



OCTOBER UPDATE FOR RETURNING HOPE TO RETURNING CITIZENS PROGRAM

GREAT STORY:

Although the following is a story that doesn't just involve returning citizens we were helping but includes some of the general public applying to our Working Cars for Working People program, it is too great a story not to share in this newsletter.

It shows the very broad impact of Here to Help and how many things are interconnected.

We were helping a great car grantee, **Yolanda**, with a used vehicle the last week in September. She is a hard-working employee at the Detroit Housing Commission, and we were meeting her at a used car lot in Detroit to provide her a used vehicle.

Upon arrival we saw that the car she was going to receive was being detailed by **Oscar**, a returning citizen we have been working with for many months now. **John**, another returning citizen we have been helping, is also present and working on fixing the outside brick on the office and Yolanda is being dropped off by an Uber driver, **Tasha**, that we helped with her back rent two weeks ago!

Five unrelated people all converging together and having one thing in common. Here to Help assisted them with their emergency needs! Just a tremendously uplifting and amazing story which highlights how many lives Here to Help touches and a remarkable coincidence of five of those people being unconnected to each other but all converging together on one afternoon at the same location.

Having been running Here to Help since 2007, this story really touched and resonated with us. And the following are great stories of some of the returning citizens we had the pleasure of helping this past month. Enjoy!

KENNETH:

Convicted at 18 years of age, sentenced to two life terms, serve 16 years and then all charges are dismissed, and you are a free man. Such is the story of Kenneth Nixon who was exonerated last year and who we have had the pleasure of assisting.

Although he walked out of a prison as an innocent man, he still faced many hurdles similar to returning citizens, but he has made the most of things and is a student at Wayne State University, President of Organization of Exonerees, a Mayoral Fellow for the City of Detroit, Criminal Justice Reform Advocate and is now working with the City of Detroit. We are happy to have been a part of the process of his success.

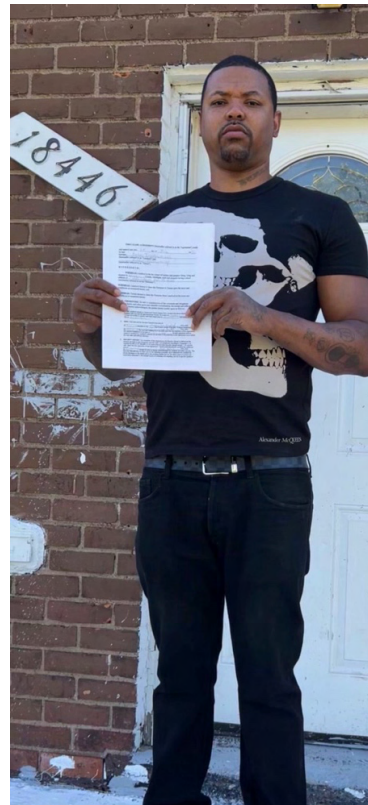
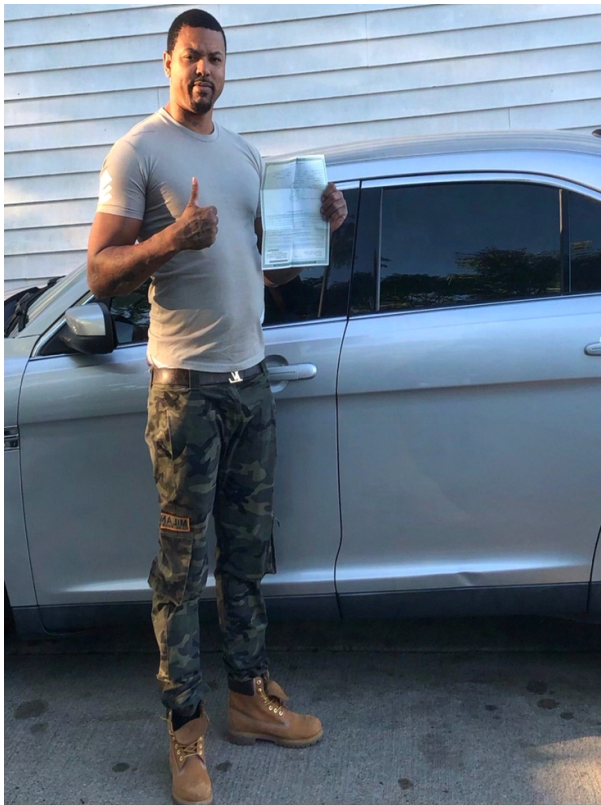


RODRICO:

A life altering week for returning citizen RodRico who we've been working with for over a year!

He has been working very hard and everything fell into place as we were able to assist him with move in costs to his new home and provided lots of furniture for him and on top of that he has finally been able to stop worrying about how he was going to get to and from work as we provided him a nice Ford Taurus!

He's a great employee and can enjoy the fruits of his labor and rest his head on his new bed in his new home with his new car in his driveway. Can't have a better week than that!



DORIEL:

Many returning citizens often found religion or had their faith enhanced while in prison. Whether it was a way to help with their hope or to establish a connection with a higher being or find a group with

common beliefs, it often served as a means to cope with their existence in a prison cell.

Doriel was such an individual and his faith has guided him as he returned to his community. We've worked with him for well over a year and just helped get him into his own housing. He has always been kind, appreciative and courteous and it's been our ongoing pleasure to help him.



KENNETH:

It's much smoother sailing when a returning citizen truly wants to be successful, and Kenneth is representative of such individuals.

Shortly after his release from prison he enrolled in the Greening of Detroit six-week program where he learned skills to get a job and he did so well that Greening of Detroit didn't want to let him go and wound up hiring him. We helped him find a place to live and helped him with the move in costs and furniture and home furnishings.

He's doing great and very comfortable in his new home that we helped him move into, along with providing furniture and home furnishing). He's doing great at his new job and with his new life on the outside of prison. He's proud, we're proud and good things will continue.



ALFONZO:

Thanks Sis! So many times, siblings come through as one did for Alfonzo when he came back from a 22-year prison sentence. Big sis welcomed him into her home, and he's been with her for six months now. He's doing great having a good job at Comprehensive Logistics where he's a perfect employee working 12-hour shifts.

We have helped him in various ways but without his big sister looking out for him and helping him as well, he wouldn't be nearly as

successful. So, shout out to big sister and we will continue to assist Alfonzo and he should be in his own residence very shortly. All going very well!



VERDELL:

It's free and virtually guaranteed to make you feel better. A simple action that gives so much is a hug.

Verdell gives hugs freely and emotionally because after just two weeks out of prison he is thankful, excited, and happy. We've met together a few times now in helping him on his return to society and each time his appreciation, joy and love is conveyed through hugs.

He has a new job and is planning his future with a place of his own and he's thankful for all we can do for him, and we are happy to help. Verdell knows we are here to provide support, care, and comfort. And a hug shows everything. 🤗🤗🤗



KAYLA:

Children. Almost every returning citizen we work with has sons and/or daughters who have felt the pain of having their parent be away from them while a prison sentence is served.

As with Kayla who just came home after a few years away and was reunited with her sons and she's ready to resume her role as mother as

we help her with employment and getting into her own home with her boys once again.

Grandma had come through while Kayla was gone and now mom is back with her love and everyone is very, very happy. A nice reunion!



LEBRON:

UPDATE: Many of you may recall the fatal fire last January at a transitional housing residence that injured many residents including Lebron who had to jump from an upstairs window to avoid burning. He damaged his knee and hand, both requiring surgery, and has been unable to return to his job as he struggled in getting unemployment benefits and any form of governmental assistance.

We've never left his side as we have continuously assisted him in meeting his needs and things are beginning to finally look up as his health is better and new housing is upcoming as well as returning to work. A long road for sure but things are improving!



JOHN:

During 46 years in prison, you'd think someone would receive an introduction before release on how to use a smartphone, a computer etc. Unfortunately, not.

John is a bright individual and educated himself as best as possible on how to make his transition, back to his community, as smooth as possible after all those years away.

But his actual experience, after one month home, has been very difficult with promised help not emerging. Except for us as we have helped John and look forward to continuing to help him gain employment and housing of his own in the near future.

He is organized and determined but has a lot of catching up and we'll make that process a bit easier. Starting with how to use a smartphone!



MICHAEL:

No matter what one may think about Amazon and their large impact on business, we have to give them a large shout out for helping returning citizens.

They have hired many of those we work with such as Michael who is 70 years old, coming back from prison a month ago and has a

disability. He just got a job at Amazon in Pontiac and the future is looking bright!

We have helped him in numerous ways already and look forward to watching his success at Amazon and helping him get into his own housing etc. as he continues on his path to success. So, kudos to Amazon for willing to give people second chances!



RONNELL:

“I don’t have one piece of angry bone in my body. I can tell you that from the bottom of my heart.”

Those are the words of Ronnell Johnson after a 14-year fight in proving his innocence as last June he was finally released from prison as a free man and his case dismissed.

Ronnell is indeed approaching everything with positivity and also gratitude for all those who assisted him in proving his innocence. We are assisting him with everything involved moving into his new home and he’s now also building his relationship with his 16-year-old daughter.

We know he is going to be incredibly successful with his great attitude!



LEON:

“There’s always a spot for you here.”

Sometimes those words are legit and sometimes they are meaningless. For Leon, they were definitely legit when he was sentenced to prison for drug possession and his boss at Madhouse Bar & Grill told him he would be welcomed back when he got out.

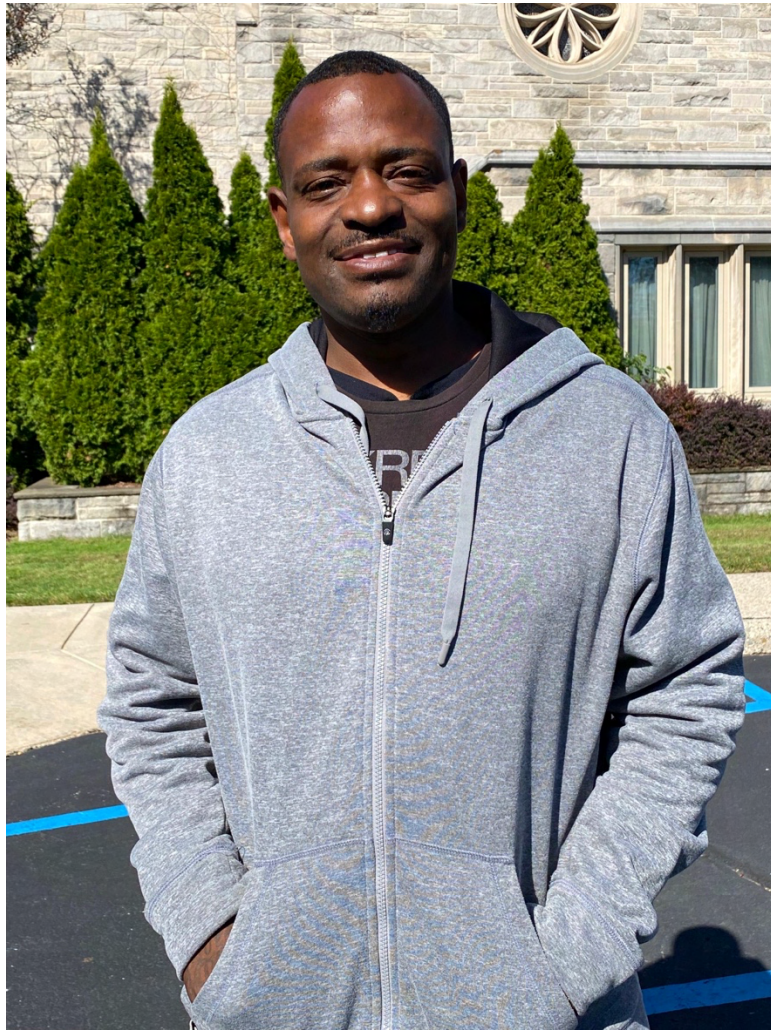
Within a few days of his release on September 20th, Leon was back at his former chef job which really helps make his transition back home so much easier. We’ve helped him with his work clothes and other basic necessities and are looking forward to helping him soon with housing and, of course, a nice meal cooked by Chef Leon. 🙌



GEORGE:

Sometimes you do have to let go of the past to move ahead and that's exactly what George felt he had to do when he came back from prison which meant letting go of former friends and even family members whose presence was not going to be helpful to him staying out of trouble and moving ahead in a successful and positive and legal manner.

It's not always easy but George did what needed to be done, and he's now successfully enrolled in a HVAC program and doing great on a very solid path of success. We have assisted him in various ways and look forward to providing more help as he shed his rocky past and is on a smooth course for the future!



GRADY:

A big shout out to the City of Detroit in hiring lots of the returning citizens we work with in a variety of jobs including demolition of old and abandoned homes. Grady got a job doing such work. As he said, “I did this type of job before in my past. It kind of saved me from being on the streets and has helped me in many ways.”

A job is very critical for a variety of reasons from earning money to self-esteem to staying focused and productive and Grady has been doing great because of that job. We have helped him in a variety of ways, and we are placing him into his first rental home this week as he continues forward on a great path of emotional recovery.



Have a great October!

All the best,

Bob