



AUGUST UPDATE FOR RETURNING HOPE TO RETURNING CITIZENS PROGRAM

Big news this month including the largest grant ever to **Here to Help**; an ongoing relationship with **the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department**; and the celebration of our one-year Anniversary for the returning citizens program.

GOOD NEWS:

1. Largest Grant Ever:

In a bit of a teaser for the September Newsletter we are pleased to report that we received a commitment for the **largest donation in the history of Here to Help!** Our relationship with the donor was slowly cultivated over the past 14 months.

So, we're quite excited by this support and the validation for what we do, and we will be able to report more on the donor in our Sept. Newsletter after the money is received by Here to Help.

2. One Year Ago:

That's when we launched the **Returning Hope to Returning Citizens** program, amid a pandemic. Perhaps not the greatest timing from an ease of implementation standpoint but a critical time to assist given the difficulties of those adjusting

to life on the outside being even more complicated by COVID 19 related issues.

In one year, we've assisted returning citizens on more than a whopping **1600 occasions** in a multitude of ways as their needs are vast and diverse.

We have established many friendships and we've been able to enjoy the tremendous success achieved by all those with whom we have had the pleasure of working.

3. Flood Relief Efforts:

As the fallout from the flooding damage in the Detroit area continues (we provided over 55 forms of assistance in July to flood victims), we received another round of generous funding from the **United Way of Southeastern Michigan** to help meet these needs.

Many returning citizens rent basement apartments and were impacted by flood waters with a loss of clothing and furniture etc. and we were able to assist them.

4. Detroit Water and Sewage Department:

A big shoutout to the **Detroit Water and Sewerage Department**. DWSD reached out to us because they had heard what we were accomplishing with returning citizens and they wanted to help as well. They have welcomed applications from those we are working with and have hired many people; all of which is our goal in placing people into careers with benefits etc. **A win win situation for all involved!**

5. Social Media:

The popularity of our **Facebook** page continues to grow as we now have **over 1500 followers** as our uplifting posts regarding those we are helping seem to resonate with many people.

<https://www.facebook.com/heretohelpfoundation/>

Here are some great stories of a few of those that we helped this past month:

Earl:

It's a great celebration when a returning citizen progresses to the point they can afford their own housing and it's move in day! We have helped Earl Irvin in many ways since meeting last November. He now has a great job with the City of Detroit and moved into his own apartment the other day. We provided him home furnishings (dishes, glasses, silverware, pots and pans, pillows, sheets, mattress pad, blanket, towels/washcloths) and provided all his furniture (bed, nightstand, lamps, couch, dining room table/chairs). He is an incredible success story. Proud of you Earl! And so happy for you. 😊👏👍



Quatrice:

We have helped women returning citizens in a variety of ways and they often face a greater challenge as they resume their role as the primary parent to their children. We recently assisted Quatrice as she began her path to success and we got her started with assistance in obtaining basic necessities such as clothing, toiletries, food, work clothes, transportation etc. She is determined and focused and we expect big things ahead for her!



Dionte:

Many restaurants are doing great business again now that COVID restrictions have been removed. That's wonderful for many returning citizens, employed as cooks, now working full time. Dionte Braxton is a cook at one of the more popular Detroit restaurants, YumVillage (serving Afro-Caribbean cuisine) who we've been helping for many months now. He found an apartment but needed some help with his security deposit, furniture, and home furnishings. We set him up, physically helped move him in, and he's doing great. Check out the tasty food at YumVillage! 😊



Rex:

Sometimes things happen for a reason. We granted Rex, a returning citizen, with a car to get to his new employment as a commercial driver and he was incredibly excited. He found a car being sold by its owner and he was ready to relieve his mother from taking him to work each day. The deal fell through at the last minute and Rex was incredibly disappointed. But a few weeks later he found a great Lincoln Navigator that we bought for him, and all is good again. He's proud and happy as is his mom! 😊👏



Brian:

Very often, those coming back from prison may have learned a particular job skill or they had a particular area of expertise before going to prison. In trying to utilize that skill for employment, they often run into the issue of no money to obtain the equipment and/or tools that are required. That's where we come in as we can assist as we just did with Brian who had a landscaping business previously and needed the equipment to resume that profession.

We loaded him up and he's good to go now with former clients enthusiastic for his return.



CHRIS:

It's great when a returning citizens we're working with progresses to the point that they have a great job and have the ability to maintain a vehicle with the costs of insurance and saving for future car repairs. Chris works at the Amazon warehouse and has been rapidly moving up the ranks and we've been helping him throughout this year. He was reliant on his sister to get to/from work, but she began working nights and their work hours didn't mesh. He was having a tough time getting to work when we were able to assist getting him in a 2009 Ford Escape. Smooth travels now for Chris!



Mark:

Sometimes you feel like you just can't catch a break and then someone throws you a lifeline. Mark was doing great at his job and employed through a staffing agency with the understanding he would become a direct hire at the end of 90 days. At that time though the company he was working at learned he was a returning citizen. Despite his stellar work record they let him go. We stepped in and handled some of his bills that he got behind on and got him a great job as a direct hire at another company. His work ethic is great, and he's been a stellar employee. Great going Mark 👍!



Aundray:

Transitional housing is just that; a temporary place until something permanent is established. Most people returning from prison are first placed in transitional housing and it is our mutual goal to get them into their own residence as quickly as possible. The first task is to secure a job, then save some money and then find housing. We began working with Aundray just over a month ago and he has moved forward incredibly fast and, yesterday, we assisted him with move in costs to his own place along with furniture and home furnishings. He's achieved a lot in a short period of time and there's no limit to his success! Way to go Aundray!



Lynn:

Juvenile lifers. A powerful term for those who committed a crime at a young age and were sentenced to life in prison. Such a harsh sentence was, years back, declared unconstitutional but it has been a long road in getting these individuals re-sentenced and released from prison. Lynn M. was a juvenile lifer who was released in June after, as he says, “33 years 5 months 25 days 8 hours 15 minutes” in prison. He is bright, articulate and determined and we have helped with basic necessities (clothes

etc.), furniture etc. for his residence and with getting him upcoming interviews for solid employment. He is eager to help others and be a productive member of the community. Second chances are what life is about and Lynn is definitely making the most of his opportunity and we are happy to be beside him.



Jerry:

Much of the joy in what we do is the relationships we build. With those we help, with those working at non-profits that refer people to us, with donors to Here to Help etc. Jerry McGhee obtained a job with the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) but was awaiting the arrival of his State ID before he could get paid and needed some “survival” help which we provided. He was ecstatic and appreciative. We are happy for him and that CEO, and our friend Director Nina Hicks, could provide him a job. All about relationships. With CEO. With Nina. With Jerry. 👍👍👍



A great past 30 days for sure and we look forward to what the next 30 days brings!

Stay well!

All the best,

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