



Center for Self-Sufficiency

Inspiring Hope, Fostering Growth

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January 2017 CFSS Community Newsletter

CFSS Holds First Annual Toy Drive



With the holiday season approaching, several of our male members expressed concern regarding their challenges of providing gifts for their children. Without hesitation, CFSS staff took on the task of organizing a toy drive for the members' children. Member Service Coordinators interviewed their members to determine how many gifts would be needed. The final list included approximately 83 children. Staff quickly went to work collecting gifts, wrapping, and organizing each of the gifts according to gender and age.

CFSS' first toy drive was off to a great start. With the help from special contributions made by Board Chair Shaleta Dunn and her family, as well as Board Member Tijuandria Smith and the Milwaukee Wine Lovers, the gifts collected totaled more than 90 items! Human Resources Director Jennifer

Patrick contributed a great deal to this collection with the aid of her friends and neighbors. Becky Redmond-Walker, Mentor Project Coordinator, also garnered support from her personal contacts.

The gifts collected ranged from large play kitchen sets to much sought after toys like Star Wars walkie-talkies and action figures. There were a variety of educational gifts including books, art supplies and puzzles. Additionally, there were a number of hats, gloves, and scarves donated to help keep the little ones warm during Wisconsin's cold winter season.

CFSS' first Annual Toy Drive was a huge success. Thank you to all who offered a helping hand! Our members were very appreciative and the children were overjoyed to get gifts from their dad.



SUCCESS STORIES

It Takes A Village



This African proverb resonates with many, in various families and in communities across the globe. Simply put, it reflects on the emphasis that is placed on coming together to accomplish a goal. At the Center for Self-Sufficiency, this is what we're made of. Whether internally with staff assisting on countless projects, or with our members at large ensuring that they are gaining access to a life of quality, we understand the importance of tapping in to ones support system because it is difficult to succeed alone.

Mantrell Williams is a remarkable young man whom CFSS had the pleasure to meet through our Face Forward program. Like many of us, Williams has experienced life situations that left him feeling alone in this world. Regardless of any unfortunate circumstances, he knew that he was not given a life to merely exist. Instead, he promised himself that he would make the best of his situation.

Williams is a 19 year-old recent graduate of Transition High School and father of a handsome and active toddler. Like many young people, he aspired to further his education with hopes of giving back to his community. With college being a great expense, Mantrell had no idea how he would pay for everything. Although he was offered a scholarship there were still many necessities to be taken care of and he allowed his village to help. Mentors, community members, past teachers and social workers dedicated themselves to this worthy cause, solely due to wanting to see a young man excel in what he's passionate for. CFSS is proud to be among those lending a helping hand. His commitment to evolve and his sincere persona reminds us of the change that we're all looking to see in this world. We wish the best for Mantrell as he begins his journey to higher education at Rainy Rivers Community College in International Falls, Minnesota.

Gaining Access to the Good Life

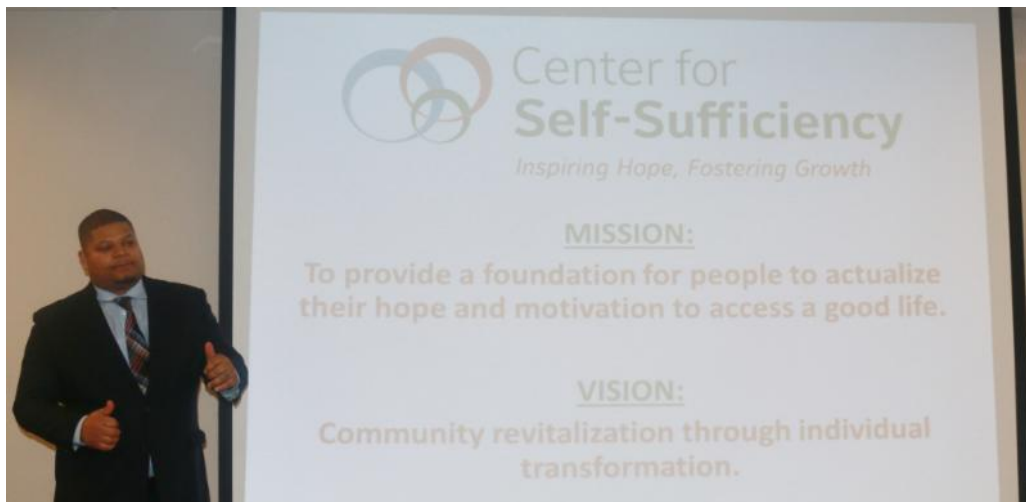
CPOP member Brother Willie Norman was released from MSDF on August 16, 2016. Since his release he has been involved in changing his circle of friends and connecting with positive leaders and advocates within the community.



Willie has been a guest speaker at several community events including an event held at the Milwaukee Art Museum which addressed nonviolence in the city of Milwaukee. Mr. Norman has become an active member of the Fruits of Islam (FOI) and has recently graduated from Pro-Trade Job development where he was praised for being an exceptional leader and role model in the class. As a result of his hard work and dedication he was accepted into the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters as an apprentice in the Carpentry program at MATC. Mr. Norman has a fond interest in agriculture and mentoring youth. As a result he spends a lot of time with Andre Lee Ellis at the Community Garden located on 9th and Ring. Willie Norman is a shining example of what could happen once you dedicate your life to change!

EVENTS

Collaboration Is About Doing More Together Than Any of Us Can Do Alone



Community Partnership Outreach Program (CPOP) collaboration is a way for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and CFSS to work together to meet both agencies missions. On November 16, 2016, CFSS hosted a three-hour workshop integrating lecture, case scenarios & group discussion, panel discussion, brainstorming and reflection. This workshop was designed for CFSS, Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility and the Division of Community Corrections staff to connect by learning about the history of CPOP, identifying the programs current strengths, and proposing ways to strengthen the model and communication between

collaborators.

The most compelling part of the workshop was the member testimonials. The testimonials provided a powerful combination for workshop participants to actively reflect upon their role within the CPOP and how their work positively impacts the lives of Milwaukee residents and their families!



Staff Retreat

Sometimes it's good to step away from the daily grind and spend time together having fun! The Center for Self-Sufficiency held a mini staff retreat in early November at Court Lanes on Mill Road. Staff came together to relax and enjoy a buffet style lunch and group bowling.

Those in attendance were awarded a "Certificate of Superlativeness" which recognized unique aspects and contributions that, together, contribute to the overall success of the organization and our members. Special thanks to Board Member LaMarr Franklin for providing the staff with the delicious chicken wings from Garfield's 502!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Shawn Williams

Youth Member Services Coordinator and Workforce Ambassador

Shawn Williams has a dedicated history of giving back to his community through his work and volunteer efforts. His positive experiences, as well as the challenges he has faced, make him a shining example for our members. Shawn is a champion of our community and he truly believes in giving back.

Shawn was born in Milwaukee and he spent his youth here as well. As a young man in high school, he started his career of supporting others by working as a Group Leader at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Milwaukee. He then attended Morris Brown College in Atlanta where he studied Political Science and continued working for the Boys & Girls Club of Atlanta.

After Shawn returned to Milwaukee he faced a number of challenges that included a period

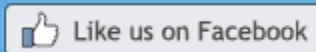


of incarceration. Shawn draws strength by sharing both the victories and the obstacles that he has overcome in his life. After his incarceration he quickly reentered the workforce and spent the next five years working as a Legislative Assistant to Milwaukee County Supervisor Tony Clark before joining Northcott Neighborhood House as their Community Resource Specialist.

Continuing his passion to support others, Shawn returned to school and received an Associate Degree in Theology from Agape Bible College. For many years he was also a dedicated volunteer as the President of the Back to School Festival at the MLK Center where they distributed over 20,000 backpacks to Milwaukee youth. In 2012, he showed his entrepreneurial side by starting and managing Team Levitate, an event planning company. Shawn continued his career when he became a Youth/Young Adult Community Organizer for the Milwaukee Innerscity Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAHA) where he focused on social justice leadership, building partnerships, and reducing incarceration in the 53206 zip code.

In May 2015, Shawn joined the Center for Self-Sufficiency as a Business Services Representative focusing on the promotion and marketing of CFSS Workforce Services to the employment community. As CFSS has grown and our needs have changed, Shawn has additionally contributed as both a Member Services Coordinator and a Workforce Ambassador. His recent efforts to recruit youth and young adults into the Face Forward program and coordinate their training needs are truly appreciated.

Shawn strives to connect with each member that he supports. Through his open and honest dialogue with our members, Shawn is an inspiration to the men and women that we serve.



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