must be experienced. When James was able to secure employment he was “nercited” as some say, with equal amounts of excitement and nervousness.

James sent us the attached photo from his first day at work and he's very much enjoying the job, has a good Supervisor and all is going well.

Not only does the job provide James with a sense of purpose and enjoyment, but he is now on his way to leasing his first home after a lifetime of always living with others. A place of his own is very important in many ways. We've also helped him in many ways so far and look forward to getting him into his own housing shortly.

And James is building that resume with experience and excellent job performance.



DAJUAHN:

Some of those we assist are not coming back from prison for the first time. For a variety of reasons, they were convicted of another crime and returned to prison.

It doesn't mean this time won't be successful as we have a good track record for making sure these repeat offenders get off that cycle of incarceration. Often, they just need guidance and help to keep moving forward and get over obstacles and that is what we are here for.

Dajuahn has been back and forth to prison three times now. This last time for a four-year sentence.

As he said to us when we met the other day, only a week after being released: "I always thought I could do it on my own and didn't need any help from anyone to keep me from going back to prison. Clearly, I was wrong and there is no shame now in asking for help and that is why I reached out to you."

Indeed, everyone can use some help from others and there is no weakness in accepting that help. Dajuahn already has a full-time job at Dollar Tree and has a plan in place to get his Commercial Driver License after he saves some money. He assured us he would be in close contact at all times, and we'll make sure that happens and keep him moving forward on a path of success. He is determined to succeed with our help and, this time around, we are confident that he will!



OPERATION GET DOWN:

When we launched our returning citizens program we definitely wanted to meet, in person and ASAP, everyone who was seeking our help.

We created daily meeting places which have been in place since we began and where we meet 10-20 people every day of the year.

One of the locations is Operation Get Down, on the east side of Detroit. The building served as a housing shelter for those coming back from prison and who had no family or friends to be paroled to.

For the past 3.5 years, since the program began, we've been there every Tuesday afternoon to meet those new to the program and also those who we met previously and were continuing to assist. For about the past 175 weeks, we'd see around 20 people in need each Tuesday.

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the building just closed and is for sale. We have a lot of great memories there. Including seeing those we met just a day out of prison, starting at the absolute bottom, and now they're driving a city bus that goes by the building and who say "Hello" by honking at us every Tuesday, while driving by.

The closing is sad, having been a staple in the area since 1997. Hopefully the new owner will keep things going as it was, but we know we'll continue to use the area as our every Tuesday meeting spot.

We have too many great memories there to change. We look forward to meeting tons more people, starting on their path of success!



CHARLES:

Sometimes it takes quite a long route to successfully wind up on a path of success.

Such as Charles, whose initial path after release from prison in Michigan had him on parole to home in Alabama but despite having a Commercial Driver License, he was not able to obtain employment.

He came back to Michigan and, thankfully, was able to get into the bus driver program via the City of Detroit. He's now well on his way to becoming a bus driver. In an odd coincidence, he was recently a passenger on a city bus that was involved in an accident. Charles did hurt his back and is currently undergoing treatment for that injury.

We are optimistic he will return to work shortly and have begun our assistance to him after we met the other day. We helped with all his basic necessities and work clothes, food, and furniture for his living situation in the basement of a friend.

We look forward to getting him into a better housing situation in the near future and definitely good to see Charles on a nice path of success after some initial difficulties.

And a shout to the City of Detroit who has employed many, like Charles, in the bus driver program. Very nice for those returning citizens and a benefit to the city who get wonderful employees.



WILLIAM:

An armed robbery at 22 years of age landed William in prison for life. His sentence began in 1976 and after 46 years in prison, William was able to finally get out on parole.

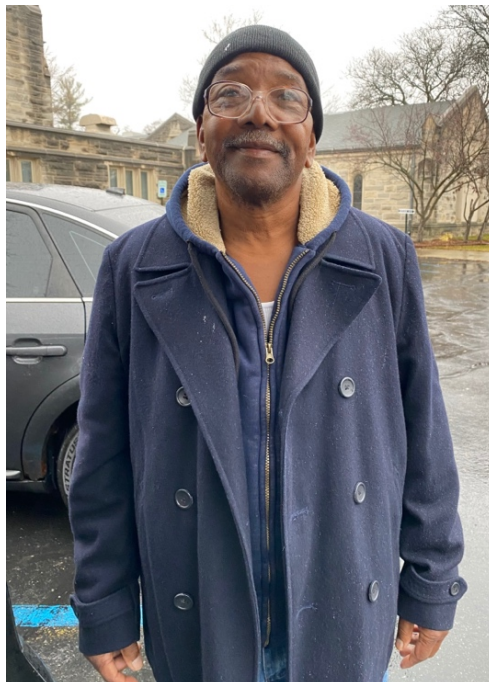
Talk about an adjustment when pretty much your entire life has been spent behind bars. Taking things slowly is definitely the mantra for someone like William as he's just been out of prison a few weeks now and trying to adjust to 46 years of dramatic change in the world while he was isolated from society.

He's currently living in transitional housing as he had no friends or family to be paroled to and we've begun helping with all his basic necessities and job leads that are commensurate with his skills and his age and also guided him seeking Social Security assistance.

It is never easy for these individuals who have been in prison for over four decades as there are many more roadblocks for them as occurs with their more advanced age and having to adjust to all the new technology and simply learning about a new world.

We will do all we can to assist William with his adjustment and getting him some income is the current goal so he can eventually achieve self-sufficiency and get into the first home of his own.

What a feeling that will be! We are confident that will occur.



LEON:

Nothing like your first Christmas season outside of prison in a long while, combined with getting into your own housing for the very first time ever.

That's what just happened with Leon on Monday as he moved into an apartment along with his fiancé. They're both working and doing great, and Leon has held his job at Union Sorters of America, which provides help inside Ford Motor plants. He's been there since May and enjoys the job very much. He has gotten a few raises already and is a valued employee.

His fiancé works full time also, so they have more than sufficient income and were quickly approved for an apartment. We helped Leon with his needs when we first met and were excited to assist him now that he's self-sufficient, with move in costs, new furniture and all of his home furnishings.

It's always exciting for us to help someone get into their housing but this time of year, with the holiday season, it always seems even more exciting with their own apartment for the first time and providing them a giant gift wrapped present when they can open that door and see it fully furnished etc.

Great times now and moving forward!



WINTER COATS:

With colder temperature moving in as winter arrives, purchasing a good solid winter coat is a difficult task at times for those returning citizens living on a limited income.

We do our best to have a continuous supply of winter coats on hand so that on our daily meetings with those just coming back from prison (or those who have been in our program) we can provide a nice winter coat when someone shows up without proper clothing.

People are as excited as a child at Christmas to get this unexpected gift of a coat but having proper clothing is imperative for many returning citizens who walk to a bus stop and also stand waiting for the bus in cold temperatures or who are working outside or in training for a skilled trade and spend time outside etc.

It was our pleasure recently to have provided coats to Romallis, Alvin and Christopher and we will provide hundreds of coats in the next few weeks. Having that need filled is critical for so many people this time of year. We are glad to provide as many coats as we do to keep so many warm and comfortable.



FELICIA:

Sometimes returning citizens do a bit of juggling with their employment as they take on multiple jobs to make ends meet.

We began working with Felicia back in August of 2022 and we helped her in a variety of ways at that time while she was going through job interviews.

Along the way we have since assisted with a utility bill, items needed for work etc. Recently she had gotten to the point of self-sufficiency that she is able to move into her own home, along with her husband and daughter.

Between Felicia and her husband, they work five jobs. That gets them in position to meet all their monthly expenses and they're doing well. Felicia currently works at Bath and Body Works and provides adult home care via Compassionate Home Care and Precise Home Care Services while her husband works at Dominos and Amazon.

We recently helped with their move in costs and furniture and home furnishings.

It took almost 18 months to get to this point but a great, great feeling in the end to have one's own place to call home. Felicia and her husband are hardworking individuals who can now experience the joy of having their own place. Congrats!



MARCINO:

Friends and family support to returning citizens plays a big role in the initial success of those coming back from prison.

From a place to live, to providing rides to interviews, to assisting with needs such as food, the importance of friends and family members is significant.

Sometimes those individuals can even provide employment as occurred with Marcino. Just a few weeks out of prison he's started a job as a salesperson at his childhood friend's men's clothing store of The Spigg on 8 Mile in Eastpointe.

The job opportunity will help to keep Marcino afloat while he takes care of getting his driver's license so he can enroll in truck driving school, with his ultimate goal of getting his Commercial Driver License.

He's got great plans in place and hit the ground running, with the help of his longtime loyal friend, in getting employed right away. We've helped Marcino (on the right in photo) with work clothing and other basic necessities and look forward to assisting him in many other ways as he moves forward on a path of success.

Shout out to friends and family for helping make success happen!



TYROME:

Sometimes, returning citizens haven't had much success via traditional schooling so it's always great to see their success in a different setting such as learning a skilled trade.

When we met Tyrome for the first time recently, he was a few days away from graduating with a degree in welding from the Detroit Training Center and his excitement for that accomplishment was very, very evident.

The day of graduation he shared his continued enthusiasm by sending the accompanying photo. So cool. And he's in a position to get into a Union and get a great job in the very near future.

Things are definitely looking up for Tyrome and he's someone that has been in and out of prison a bit so his current accomplishments and his ability to be self-sufficient very soon is a clear breaking of the cycle of prison.

We've helped him in a variety of ways and are ready to assist him with any tools and equipment he will need for his upcoming employment. He's living with his fiancé and with both of them working, remaining self-sufficient will not be an issue. We're in the process of providing them additional furniture and home furnishings to completely fill in their house with all they need..

Good times ahead. Way to go Tyrome! We are proud of you.



BRANDON:

Sometimes, success is all about getting an opportunity.

It's not only great when an employer is willing to hire a returning citizen, but all the better when they are willing to make a further investment by teaching them a skilled trade.

When Brandon applied for our assistance he indicated he was interested in CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine operator skills and thankfully he was able to get a job soon thereafter with Greene Metal Products and they were willing to teach him to become a CNC operator. When he's finished with his training, Brandon will get an increase in his hourly wage rate.

We were pleased to hear that when we met in person and Brandon is very appreciated of our help with providing him gift cards for work and casual clothing. We also provided him with a winter coat as he had no outerwear, let alone clothing. We look forward to getting him into his own housing soon.

A big shout out to Greene Metal Products for giving Brandon a chance at employment. And training him for a skilled trade. A great combination!



KEIONTA and MARQUELLE

Always great to see people pursue their Commercial Driver License. We definitely encourage people to get a skilled trade degree.

Sometimes it takes a few times of making that recommendation before people finally talk to their Parole Agent about pursuing that path. Their Agent can assist with the State paying the required tuition.

Just last week Keionta and Marquelle started their program at Suburban Trucking. We first began helping Marquelle over two years ago and we started with Keionta this past October. Both are now ready to pursue this path and that's great. They are friends as well so nice to start the program together and going through it at the same time.

They came together to meet us the other day as they are already working in the "yard" at Suburban Trucking to acclimate themselves to the large trucks and beginning to drive them.

Given the colder temperatures at present, we were glad to make things easier for them by providing a winter coat and thermal overalls.

They are both excited for their future and feel they are finally on a good path of success, which they are indeed. And excitedly wearing their brand-new warm winter coats.

Great times ahead!



TEVIN:

It is a much softer landing for those coming back from prison if they can quickly resume their employment where they were working before beginning their prison sentence.

Such was the case with Tevin as although he served four years in prison, he had been a very valued employee with Huntington Cleaners before he went away to serve his prison sentence and his boss was very willing to accept him back and employ him once again.

So, Tevin has been back at work at Huntington Cleaners for almost a month now and things are going good though he has larger plans for his future, which includes getting his Commercial Driver's License. He's in the process of enrolling for that training and a job awaits him when he graduates and completes his road test as he has a relative that owns a transportation company.

Tevin is currently living with his father and very excited to get his own home to rent and we will gladly help with that very shortly. He is very appreciative and very excited for his future.



SALINA and AYESHA:

It is always an easier path to travel when you have someone going with you. Even more so when the other person is a good friend with a similar background and understands all you have been through, and you similarly understand their history.

Salina and Ayesha fit into that description as they were friends before they both wound up serving a prison term and they got out of prison on the same date of December 12th and are currently living in the same transitional housing through the Detroit Rescue Mission.

We met both of them yesterday and helped them with their basic necessities and with job leads to get them employed as quickly as possible and get them out of their transitional housing and into their own home. Ayesha is also interested in obtaining a Commercial Driver License which is a great plan.

They are adjusting well to life on the outside, together, and are very, very appreciative of the help we provided so far and all we will be able to assist them with moving forward.

Good to have friends to travel with on their path of success.



LADALE:

We can be sure about one thing. It is not easy coming back from prison and we strive to make it easier, but there is definitely much difficulty with lots of things in returning to society.

Often the need for an immediate income leads to that starter job, which is grabbed right away and before someone first meets with us. After our initial meeting we look to pair that individual with other job leads which present greater opportunities.

That starter job is often a lot of grunt work as it currently is for Ladale who is living with his mother and been out a few weeks and grabbed the first job that came his way. Working for a demolition company and getting paid just slightly above minimum wage at 47 years of age, He is doing a lot of physical labor as shown in the photo.

We will transition him to a better suited job shortly and get him going on a path leading to self-sufficiency. Like everyone else, Ladale is very interested in getting his own vehicle and we are the resource for that need, but he would have to first be in his own housing and having established that level of independence. A higher paying job would help with that, and we know that job is going to be happening very soon.

And everything good will springboard from there.



DAJOHN:

One thing that emerges from the thousands and thousands of people we talk to who are coming back from prison is their expressing a prior lack of guidance from anyone in their life. The absence of someone wanting to help them be successful. So, sometimes they are very uncertain as to whether our help is for real or not. When they understand we are legit, the emotions really rise to the surface.

As they did when we met Da'John yesterday. We discussed all the things we could help with and how he would be very successful, like all the others we've helped. He teared up and simply said: "Man, I heard about y'all but just wasn't sure it was for real. I never had anyone help me with anything. Not just a mentor but just someone having an interest in giving me advice. I don't even know what to say. Other than thank you man. Thank you so much. You got me crying!"

It's our pleasure to give what we can, and we are helping Da'John in a lot of different ways. He is working at Detroit Manufacturing Systems and we're guiding him into learning a skilled trade as he has an interest in HVAC and carpentry, and we've helped him with work clothes and casual clothing etc.

Merry Christmas Da'John! We will continue to give you all we can moving forward, and you can experience much of the joy that life has to offer.



JAMES:

Right around the time that James was sent to prison, he and his nephews had been creating a car detailing company as they all had a lot of work experience and talent in this area.

While James was in prison, the others did launch the business and it's been doing well with a lot of clients. His nephews welcomed James on board along with his expertise and his ability to take care of minor car repairs as well.

We helped James with work clothes and more importantly lots of tools and equipment he really needed for his job at Showroom Car Detailing.

He's living with his parents at present but would obviously like his own place and we will begin that process in the very near future.

It's obviously good his nephews were stilling willing to bring James on board with the business and we were glad to help him get up and running with everything James needed to be a successful member of the team in detailing vehicles and doing small car repairs.

He's working hard and the future looks very good. A lot accomplished in only three weeks' time after being released from prison. Way to go James! And way to go Showroom Car Detailing for your help in providing a soft-landing spot for James upon his release.



JOHN:

We first met 68-year-old John in September 2022 after he was released from prison, having served 46 years. He'd found that forms of help that he'd been provided before meeting us, "...sounded very good in theory but when you hit the ground, nothing is as planned, and help is not as real as it appeared."

He felt defeated as nothing in his "Pre-Release Plan" had materialized. He was very appreciative of our aid and left a large impression on us as smart, resourceful, and determined.

We helped John with various things, and he had definite goals of getting his license, a car, enrolling in school, and securing employment. All of which he accomplished, and he was doing well.

He subsequently moved to Ann Arbor and was renting a room and had secured employment with a nonprofit as a "Community Engagement Specialist."

He was very self-sufficient except he needed assistance with a car repair and reached out to us for help. We gladly took care of that expense for him as his vehicle is critical for his job requirements.

John was incredibly appreciative, and we are glad to see his success, especially after those first few months post release where he was encountering many problems. We look forward to helping him move from his room, in the near future, into his own home. One more dream to make reality!



JOHN:

We've said it before and we'll say it again, the work ethic and determination of returning citizens never ceases to amaze us and John is one more example.

John works full time with a delivery service company and begins work at 5:30am and gets off around 3:30pm. He then heads straight to the welding training program he is currently completing and doesn't finish until 9pm.

He then heads home for a quick dinner, right to bed and back at it very early the next morning.

Sometimes you simply have to do what you have to do to achieve success and that is the sacrifice John is making now and the dedication to achievement that he is implementing.

We look forward to assisting him more and making his busy schedule easier such as helping him with a much-needed car repair, so he doesn't lose any time from his job nor his welding training.

He's definitely focused on the goal at hand of remaining self-sufficient and getting the training necessary for a skilled trade for better pay, job security, benefits etc.

Good things do come to those who are willing, like John, to work for them and he has a very powerful work ethic. Way to go John!



MICHAEL:

We have a good relationship with the Detroit Water and Sewage Department (DWSD) who has hired lots of the returning citizens we work with, and they've gone on to be great employees.

One of the first ones we helped get hired there was Lynn McNeal who spent the next two years never missing one day from work, weekends included, before he chose to accept a new job as Community Liaison with the Detroit City Council.

Michael has been working with DWSD after applying a few months ago based on a referral from Sean, another returning citizen, who we helped get a job with the Water Department in September.

Michael had been living with his Godmother since coming home in May and now, with his solid job, he was able to find a home to rent.

We helped him with his move in costs and with brand new furniture and home furnishings as he had absolutely nothing at all to move in with.

Michael is a wonderful story of success and he's always been appreciative of our help. We are proud of him and excited that he can start the new year in his home after so many years of not having that luxury.

Way to go Michael!



LAMAINE:

When one is sent to prison at 15 years of age and you don't get out until 17 years have passed by, well there's a lot of life experiences and general learning that you have definitely missed out on.

That learning curve is significant in making up for lost time and trying to learn how to open a bank account, how to find a place to live, how to complete a job application on your phone, how to get your driver license, how to email and text etc.

Those are some of the issues that Lamaine has experienced, and we are here to offer as much help and guidance and teaching as we can to him.

He is staying with his Aunt and has passed the written portion of the driver test for his first license, and he is taking the road test next week. His goal is to get his Commercial Driver License which would be a great career path for him, but he would first like to earn some money via a Chauffeur License, which he can accomplish right away.

We will definitely take things slowly with Lamaine as he adjusts to being an adult for the first time outside of prison and we guide and mentor him and keep him on a path of success. He is very determined, which is great. We've started that process now and look forward to providing ongoing help and making his path as smooth as possible.

