

# Graduate celebrates big milestone

## How you helped change her life's trajectory

Helen was excited and a little scared when she graduated from Job Readiness Training at Second Chance. But she was also confident and ready to live a better life. That was nine years ago. It's been a long journey, but a worthwhile one. This month, Helen will receive her Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. She graduates with honors and as a member of the National Society for Leadership and Success.

Your support made it possible for Helen, and hundreds of others to find success. To leave a checkered past behind and begin building toward something more.

Proud of her accomplishment and excited for a new chapter in her life, Helen has not forgotten how difficult her journey was. Addicted to meth at 14, her first child at 17, Helen had little support and at that age, wasn't aware of resources available to her. Suffering from abusive situations, using drugs was her way of feeling worthy. Her addiction and trauma she endured stole years from her and her kids. Until she summoned the courage to make a change when she saw the affects her lifestyle was having on her youngest son.

"My son gave me the drive to change my life. Second Chance gave me the skills I needed for everything else. I learned time management, resume building, interviewing skills and how to be confident, even when I'm not really feeling it," she says.

Helen was ready to go out into the world. Thanks to you, she did, and she hasn't looked back.

She took all she had learned from the class and applied that knowledge to gain employment and eventually, to further her education. She obtained a Bachelor's in Social Work and is an investigator for a law firm that represents parents in the child welfare system. With her MBA, Helen's goal is to work in non-profit management. She wants to use her life experiences, combined with her education, to help individuals who've been affected by incarceration, with mental health issues, or the child welfare system.

Like you, Helen is passionate about second chances. She enjoys sharing her story, especially with current participants – to inspire, to encourage, to let them know self-sufficiency is attainable. And she is "forever grateful" for the chance she was given by supporters like you.



*Helen and her husband Larry actively support each other in their recovery.*

*"How haven't I changed is an easier question.. there is not one single thing that I do the same.*

*My whole mind frame and thought patterns are different."*



# Program Spotlight

## Reentry Works

Providing the justice-involved population with pre- and post-release employment and training services, links to jobs, and more

### Preparing for a new way of living

For the best chance of success upon release, reentry planning needs to start while an individual is still in custody.

Second Chance provides services to hundreds of justice-involved adults to ease reentry transition. Reentry services are provided post-release (and pre-release prior to Covid-19).

Case managers build rapport, provide training and education, identify needs, and develop a transition plan. The intent is to provide individuals returning to their communities with the tools and confidence necessary to become productive community members.

Upon release, a participant can enroll in our Job Readiness Training program and/or continue to receive supportive services, such as referrals for medical needs, assistance with obtaining a high school diploma or industry certification, guidance on writing a resume, and more, until employment is attained.

Scott Taylor, Reentry Works Program Manager, says it is critical to reach individuals prior to release to ease reentry transition.

“This is a population who has faced incarceration, lack of opportunity, unemployment and poverty. Our services extend beyond job training and placement; we address barriers such as antisocial thinking, behavioral health issues, unstable housing and reunification services.”

Reentry Works is more than just getting someone a job. It's about compassion and understanding. And it's providing the tools and guidance to help someone on the path to a new way of living.



## Why Your Investment Is Needed

Equipping justice-involved individuals with the skills and resources needed to successfully reenter the community and workforce is one of the most powerful – and cost-effective – ways to ensure they avoid future contact with the justice system.

Your donation helps provide all individuals the vital training, education and support needed to meaningfully contribute and participate in our community.

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# Empowered, confident and ready to work



A long-time employee with a driving company and 16 years clean and sober. Until an unfortunate accident sent Jason into relapse and eventually, incarceration.

Jason is now 20 months clean and getting his life back on track.

Your belief in the power of a second chance means Jason and other justice involved individuals have an opportunity to reimagine their lives – and then make that life happen!

Through Reentry Works, Jason received a laptop which allowed him to participate in Job Readiness Training (JRT), search for employment, fill out online applications, and communicate with his case manager.

After completing the intensive four-week JRT class, Jason came away with a solid resume and job search skills. More importantly, he says, was the opportunity to practice interviewing.

“I have gained the confidence to go into any interview and feel I will do a good job, and that is priceless,” explains Jason. “Without having gone through JRT, I would probably still be sitting on the couch complaining about not being able to find a job.”

**Without supporters like you, Jason wouldn't have had the courage to move forward. But because of you, he's on a new path.**

# Growing a healthy community



Through our Healthy Community Initiative, Second Chance Youth Garden is offering healthy, fresh produce to low-income families in the Encanto community. Like other Southeast San Diego communities, Encanto is geographically and economically isolated from healthy food options.

Thanks to long-time community partner Sycuan, families in the area will have access to delicious, healthy produce.

SC board member, Gary Strawbridge, left, presented Second Chance a \$5000 check from Sycuan in support of the initiative. Strawbridge says meeting basic needs is the key to long-term physical and mental well-being of communities like Encanto. To support the Healthy Community Initiative, please make a secure donation online and designate the Youth Garden.



*Shout out to our friends at Custom Logos for gifting mugs to the staff as a special holiday thank you!*

## The impact you make!

### As a result of your support in 2020:

Reentry Court participants logged 5,758 hours of training through structured curriculum, group sessions and individual counseling.

98 individuals graduated from Job Readiness Training and 81 were placed in employment – that's an 83% placement rate!

# Renovation breathes new life into sober living house

When you give a gift to Second Chance, you ensure struggling San Diegans have a safe place to call home. A place to call home is significant to one's personal life, especially for individuals in recovery.

That's why we were so excited when renovations to our largest sober living home were completed. New windows and blinds, kitchen cabinets, flooring, updated bathrooms and even new bed linen will welcome residents.

Housing resident Billy T. says, "Being in a place with people who understand you and encourage you really helps. And having a place that you are proud to live in is just as important."

To support residents in recovery, contact Maureen Polimadei at 619.839.0953 or [mpolimadei@secondchanceprogram.org](mailto:mpolimadei@secondchanceprogram.org)



Stay connected



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Reentering the community after incarceration can be overwhelming, frustrating and confusing. Here are examples of what your donations can do:

\$50 – covers the cost to obtain a California ID or driver's license

\$300 – provides a low-income family a bag of produce for 10 weeks

\$600 – provides three Chromebooks for youth programming

\$1,000 – helps sponsor a participant through four weeks of Job Readiness Training



**Saturday, April 24, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

**Peace Garden**

**3850 Westgate Place, San Diego 92105**

Contact Caelli for specific details and to sign up:  
[cwright@secondchanceprogram.org](mailto:cwright@secondchanceprogram.org)

## Celebrating Earth Day in the Garden

Love volunteering? Looking for a chance to get outdoors? Join our Youth Garden staff for a few hours of pruning and fertilizing fruit trees in celebration of Earth Day.

We'll be clipping the trees, digging trenches around the trees, and shoveling fertilizer. Don't worry, you'll learn how to safely use the tools and perform each task.

The trees are located on a slight hill; you'll need to be physically able to walk up the hill and work on uneven ground. For individuals unable to navigate the hill, there's work to be done in the garden beds.

Space is limited to 15 people. Covid-19 safety protocols will be followed.