



Amazingly, they have now contributed over **\$500,000** in total to the program over the last year. We can't thank them enough, though we've tried lol.

It is nice to receive their support and their acknowledgement of the significance of what we are doing for returning citizens.  
**Thanks SLF!**

## **THE WORST:**

### **1. Flooding**

The city of Detroit and surrounding communities were hit hard the weekend of June 26<sup>th</sup> by tremendous flooding. This caused a lot of damage for many returning citizens who were living in the basement of their family or at a friend's place. The flooding ruined their clothing, furniture, carpeting and work equipment etc., that we had previously provided, So, we spent a lot of time and effort replacing those items and relocating these individuals to other places to live.



## 2. **A Death in the Family**

For those pet owners amongst us, I need not explain the unbearable pain of losing your loved one. Our dog, Henry, arrived when we were launching Here to Help in 2007 and he became an integral part of everything. He was the friend of so many grantees that adored him and welcomed seeing him again and again and again. Very often we receive random texts asking, “How is Henry?” or requests for a picture of him.

Henry would enthusiastically go to VOA to “help” grantees select a car; go to homes to “help” unpack home furnishings, tag along with a wagging tail when a rent check or security deposit was delivered to someone etc. His loss hit us incredibly hard. For those interested in our tribute to him, here is the link to our Facebook post on his passing:

[Henry Schwartz](#)





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

**ERIC:**

Graduation Day! Such a great accomplishment when a returning citizen completes their program of learning a specific skill/trade, obtains a job and embarks on a successful career. Many of the people we've been working with have recently become graduates, including Eric Abner who just obtained his Commercial Driver's License and the future is very bright! Way to go Eric and all the others who are on similar paths of success. You should be very proud. We definitely are.



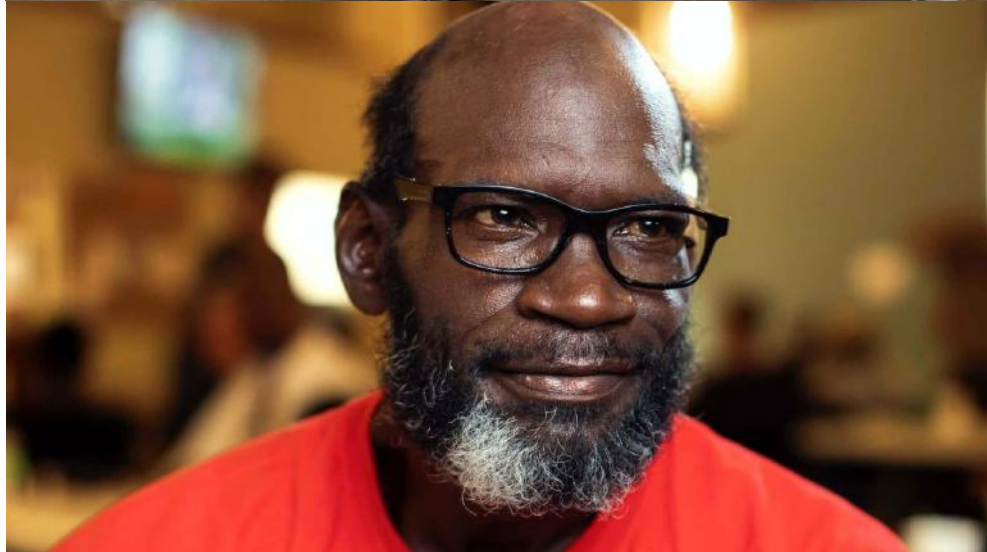
## **Ronaldo:**

For many people, English is not their native language and this is often an issue in receiving medical care. Language barriers can pose a problem for patients/ families fully understanding medical care/treatment issues. We have helped returning citizens, who are bilingual, in completing the coursework to become certified in the field of medical interpretation. The training requires a computer and we're glad to help in providing a computer as we just did with Ronaldo who is on his way to certification.



## **Antonio:**

It is said “Home is not a place, it is a feeling.” That is especially true with those coming from homelessness who finally have a place to call home. It may not be a traditional apartment setting or renting a house as many times the first step from homelessness is renting a room in a building. But it is a great “feeling” for those no longer couch surfing or sharing space at a shelter etc. And when we can provide a nice bed, bedding and other items, it makes everything even better. As we just did with Antonio who is renting a room and loving his new “home.”





## **Isaiah:**

The Detroit Land Bank owns vacant homes that can be purchased, with certain requirements of renovating the home. The goal being to decrease blight and increase occupancy. Returning citizens are often stereotyped by apartment landlords and impacted by policies against renting to those with a criminal record. A way around this is purchasing a home through the Detroit Land Bank. We just helped Isaiah obtain a home and he and his family/friends have already begun renovations. A great solution for everyone: the city, the returning citizens, the neighborhood etc.



## **Quintel:**

Alexander Graham Bell famously said: “When one door closes, another opens” and that is right on point with Quintel Kennedy. Many returning citizens experience difficulties with employment opportunities. Sometimes the solution is to be your own boss as Quintel launched his own personal fitness training company. Here he is proudly wearing some “swag” from his

business and he shared some great t-shirts with us (and he's holding our envelope with our Walmart gift cards to assist him with basic necessities):



### **Edward:**

Transportation issues continue to be the main reason that those with employment wind up losing their job. Edward is the epitome of persistence as after getting his job he would take three busses to and from work and spend a lot of time in transit. He finally saved enough to purchase a used SUV on his own but it soon needed significant repairs. We took care of the cost for him



and now there is no more hours and hours on the bus each day as his vehicle is running great!



**Walter:**

This is a large need today for truck drivers which is partly due to more items being transported as the economy picks up. For returning citizens, getting their Commercial Driver's License is a great career opportunity with a lucrative income. We have assisted a lot of individuals getting their CDL, especially providing help during training when they have no income. It's a great investment in their future success. Including Walter who just got his license and was hired with a very good annual salary. Congrats Walter!



**Charles:**

There is often a degree of anxiety and depression for parolees as the challenges are great. We're there to simply listen at times or to also offer words of encouragement. Charles Wasmer persevered through many struggles and has been incredibly successful with his job and self-sufficient in his own apartment etc. And he just got off parole! He texted: "“Hey just wanted to share this with you seeing as how you are very responsible for making this happen. So from me to you thank you for always finding time to talk even during my most stressful and depressive times. I know I will survive. Thanks for all!” Congrats Charles! Very proud of you.

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
PAROLE BOARD ORDER FOR DISCHARGE FROM SENTENCE

**WAMSER, CHARLES**

**A 886017**

**41**

OFFENDER NAME

MDOC #

CODE

June 17, 2021

PAROLE EXPIRATION DATE

PDM

Wayne/Detroit Metro District/Prob/Par/REP

1391

6/18/21

PAROLE OFFICER

LOCATION

CASE LOAD

DATE DELIVERED

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**Alvin:**

We all make mistakes. Consequences to our actions occur and then we need to move forward. Alvin had achieved his associates degree in Business Management and was on the path to success but a mistake derailed him. He served his sentence and is now making the best of things with working and getting a scholarship to continue his college education in the fall. He ran into an unanticipated car repair bill that we helped him with and he's now continuing to move forward on his path to success! (And that's his energetic dog on the left lol.):





**Allen:**

Allen is a returning citizen who has been working for over a year as a dishwasher at a popular Detroit restaurant but with COVID's restrictions, his job has been off and on. Now, with no restrictions, he's back working full time but didn't have savings to pay for a transmission replacement on his 2008 Chrysler 300. He was struggling in taking many busses to work when Here to Help came through to pay for the repair and ease his burden. He's been a wonderful employee and is now doing great once again!



So June had it's up and downs but in the end there's always the joy in helping returning citizens move forward.

Stay well!

All the best,

*Bob Schwartz*

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