



JANUARY UPDATE FOR RETURNING HOPE TO RETURNING CITIZENS PROGRAM

What a year! As shown in the charts below, 2021 was a record setting year for Here to Help in both the number of people we assisted (**2227**) and the amount of assistance we were able to provide (**\$919,416.95**)!

That is **\$2518.95** per day for 365 days straight.

These large numbers were due to various factors including COVID-19 continuing to wreak economic havoc, the severe flood damage in the Detroit area last summer resulting in a large number of emergency needs, and 2021 was the first calendar year of operation for our returning citizens program.

Here is a breakdown of what we were able to do at Here to Help for 2021 and a separate chart delineating what our Returning Hope to Returning Citizens program accomplished:

HERE TO HELP FOUNDATION OVERALL:

Here to Help 2021	Number of Grants	Cost of Grants
Walmart Gift Cards	1117	\$204,513.00
Furniture	183	\$135,010.00
Cars	66	\$178,893.65
Car repairs	147	\$98,704.50
Rent	124	\$82,945.00
Security Deposit	88	\$53,885.00
Tools/equipment	65	\$22,314.65
Home furnishings	108	\$26,955.84
Clothing for Work	59	\$11,668.57
Utilities	25	\$11,320.63
Miscellaneous	245	\$93,206.11
Total	2227	\$919,416.95

RETURNING HOPE TO RETURNING CITIZENS:

Here to Help RHTRC 2021	Number of Grants	Cost of Grants
Walmart Gift Cards:	1117	\$204,513.00
RHTRC Rent:	68	\$42,260.00
RHTRC SD:	66	\$42,575.00
RHTRC AI's Furniture:	144	\$108,015.00
RHTRC Car repairs:	97	\$61,485.66
RHTRC Cars:	40	\$101,093.65
RHTRC Home Furnishings:	106	\$26,385.87
RHTRC Tools/equipment	64	\$22,134.65
RHTRC Clothing for Work	59	\$11,668.57
RHTRC Utilities	10	\$4,302.38
RHTRC Miscellaneous (phone bill, bus pass, food, SOS fees, work clothes, hotel, gas, bicycle, eye glasses, etc.)	194	\$44,579.32
RHTRC Total:	1965	\$669,013.10

The year closed with some wonderful success stories of returning citizens.

Here as just some of the hard working and determined individuals that we helped this past month:

ANTHONY:

Calling something "“life changing” is a powerful description and not to be used lightly. We have helped Anthony in various ways, but we felt that Anthony’s life had been changed when we recently got him a job at the Detroit Water Department. But we refrained from describing it that way when texting him about the job offer. Funny enough, in his reply to us, he said: “Bob, this is life changing! I couldn’t be happier and can never thank Here to Help enough for all you have done for me. I won’t let you down!”

Indeed, life changing. We know Anthony will be incredibly successful at the job. And we got him well equipped with work clothes for his first day at this outdoor job, during the cold winds of winter.



SHERITA:

Mothers, who are also returning citizens, have an added dimension of transition as they often resume the role of primary care giver for their children who, usually, were being raised by a grandmother or other relative.

Sherita returned from prison and began re-establishing her relationship with her three children and resumed her role as mom. We assisted by getting her into her own residence and we provided furniture etc. for Sherita and her children and good things are happening as they had their first Christmas together in years!



CHRISSIE:

Wanting to “pay it forward” is a familiar refrain we receive from returning citizens. From offering their skills in home construction, masonry, carpentry or even helping us with transporting other people to work, returning citizens are **ALWAYS** offering their help and we are often able to utilize that assistance. Such as Chrissie who works for New Leaf staffing agency as operations manager and will be of great assistance to us in immediately getting jobs for those we work with as they are released from prison. As we help her, she’s helping us. A great relationship!



JASON:

Children of an incarcerated parent are three times as likely to suffer from behavioral issues or depression. It's difficult when a parent is no longer part of a child's daily life as it was for Jason's young son. His wife also gave birth to their second son soon after Jason started his prison sentence.

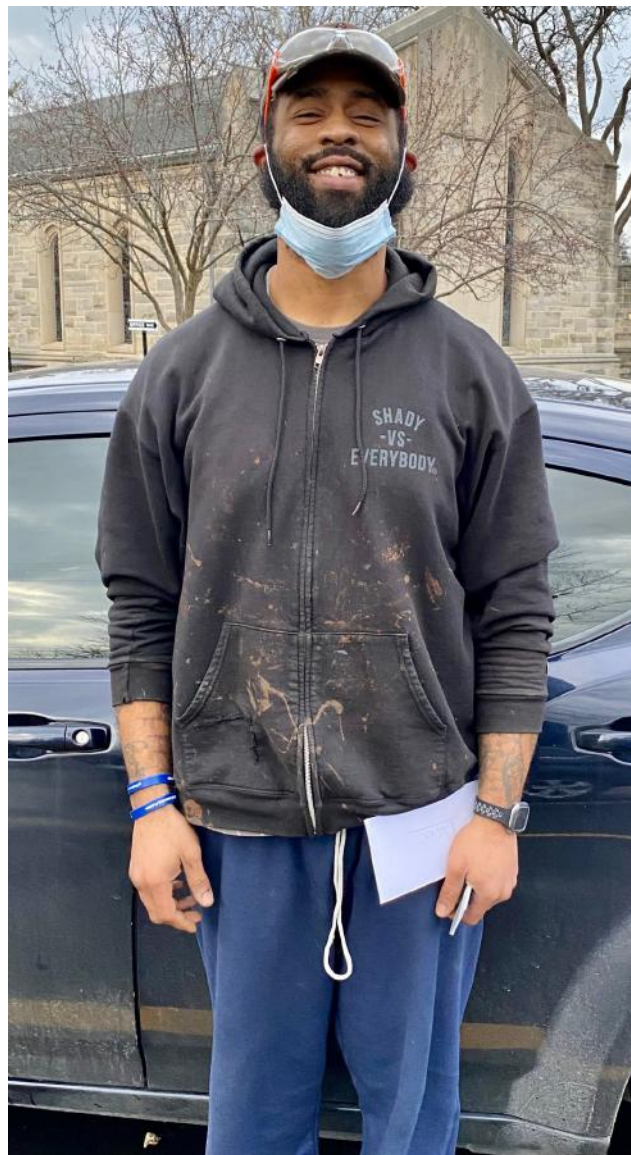
Jason was gone for seven years and is now rebuilding a relationship with his teenage son and establishing a bond with his seven-year-old son. All is going well, and we've helped Jason in many, many ways as he continues to be a great success story. And his children are doing very well also.



DARIUS:

Perfect storm. A rare combination of events coming together to produce a very bad situation. Darius experienced COVID related issues where he'd been living resulting in his being homeless, supply chain issues at work causing a two-week layoff without pay, an unexpected car repair cost, and needing to contribute his share of family funeral costs for the recent passing of his mother. The perfect storm causing him to currently be living in his vehicle. And during last month's holiday season.

He's working again but has to wait for his next paycheck and we helped him get into temporary housing and helped with clothing and food etc.



ARMOND:

14 cents per hour! That's what a prisoner may earn while working when incarcerated. Once they are released, we can assist in getting them a job paying \$20.00 - \$30.00 per hour and they are incredibly hard-working employees. It's also a wonderful feeling for them to be promoted and/or receive a raise etc. As it was for Armond, who has a great job with SK International, but they moved into new headquarters on January 3rd, further from Armond's home and he

needed help with transportation. We were able to provide him a great used car, with only 71,000 miles, and he was incredibly appreciative!



DENISE:

In the children's movie "Jungle Book," Balu the Bear sings: "The bare necessities of life will come to you." And strange as it sounds, that's our goal with returning citizens during the first few days after they are released from prison. We meet with them and provide gift cards so they can obtain those basic necessities including new clothes, shoes, toiletries, food etc. which is incredibly important as they are released with absolutely nothing. As it was for Denise who said, "Your kindness is so appreciated as I was able to get everything I needed, including Levi's, flannel shirts, boots for work, a winter coat, toiletries etc. Thanks for making this transition so much easier." You're welcome Denise.



THOMAS:

“I'm trying to make all the right decisions but right now it is getting hard because it seems as though I face roadblock after roadblock.”

We hear that a lot with returning citizens who confront so many obstacles. Thomas texted us those words as he encountered complications getting his Social Security card, difficulty with busses not running when he finished his 12-hour shifts, being turned down from apartment complexes due to his background etc. We helped remove obstacles for him and he's now in his own home, has his own car to get to work etc. He's now brimming with pride and confidence. Way to persevere Thomas!



JERRY:

Donated cars are a great way to help us help others. We are very selective in providing those cars to those who've demonstrated much personal achievement in reacclimating to life outside prison. Such as Jerry who has completed electrician training, obtained a great job, bought a home from the Detroit Land Bank, fixed it up, and has volunteered by helping other returning citizens. We've helped him along the way and were overjoyed to provide him, the other day, a great donated vehicle. Congrats Jerry, you deserve it!



JAQUAN:

Lost opportunity occurs in choosing the wrong course of action. Returning citizens may have experienced that in their past. It's the successful people that recognize a second chance to get it right. Jaquan's prison sentence took him away from his daughter, but he's now rebuilding that relationship and also bonding with his new grandson. We've helped him a lot and just got him a wonderful job opportunity making very good money.

And we know he will make the most of that and his success will continue. Congrats Jaquan!



OSSIE:

“Make your own magic” is a mantra for self-empowerment as sometimes you just have to take matters into your own hands. Ossi, a returning citizen, had applied to numerous apartment complexes but because of his felony background he was always turned down after paying the application fee.

Finally, he decided to put his well-earned money into purchasing a fixer upper home through the Detroit Land Bank. We have since helped him in many ways including providing new furniture, purchasing home construction materials etc. Over time, his building skills were able to create a wonderful home of his own. Congrats Ossi!



Those are just some of the wonderful stories of this past month.

All the best,

Bob Schwartz

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