

# REFLECTIONS ON THE *Journey*

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We are nearing the end of an unprecedented year. It was certainly one of intensive, on-the-fly learning and adapting. New challenges that we never predicted presented themselves in our programs, our service delivery, our fundraising and so much more.

***Yet we remain thankful for the work that we accomplished.***

We can't deny that COVID-19 has had an impact on our operations. We lost some key funding causing us to think about our long-term funding model. If anything, however, this experience exposed and reinforced the expertise and dedication of our team, our valuable and innovative programs and our compassionate approach to meeting clients where they are and walking with them on their journey.

Nothing here at Journey to New Life is possible without your generous support and advocacy for what we do. We want to share some of the stories you've impacted and ***thank you for everything you do*** to go on this journey with us and our clients.

## AT THE CROSSROADS

When Aaron\* arrived at Journey to New Life after a short time in prison, he felt like he was at a crossroads. During the time he was incarcerated, he got to know himself. He analyzed all the things that he took for granted. He saw how his incarceration was affecting his mother, his father, his daughter and his seven brothers, who had no choice but to continue on with their lives without him there. He lost a brother during that time, a particularly difficult experience since they were close in age and closely bonded. Because he was incarcerated, Aaron wasn't able to attend the funeral to say his goodbyes and share his sorrow with his family.

During his younger years, Aaron's parents and their family of eight boys fell on hard times sometimes, but they were a close-knit unit. His older brothers looked out for him, and his younger brothers looked up to him, so it weighed heavily on his mind that he had inflicted pain and disappointment on them.

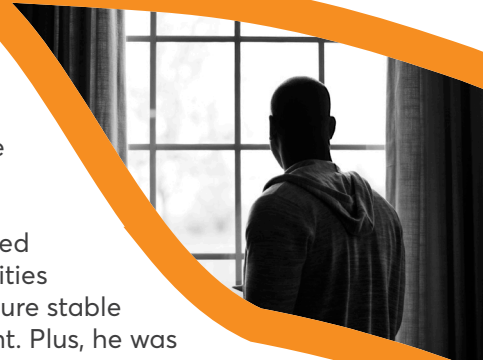
"It was an eye opener," he said. "When you do time and get out of prison, you're a new you. Anyone with any logical thinking would not want to go back to the same situation as before. I wanted a new path. I wanted to try

a new way. Instead of going left again, I wanted to try to go right. I'm very blessed that Journey to New Life came into my life."

Journey to New life helped Aaron with basic necessities and also helped him secure stable housing and employment. Plus, he was able to connect with legal services, thanks in large part to Journey to New Life's partnerships with individuals and businesses in the community. Aaron was intent on regaining full custody of his daughter, a feat he achieved earlier this year. He and his daughter are reunited in the housing he secured through Journey to New Life's program. And, since the two are both in school now, they are literally and figurately learning virtually together through the pandemic.

***Aaron is confident when he says, "I'm the first — and the last — in my family to go to prison."***

\*The client asked for his name to be changed to protect his family from additional hurt.



# FROM INNOCENCE TO INNOCENT

Laquanda "Faye" Jacobs came to Journey to New Life in September 2018. She came as an incredibly afraid young woman. She'd just been released from prison after spending 26 years 7 months and 2 days for a capital murder crime that she and her advocates adamantly say she didn't commit. At her sentencing, Faye became the first and only female in Arkansas sentenced as a juvenile to life in prison without parole, a sentence deemed unconstitutional in 2018 by the U.S. Supreme Court, leading to her release.



***"I feel like I owe my life to Journey to New Life."***

*-Faye Jacobs*

For Faye, getting out of prison and going to a place she'd never been before was overwhelming. She was originally from Little Rock, Arkansas, so to be in Kansas City was a whole new world. She was a mere 16 years old when she entered prison and 43 when she got out. Her parents in Arkansas had grown elderly during the time she was away, and beyond her attorneys, she didn't have any connections in Kansas City.

One of her attorneys asked Faye if she was interested in Journey to New Life. Even though she was scared, she knew she didn't want to be a burden to anyone. So she took the leap and entered Journey to New Life with the hope that she would learn new things. As a resident at Journey House, she was nervous at first. She didn't know if the others knew her story. Much to her surprise, she says she found a very welcoming, loving and judgment-free environment — something she wasn't used to in prison.

## ***Reflections***

It was at Journey House where Faye believes she began again. She had never been responsible for herself or lived independently. She'd never even ridden a bus. "Journey gave me the courage and motivation to do those things," she said. "They told me, yes, you can do it. They were there to help and guide me. They carried me when I couldn't carry myself, and they taught me that my past doesn't define me." When she thinks about what her life might have been without Journey to New Life, she says she truly believes she wouldn't have been as successful as she is. She's very thankful for the legal support she got, but once she was out, she needed something more to become a productive member of society. That's what Journey to New Life is.

"I feel like I owe my life to Journey to New Life," she said.

While incarcerated, Faye says she became accustomed to a certain way of life — institutionalized. But, growing up a pastor's daughter, she always believed in treating people the way you want to be treated. Forgiveness, she says, was something she worked on the whole time, and it wouldn't allow her to have any bitterness, anger or hatred.

## ***Embarking on the next journey***

Recently, Faye started her own business, called Innocence Too. It's a transportation business designed to transport individuals who are re-entering the community after prison to necessary activities like job interviews, doctor's appointments and grocery stores. She wants to help others who've been incarcerated. Faye is also the primary caregiver for her aging mother.

Although Faye was released by the courts with time served, she continues to fight for exoneration. Her case remains under consideration in the Arkansas Governor's office.

***"They carried me when I couldn't carry myself, and they taught me that my past doesn't define me."***

# A LOOK BACK AT 2020



Journey House Residents

*"I look in the mirror today, and I like the woman I am. I feel stronger than I've ever felt."*

*-Regina, Journey to New Life program graduate*



READ THESE SUCCESS STORIES AND MORE AT [BLOG.JTNL.ORG](https://blog.jtnl.org)



*"The organization helped me so much. They tell me to come or call anytime I'm feeling down."*

*-William, Journey to New Life client, with Rita Flynn, Program Director*

## BY THE NUMBERS

Our **RECIDIVISM RATE**, or those who return to prison, is just **10%** compared to the **national average of 67.8%** — meaning virtually no new crime.

**260** Housed permanently

**154** Served by homelessness prevention

**42** Received transitional recovery housing

**1,362** Assisted with emergency assistance

**124** Helped with emergency shelter (Journey to New Life's residential properties)

## OUR MISSION

Journey to New Life maximizes the quality of life for men and women returning to the community from prison or other criminal justice involvement.





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[journeytonewlife.org](http://journeytonewlife.org)

Your help  
makes this  
possible.

## WAYS TO GIVE



### **MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS**

Does your company match charitable contributions? If so, make sure you submit the giving request.



### **PLANNED GIVING**

Remembering Journey to New Life in your will is a great way to create a lasting legacy that reflects your support of the organization's mission.



### **MONTHLY RECURRING GIVING**

If you're giving by credit card, simply check the box to make an ongoing monthly contribution.



### **VOLUNTEER OR DONATE ITEMS**

Journey to New Life is always in need of volunteer assistance and basic living and hygiene items.

[JOURNEYTONEWLIFE.ORG](http://JOURNEYTONEWLIFE.ORG)