



# Center for Self-Sufficiency

*Inspiring Hope, Fostering Growth*

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## April 2017 CFSS Community Newsletter

### ***BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY: NEEDS VS. WANTS***



CFSS Members return from their "needs shopping" activity

Needs are things that we truly can't be without, such as nutritious food, a place to live, a warm winter coat, a good pair of shoes, and transportation. When *CFSS Community Partnership Outreach* Members are asked what they'd like to address immediately upon release from incarceration, most often the response is, "I need a job so that I can take care of myself and my family." The reality is that, often times, until one's basic needs are met, obtaining employment is unrealistic.

This conundrum led to the development of the project's two week Engage Your Power Within series. This series aligns with CFSS's Mission, ***To provide a foundation for people to actualize their hope and motivation to access a good life***, and provides members with a variety of tools to improve decision making and life skills, increase employment opportunities, and develop financial literacy.

During financial literacy workshops, we discuss the difference between the needs and wants along with the importance of using resources wisely. Members then identify their own needs and wants.

When trying to figure out their needs and wants, members ask themselves questions, like:

- What items do I need in order to get ready each day? Maybe a toothbrush, towel, shampoo?
- Do my children need diapers or formula?
- How about my clothes? Do I need shoes, socks, pants?
- How do I get to work? Do I need bus fare, a bike, a valid driver's license, or good walking shoes?
- Do I have any sports or hobbies (pro-social activities) that need equipment? Like a basketball or cleats?

An incentive for participating in the Engage Your Power Within series is the opportunity to shop for the needs items identified during class. Prior to shopping, men learn the importance of identifying the items they need prior to going to the store, how to track spending while shopping, and how to determine if they are really getting a "deal" on a lower priced item. The men also create a budget and discuss comparison shopping. This shopping field trip allows for members to not only learn in a classroom setting, but to also put into practice the lessons learned. This results in positively reinforced pro-social attitudes and behaviors.

Since we began the shopping outings some of the men have been able to purchase casual clothing as well as clothing for job interviews, hygiene items, diapers and clothing for their children, and recreational items that meet their pro-social needs. When asked for their feedback regarding the shopping field trip one of our members, Antonio, stated "At first I didn't think I needed anything because my family is helping me out. But now that I've actually done this activity I appreciate the opportunity, and I'm grateful for this workshop and the staff for showing me how to be self-sufficient!"

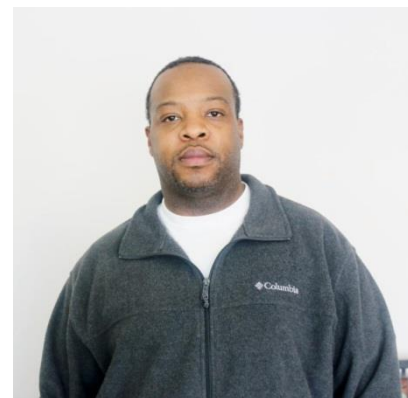
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## SUCCESS STORY

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### ***Hard Work + Dreams + Dedication = Success!***

CFSS is proud to introduce you to Mr. Phillip Allen! Mr. Allen was enrolled in the Windows to Work (W2W) program in February, 2016, and has consistently stayed involved with the program for over a year! While he was incarcerated Mr. Allen not only obtained his GED, but he also completed an introductory forklift operating class. Towards the end of his incarceration Mr. Allen was transferred to a work-release site where he maintained employment throughout his stay. Gaining and maintaining employment was always Mr. Allen's main goal. Within a month of his release in October, 2016, he gained full-time employment and has since maintained employment at the same company! In addition, Mr. Allen has been able to obtain and maintain stable housing on his own without any help from the W2W program. In order to improve his chances of obtaining higher paid employment, he is currently in the process of enrolling in a forklift certificate program. Mr. Allen's long-term career goal is to pursue a career as a CNC Operator, and CFSS has no doubt that he will continue to succeed!



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## PROGRAM UPDATE

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### **PROJECT F.R.E.E.**



As you may recall, CFSS was one of only four organizations throughout the country to receive the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's three year grant entitled "Strengthening Relationships Between Young Fathers, Young Mothers, and Their Children"! As CFSS continues through the planning phase of this grant we have decided upon a name for our project. Moving forward, "OJJDP Strengthening Relationships" will now be known as Project F.R.E.E - Fatherhood Relationship Engagement and Education! Project F.R.E.E. will work exclusively with young men at RYOC who are rejoining the Milwaukee community upon release. This project will promote freedom from incarceration, from poverty, and from the cycle of absentee fatherhood. Diana Rhyne will be their "Freedom Ambassador" and will be assisting the Members in their journey to "freedom." Her primary role will be to work as a guide for the young fathers of Project F.R.E.E. as they navigate their way into the work place and into their roles as fathers. As the Freedom Ambassador, Diana will be a promoter of healthy relationships, responsible and engaged parenting, and job readiness. Young fathers will be encouraged to "Dad Up", step up/man up to the responsibilities of fatherhood and take on an active role in their child(ren)'s lives. CFSS is excited for the opportunity to continue to play a part in the revitalization of our community!

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## EVENTS

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### **CFSS Holiday Party**

At the heart of every non-profit organization are the employees. CFSS believes that it is important to recognize the hard work and commitment that each and every one of the staff exhibits on a day-to day basis. So this year, CFSS celebrated the holidays, as

well as the amazing staff and board members, at the High Note Karaoke Lounge in downtown Milwaukee. There was great food, a gift exchange, and some very entertaining karaoke! Of course, in true CFSS fashion, there was even a little dancing involved. A great time was truly had by all!

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

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### **Keonna Muñoz** *Member Services Coordinator*

Keonna Muñoz is fortunate to have had strong role models throughout her life. Now she is taking those experiences and sharing them with our members at the Center for Self-Sufficiency.

Keonna grew up with a mother and grandmother who set positive examples for her to follow. Keonna's mother worked in Human Services and she taught Keonna the importance of serving others and her community. Family has always played an important role in Keonna's life as she is the oldest of three siblings. Growing up in the 53206 area code presented a variety of challenges to overcome, but with Keonna's strong family support system she set out to help people.



Keonna's career of helping others started at a very young age! At only fifteen years old, she started working as a counselor at a local summer camp. Other dedicated human service positions followed including working as a Youth Services Coordinator at the Milwaukee Christian Center. There she started a youth volunteer program which served teens that had aged out of youth programs but were not yet eligible for some of the adult programs. Keonna also worked as a Lead Family Care Coordinator at the Center for Quality Community Life and she spent three years as a Lead Mentor at Holton Youth and Family Center.

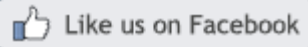
With so many years of positive support experience, the Center for Self-Sufficiency was fortunate to have Keonna join our team in March, 2015, as a Mentor Coordinator. Now as a Member Services Coordinator, Keonna is part of the team dedicated to supporting members who are transitioning from confinement to the community. Prior to working at CFSS, Keonna had never even been inside of a prison or institution. Now she regularly facilitates complex, cognitively-based curriculum including *Makin' It Work* and the University of Cincinnati's CBI-EMP for men residing at the Racine Correctional Institution who are releasing to the Milwaukee area. Keonna is excited to boast that 13 men have already successfully completed the Windows to Work (W2W) program through CFSS, and she is currently working with 23 men who have already been released from incarceration. She is thrilled to announce that 17 of the men have already found employment!

Alongside her wonderful husband of almost ten years, they are raising four active children. They all participate in various sports including football, track, baseball, basketball and wrestling. Keonna leads a very busy life but she also enjoys traveling, reading, cooking and watching sports. In addition, she is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Community Leadership Development at Alverno College.

Family, community and giving back are only a few of the driving factors that have influenced Keonna to choose a career of supporting others. She has developed an honest and amazing

rapport with our members and she genuinely celebrates each success. Keonna truly believes that everyone deserves a second chance and she is excited to support our members as they transform their lives.

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