

JUST WORDS

The Stories of Working People In Our Community

Episode 20: Terry

Welcome to Just Words—the stories of working people in our community.

Over the past couple of weeks we've gotten to know Terry, an ex-offender in his 40's who was released from prison in August after serving 8 years.

Out of prison, he is trying to live a new life. He's focusing on work, his daughter, his girlfriend and her daughter. He lives in a group home owned by the Maryland Re-entry Partnership, a program funded by Catholic Charities that works closely with him to help ease his transition back into society. He is doing everything he can to defy the odds that say he will most likely end up back in jail. But it's hard out there.

It's hard to get a job out here now when you have a record. It really is. I am a certified forklift operator, and I have been doing this kind of work for over 15 years. And I know loading and unloading trucks, working in a warehouse, inside and out. And, I put my heart and my soul into it because that was my career. But so many warehouses out there do not believe in giving you a chance. They hear that you've been locked up and their antennas go up and it seems like they are not interested in you after that. You want to be honest with them, but you never get a phone call. I even had a guy send me for the physical, two interviews, urine test, whole nine yards. Gave me the job and everything, timecard and all of it, and then got my background check back and declined. Said he can't give me the position. You know when you have two beautiful little girls and they both want cell phones and one is about to go to her prom and the little 10 year old just had her birthday. You just want to be able to give them the things they want, and that is all I want to do. Because now it is not just me and my daughter, it is my girlfriend and her kid. And it's hard, But I know I have to keep on striving, keep on sending out my resumes, keeping on filling out applications until I land the job I need to get back on my feet to get the job I need to be able to live and take care of my daughter and family.

Terry knows he went to jail because of his own poor decisions. But his life makes you wonder...if ex-offenders had more help and more resources available to them when they got out of prison, would less of them go back?

Listen next week for more about Terry.

Asheru, Cool Out

Produced by Jessica Phillips. Hosted by Marc Steiner.

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