



December 1, 2016

NEW BEGINNINGS

RECORD EXPUNGED – DIGNITY RESTORED

Off to visit an employer for better paying work, Derek Watkins presents hope and readiness. Flashing his confident smile, dressed to impress with a professional resume in hand, he waits for the response HR promised to give. Days later, yet again, the HR department rejects Derek's application. Derek has a long and stable work history, reliable transportation, and a positive attitude. Limited by felonious convictions from his young adult life, his past appeared to be always more important than his actions today. Those convictions kept him from moving upward at his current job making it impossible for Derek to find work paying more than \$8 per hour.

On Thursday, September 8, 2016, Judge Leslie Ghiz granted Mr. Watkins an expungement! There were only a few witnesses in the courtroom with no media presence. None of that mattered to Derek because he had achieved a major milestone - a victory worth celebrating with those who helped along the way. Thanks to the lawyers at the Ohio Justice and Policy Center, along with Brother Mike Murphy of the HELP Program, Derek can now get past the barrier of a felony conviction and career immobility. His expungement has opened many doors not only for his



future prospects but, more importantly, for his family, which includes his young daughter.

Derek Watkins continues to adhere to the steps outlined in his Restoration Action Plan to help returning citizens remove barriers to meaningful employment. Derek is now a registered voter, a regular attendee at his church, works full-time, and has custody of his child. As an engaged parent, he has not missed a parent-teacher conference.

Derek is committed to rejoining society as a contributing member. The removal of the felony from his record means he can now take the final step in his restoration to gainful, satisfying employment.

Derek's long-term goal is to find a position where his intelligence and work ethic will lead to career advancement. He is finally moving closer to his dream of becoming a realtor.

Call to Action: Please call Wilson Willard at the HELP program (513)-432-0907 to share names of real estate companies, individuals and/or industry resources willing to further restore Mr. Derek Watkins's dignity by helping him join the Real Estate Industry in any capacity.

“DEREK IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE HELP PROGRAM WORKING SUCCESSFULLY TO PROVE TO SOCIETY THAT REHABILITATION IS POSSIBLE.”
BROTHER MIKE MURPHY

DISMAS JOURNEY

at Our Lady of Lourdes

Arranged by Sister Tracy

“Where does the modern leper have to turn for help?” That is the question Dominic Duren of St. Vincent de Paul posed to the crowd at Our Lady of Lourdes. As the crowd pondered the question, Dominic went on to say, “The Catholic Church is the only place in Cincinnati supporting programs that are available exclusively to felons.”

Dominic Duren is the Ohio Re-entry coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul, and is a felon. After serving over a decade for manslaughter Dominic has become a model citizen. The blessings provided by the HELP program are made possible by the overwhelming generosity of the Catholic Diocese of Cincinnati and the individual parishioners who send donations. Dominic was provided a range of services including employment, anger management, financial literacy, education programming, resume writing assistance, and most important, a career. Dominic has moved from running a local program to working as a professional advocate for re-entry reform.

After Dominic, Lamar Beauchamp spoke to the group. Lamar focused on more than just his personal redemption story and the challenges of prison. Lamar transitioned from talking about the systemic challenges faced by returning citizens to his personal story. The crowd learned about the lack of support and the feeling of hopelessness that engulfed Lamar before finding the HELP program. “After I enrolled in HELP I got a job, housing and assistance cleaning up my record.”

Other participants from HELP included Wilson Willard, Denna Brock and Alysia Barker. Wilson revealed that the real challenge was returning to society. “No one wants to take a chance on you. Landlords, employers, credit card companies and probation officers assume they know everything about you from your record. My



Livingston Beauchamp speaking to Our Lady of Lourdes

record, my one charge, is a snapshot of my life, not the movie!”

Alysia and Denna talked about the added challenge of returning home to their family and needing childcare to start working.

The HELP program is supported by the generosity of St. Francis deSales Parish, St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic parishioners from all over the diocese.

The funding provided allows the HELP program to provide job training, job search assistance, political advocacy and financial assistance. Over 200 felons in Greater Cincinnati access services from HELP per quarter. Some just need a bus pass to get to work, others need a place to live upon leaving a halfway house or prison.

You can support the HELP program!

Please send donations to:

Brother Mike Murphy, Executive Director
The HELP Program
1600 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45206-1815

The program accepts money, food, clothing, vehicles and in-kind services from volunteers. The HELP program also needs additional mentors.

Please LIKE -The HELP Program Cincinnati Facebook's page.

LEADERSHIP CLASS

at HELP

Weakness Identified, Solution Developed!

The idea started from a phone call; Paul Graham wanted to see more HELP members on the Board of Directors. After a brief discussion the lack of experience was identified as the major barrier. The members had never participated in anything like this before and would not sign up out of fear. Adults, who survived prison, in fear of a professional meeting! At the core of their fear was a lack of understanding. What does a board member do? Who decides who is a leader? What if I have a bad idea?

Paul Graham stepped up to answer those questions. Over the next four Wednesday evenings Paul held a lecture and interactive education series on Leadership.



Paul Graham teaching the first class.

The first session was titled, *Leadership: Relationships and Accountability* and in that class the topic was public vs private relationships, and how to build powerful relationships based on self-interest, which leads to accountability.

That exciting first class was followed by *Leadership: Power and Team vs. Family*, where the class learned the process of defining and understanding power dynamics. The team concept versus the family concept, and which gets the best results for the leader.

Feedback and Trust were the topics of the third class. The students learned how to give and receive effective feedback along with an understanding of the components needed to build trust.

The final class was *Leadership: Triggers and Requests* How to give and receive effective feedback. In the final class, Paul discussed the next steps with the participants.



Paul Graham, Board Member of HELP and National Reentry Coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul, teaching HELP members how to become leaders in the community.

Each was asked about their interests, their time commitments and how the HELP program could benefit from their leadership. Soon Paul will be inviting his students to join the Board of HELP, the standing committees and to work as mentors for other members.

Call to Action: The HELP members need coursework and professional development in other areas. If you have experiences and knowledge you wish to share please contact the program about setting up a class! The best way to reach out is by emailing your course idea to Wilson H. Willard III, Board member and Development Director, at HELPProgramCincinnati@outlook.com.

The HELP Program would not exist without the generous support of the individual donors and the support of the following organizations:



The Archdiocese of Cincinnati provides the supportive framework needed to carry out the program mission. Marianist Brothers who run the program include Brother Mike, Executive Director, Brother Kiama, IT Specialist and Brother William, Staff Support.

The Beacon of Hope Business Alliance provides a network of employers committed to providing a second chance for returning citizens. Dan Meyer founded the group and every week a new list of the open positions in BOH member companies is distributed by the dynamic director Katie Schad.



Under the leadership of Tony Stieritz the CCHD provides the funding for a full-time director of the HELP program. Additionally, CCHD helps set up Dismas Journey presentations around the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The generosity of SFDS cannot be overstated! The parish provides a rent-free home to the HELP program, phone lines, internet service, access to a copy machine and custodial services. The ongoing support of Father Gene and his flock are vital to the HELP Program. Additionally, SFDS provides a large contingent of mentors and volunteers.



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul makes the provision of basic needs to HELP members possible. SVDP provides clothing, furniture, bus cards, food, and funds that help members get their licenses reinstated. Paul Graham and Dominic Duren, SVDP employees, are fully committed to the mission of the HELP Program.

The HELP program inspires hope in those who have been convicted of a felony, by providing a caring community of support as well as the tools, education and resources they need to find and maintain employment and become fully self-sufficient and contributing members of our society.