



OCTOBER UPDATE FOR RETURNING HOPE TO RETURNING CITIZENS PROGRAM

One of the largest obstacles to the success of returning citizens is transportation. Someone can be trained with a skill set to obtain a good job and they can eventually get hired for that job, but if they can't obtain transportation to that job then there is no way they will be successful.

Transportation is by far the most popular question we are asked at the first meeting we have with any returning citizen. Knowing the significance of transportation, we help in a variety of ways:

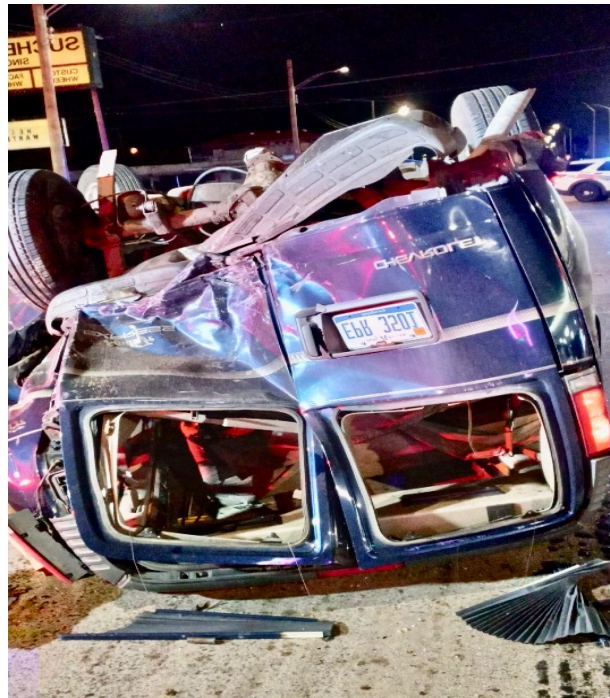
- 1. Car repairs**
- 2. A used vehicle through our *Working Cars for Working People* program**
- 3. Cost of Road Test to obtain license**
- 4. Bicycles**
- 5. Bus passes**
- 6. Temporary assistance via United Way and their Ride United program designed to assist those who have a temporary problem with transportation, and they provide Lyft or Uber assistance.**

An unbelievable story from last month is that of Tremayne as very lucky to be alive is all that crossed our minds when we saw the photos of Tremayne's hit and run accident early Saturday morning on his way to work.

Amazingly, he escaped without injury, but his van was totaled.

Suddenly, all his worries started coming in fast as with no vehicle to get to work, he has no income, loses his great job, can't pay rent etc.

We got things going in a hurry when he contacted us right after the accident. We arranged transportation for him to get to and from work and we began the process of assisting him with getting another used vehicle. We helped alleviate his worries as fast as we could.



Tremayne has been one of the most successful returning citizens we have worked with, working hard from the time of his release, and also obtaining his Commercial Driver's License and then getting a great job driving trucks.

Less than one-week post-accident, we provided him a very nice Buick Lucerne with very low miles.

Tremayne was very appreciative and said it all with a happy "Hallelujah!":



Additional stories of some of those we have helped over the past month include the following returning citizens. Enjoy!

LEON:

Three weeks! A record for anyone we have helped who was coming back from prison and Leon was able to accomplish, in only 21 days, all of the following:

1. Obtained his old job back
2. Received full time hours
3. Got his Driver License
4. Began his job and saved money for move in costs
5. Found a home to rent
6. Rented the home

We helped Leon a bit along the way and helped him with home furnishings and furniture this week, but he was definitely a man on a mission with all he accomplished in such a short period of time. Congrats to Leon! A record that will be hard to beat.



RANARD:

If you're spending 20 plus years behind bars, the question emerges what are you going to do with your time?

For some Michigan prisoners the answer has been to pursue learning through Jackson Community College degree offerings. Ranard is one of those who just received his degree during a recent prison ceremony. His father drove from Detroit to watch his son receive his diploma. Ranard went to prison at 16 and education was the last thing he thought he would pursue.

So, congrats to him and the 31 others at Cotton Correctional Facility in Jackson, who recently got their college degree, and they could not be prouder of themselves. When we work with returning citizens, like Ranard, the success rate is quite high as getting a job and most everything else is much easier!



FRED:

Two years. That's how long we've been working with returning citizen Fred before he was ready to get into his own housing. Through no fault of his own his path has not been as smooth as possible with layoffs, being dismissed from jobs when his felony background was uncovered, prior living situations not working out etc.

But his perseverance has found him employed at the same job for a while now and he is self-sufficient to handle rent and all other expense of being on his own. We have helped him a lot over the last few years and are very excited to help him move in today. A long road but he never gave up!



LARRY:

Another great company for being willing to hire returning citizens, paying them a great wage per hour, and giving them incentives to earn bonus pay as well is Lipari Food Distributors. A big shout out to them!

Larry has been working a few months now for Lipari a few months now and is doing great and couldn't be happier working there. He's saving money while living in the halfway house as a Federal returning citizen.

We will be getting him into his own housing very soon and he's a great success story with a strong work ethic and great attitude! 🙌



DAVID:

It's said someone can go from the "penthouse to the outhouse" very quickly.

The fall from the top to the bottom can happen fast with a series of poor decisions as it did for David as he went from a very powerful job and a good income to prison.

But the measure of a person is how they handle adversity and coming back from the bottom is not an easy path, but David is navigating it quite well since his recent return from prison.

He is in a position to resume his prior job and he's learned from his mistakes. That is all that can be asked of someone who finds themselves in David's situation and we expect him to continue on his current path and become very successful, once again.



DANIEL:

Wow, wow, wow. Sometimes when we meet a returning citizen for the first time they have only been out a few days but already have a job in place, have investigated potential housing and are so well versed in our Returning Hope to Returning Citizens program, from our website, that they clearly know all we can do for them.

Such as Daniel, who had a very nice job when we first met and shortly thereafter had a rental lease in place. We helped him with move in costs and when he does move in two weeks we will be there with furniture and home furnishings.

All the while knowing his intelligence, perseverance and work ethic have him clearly on a great path of success!



GREGORY:

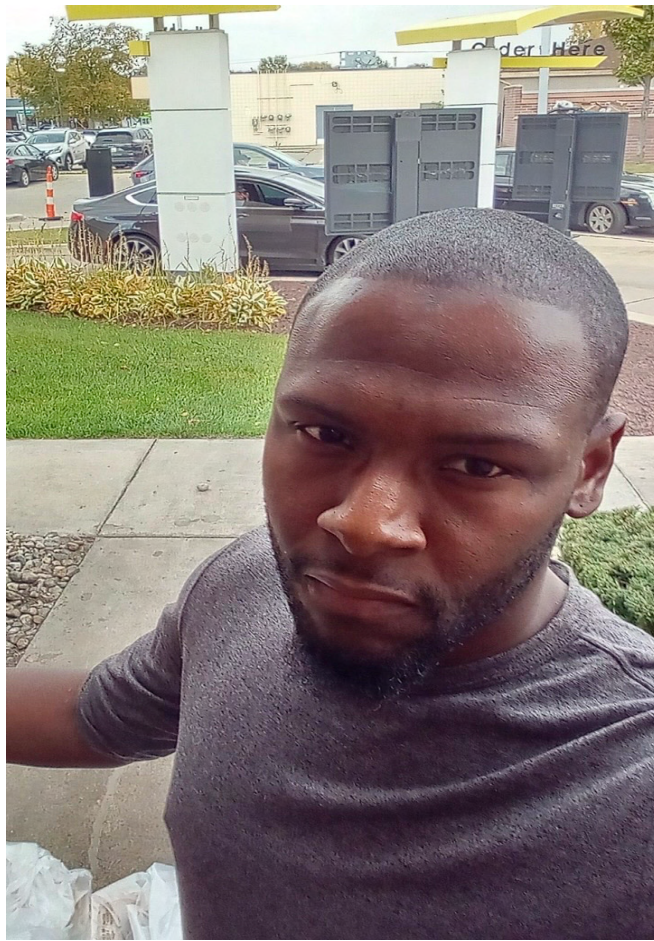
"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" is a common saying that originated from a Chinese proverb.

This saying teaches that even the longest and most difficult things have a starting point; something which begins with one first step.

So, it is with returning citizens whose most difficult task upon release is taking that first major "step" to begin the path towards self-sufficiency.

As it was with Gregory who had to adjust to many things upon his release and has now taken his first "step" on his journey to success by beginning a job at McDonald's as a dishwasher.

We've helped him in various ways, and he's just gotten new housing as he's able to pay rent and every day is a "step" closer to complete self-sufficiency.



DEMETRIUS:

Sometimes you just got to do what you got to do and that is very true for those returning from Federal prison.

These individuals are first placed into transitional housing where they are in a hybrid space with a lot of restrictions on what they can do and where they can go, before they're allowed to move out to what is called "home confinement."

They often take jobs within walking distance of their transitional housing and work hard at manual labor positions before they can leave their situation and obtain jobs that are more aligned with their educational background and skill level.

Demetrius is one of those individuals who just started a manual labor job but has realistic plans for the next step when he leaves Federal housing and can resume his prior career. He's got a great attitude and will do wonderful moving forward! We've assisted in various ways (including finding clothing for his 6'7" frame) and will help a lot more in the near future.



WILLIAM:

9 cents per hour!

That's what some Michigan prisoners earn while working during their incarceration.

Needless to say, when they get out and are offered a job earning about 192 times that amount at \$17.30 per hour they jump at the opportunity.

William has been out less than 10 days after serving his five-year sentence and he's been able to get a job with Magna International for that amount, however the job comes with a bit of a price.

When we met William in person yesterday he advised that his shift is currently 12 hours per day and a whopping seven days a week! Wow.

Despite that grueling schedule, William was incredibly excited to be working again and being paid a good wage.

We have helped him get basic necessities and work clothes and are ready to next get him into his own housing.

And no more 9 cents per hour!



BRENDA:

Bags to Butterflies.

A catchy name for a company that provides formerly incarcerated women an opportunity for immediate employment and success after prison by creating handbags and accessories for sale.

We have helped a lot of the women working there and including Brenda who we just assisted by getting her into a furnished residence along with all home furnishings.

The creator of Bags to Butterflies, Michelle, came along with Brenda when we met her to provide the home furnishings, and both were very excited:



ANTHONY:

Here is the story of Anthony Kyles summed up in one recent newspaper headline: “Murder convictions overturned; Michigan man released after 25 years behind bars.”

Indeed, the Conviction Integrity Unit determined he was wrongfully convicted and Anthony, who had been sentenced to life in prison for murder, has finally been freed.

His mother and father each died while Anthony was in prison. Needless to say, Anthony has missed out on a lot of things over the past 25 years and said: “This is an overwhelming day. I’m happy and I’m excited about finally being out.”

We have begun working with him and assisting in various ways to make his transition as smooth as possible. Nice to see justice properly served. Unfortunately, a long time in coming to this point.



I hope you enjoyed these stories of just a few of the many returning citizens we had the pleasure of assisting in October.

Best wishes for a great Thanksgiving.

Bob

