

# NEW CITIZEN

## Reality After Release

Persons coming out of incarceration have the cards stacked against them.

- 67% Recidivism Rate
- Lack of Education Pre & Post Release
- Minimal Job Opportunities
- Lack of Structure & Discipline
- Housing & Transportation Issues
- Lack of Family Support
- Confidence Issues



## A SECOND CHANCE

Through the New Citizen program, Hamilton Center provides a second chance to individuals who have been incarcerated and/or convicted of a felony. In cooperation with the Department of Corrections, Community Corrections, County Jails, the Federal Bureau of Prisons and halfway houses, this program offers the opportunity to acquire job skills, employment, and a new way of life.

The “New Citizen” meets weekly with a team of mentors led by the program chair, program graduates, other participants, and those who have a key role in the project during which time they report on their activities, concerns, etc. and receive feedback from the committee.

Core Elements of the program include:

- Improve job skills and explore opportunities for job placement
- Develop a career not just a job
- Establish positive referrals/character references
- Improve community perception
- Develop positive relationships with community leaders
- Increase sense of self-worth and purpose

The opportunity is life changing for someone who has been involved in the criminal justice system and is willing to turn their life around. The program offers support from Hamilton Center staff and community leaders to bring confidence and motivation to someone who is willing to become a new citizen.

## MENTORS ARE KEY

The New Citizen Committee meets regularly with participants to discuss their current professional and personal environment. Since establishing the program, CEO, Melvin Burks has remained very involved in addressing issues and providing direction and encouragement.

# HOW IT WORKS

One male and one female are chosen each year after a series of interviews conducted by the CEO and the New Citizen Committee. If selected for participation, New Citizens have:

- Routine Meetings
- Frequent Interactions with Mentors
- One Year Probationary Period - Working in Four Departments for Three Months Each
- Participation in Community Events and Organizations

The New Citizen Program is about supporting those who have made decisions that could negatively affect the rest of their lives. Hamilton Center has made it possible for these individuals to have a second chance. It is an extraordinary opportunity to start a new life, and travel down a supported path to success.

# SUCCESS STORIES



**TATU BROWN** was a star high school athlete. He finished 2 years of college through an athletic scholarship but fell victim to bad decisions and lack of guidance. Some of his family members, his best friend and he were involved in selling drugs. He was arrested and sentenced to 188 months in prison. Now he is the Executive Director of Human Services. He also chairs an annual golf tournament that raises over \$40,000 annually.



**STACEY TOTTON** was a high school honor student who also earned a college degree. She started experimenting with drugs and alcohol and was later convicted on charges for dealing methamphetamine. Now she has earned a Master's Degree, is a Certified Recovery Specialist, participated in state-wide stigma reduction campaigns, and now works as Manager of Recovery Services for Hamilton Center, Inc. in the greater Indianapolis area.



**MELISSA HUTCHENS** was introduced to illegal drugs at an early age. She dropped out of high school and started selling drugs to support her addiction. She was arrested on Federal charges and sentenced to 120 months in federal prison. Her crime was conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. Now she is an Access Specialist and a Certified Recovery Specialist.



**JOE DIEHL** was raised by a single mother in poverty. During high school, Joe engaged in the use of alcohol, but still managed to graduate. In September 2014, he was arrested for reckless homicide. Joe has previously worked as an EMT and aspired to work as a firefighter. His career path came to a halt with his felony conviction. Joe worked odd jobs until his acceptance as a participant in the New Citizen Program. He is now the Acting Facilities Manager.

*"An individual has paid their debt to society after serving their sentence.."*

*Melvin L. Burks, President/CEO, Hamilton Center, Inc.*



Are you interested in bringing the New Citizen Program to your organization?

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