

# JDC NEWSLETTER

## *The Story of My Life*

### **Before...**

"I was sitting at the bus stop waiting with my girlfriend. A cop stopped in front of us, and he said he recognized me from my warrant. I knew I was over. 6-7 months on the run, it's terrible."

"I had just got[ten] back from my mom at the hospital with my lil' brother. He was born 12-7-13. I got arrested 12-8-13."

"I was good at painting."

"I was on the outs and always getting in trouble a lot and didn't care about anything and anyone."

"I was a smoker."

"Before I came to JDC, I was smoking weed and being disrespectful."

"I was off molly. I was on some young brilliant [stuff], posted on the block [trying to] drill some [stuff]."

"I was out getting it, hitting licks, robbin[g] niggas. [People] in the lab putting in work. 3 of the licks had my finger prints and now I'm doing the time."

"Riding dirt bikes."

"Smoking weed, getting females pregnant."

"Popping mollies, getting girls, going to clubs, staying out late, robbing people, stealing cars, shooting people, shooting at people, not listening to my mother."

### THE STORY OF MY LIFE

In this issue of JDC Newsletter, a group of young men and young women discussed the importance of history. As members of a critical community of practice focused on creating an empowering culture of thinking, each group discussed and composed reflections of their history in three perspectives; before they arrived at JDC, during their residency at JDC, and after, detailing future goals and aspirations. The participants concluded their writing with advice and opinions based on their experiences.

"I was in the streets of North Miami doing wrong community crimes. Selling drugs. Committing robberies. Because I thought it was what I had to do since I was no longer attending school. I was not attending school because Mavericks didn't accept [me] only because my parent forgot to sign a portion of the slip. Before all that, I was an A student at middle school."

"I was stealing, lying to people, taking from people, doing drugs, hitting licks, getting drunk, fighting, staying away from home, not caring about anything, not going to school, making mom mad at me."

## AN EMPOWERING CULTURE OF THINKING

### Before...

"Sports, technology."

"Smoking weed, not going to school, not listening, [dis]respecting my mom."

"Before, I used to smoke and drink, also I used to take pills."

"Selling dope. Robbing, stealing car, not loving my mom."

"I was eating lunch, thinking about court, hoping I [would] get released [so] I could go back to family and stay out of trouble."

### During...

"I was sitting in the rec' area, thinking what might happen in court, just hoping I get released. So right now, all my hope is in God."

"Getting locked up is not for me. Selling dope, easy money could give you life."

"Baking, (writing) with my friends and family."

"I stay to myself, do my work, do what I'm told, and I chill and try to be a leader."

"I came here realizing what I was doing is wrong. Now, I do all my work in school, read the Bible everyday, and do workouts as I wait patiently for my judge to sentence me."

"Trying to control my anger (not fighting) having to deal with my problems and I can't leave."

"I changed my life and made up my mind not to smoke or do those drugs no more."

"Taking care of my baby, running away from my parents."

"Acting dumb."

"I'm vibin,' trying get big. I ain't on no friendly [stuff], any pressure in here or any n---- that tries my homeboyz, we [deal], ain't no one on one."

"School - challenging myself in subjects, socializing, participating in the groups and programs, cleaning the module for the girls, art - drawing and coloring pictures, sports - playing basketball and going over drills."

"I changed my whole thinking and my life. I praise the lord and respect my family and read the Bible every day and pray too."

"Writing poetry and working on my attitude. Sketch[ing] in my journal."

"I'm good at drawing and painting."

"Now I'm in here, thinking about I should have cared about my family and friends and about myself."

"I'm finally doing school work, and I haven't done work from school in 3 years. I feel relieved."

"I'm doing the time for the crime I did with my girlfriend. It hurts every minute I'm in here. I learned what regret is. Also I'm learning right from wrong, good from bad. I learned what love is [and] how to show it."

"Get educated, get my H.S.D., get closer to my family, do my 3 years in juvenile prison."

"Reading from the library cart and the Bible the guy gave me."

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## CRITICAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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### After...

"I'm going to go get my G.E.D., get a good job so I can support my girlfriend and [I] without hustling. Go to church, do the right thing."

Start in after-school programs to draw and paint better."

*"How would your life be different if... You didn't allow yourself to be defined by your past? Let today be the day... You stop letting your history interfere with your destiny and awaken to the opportunity to release your greatest self."*

— Steve Maraboli

"I'm [going to] give my son a good life, a better time to catch up the times, and memories I missed."

"When I get out, I'm going to get back in school and change my life for my family and girlfriend."

"I'm [going to] go to the music studio, keep riding dirt bikes, buy more bikes, and get back in school (register back in regular school)."

"The right thing by staying out of trouble."

"Sports - go to the park and exercise, practice. School - study more in challenging subjects."

"When the Lord gets me out of here, I'm going to church with my family finish school and play football."

"When I come out, I'm going to do right, and I'm going to stop smoking. And also go to a church program."

"I want to get my life together and go back to school, get a job go, and get a house, a car, and do better for myself and make my mom and dad proud."

"Knowing my wrong as a man, loving my mom, not selling dope, getting involved with God."

"Get back to school, finish AMI, and go to Alonzo Mourning, play football and track."

"Read to my son. Continue taking care of my baby. Staying put to deal with my problems instead of running away."

"I'm [going to] change my life and get a job."

"Change my life around."

"Go to college, get my college degree, become a positive citizen, become a C.T., give a testimony."

"I'm going to get [my] GED and go to college for Culinary Arts. Opening own bakery."

"Change my life."

*"Keep your language. Love its sounds, its modulation, its rhythm. But try to march together with men of different languages, remote from your own, who wish like you for a more just and human world."*

— Hélder Câmara

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## Opinions/Advice

“If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything. Running away from your problems won’t solve anything. Everything happens for a reason.”

“Just chill, be educated, stay out of trouble, don’t be a follower.”

“Get responsibility, grow up, jail, is not for everybody, stay with your family.”

“My advice: people who want to rearrange their lives for the better, don’t let anything or anyone ruin your future. If you want something, work for it and take it. NEVER let someone tell you that you can’t do something. Show them you can.”

“Stay home, go to school, get a job, love your family, get responsible, act like the man or woman God made us.”

“That I know I was doing wrong, but everybody deserves a second chance.”

“Try to better myself in the future, so that I can be drafted to the WNBA. GUMP: Go Until My Path.”

“Don’t do nothing that you will regret, because it will follow you for the rest of your life.”

“Don’t give up no matter how hard it may seem, just keep your head up, and ask for help if needed, and don’t be afraid of life.”

“Do better in life, don’t commit any more crimes.”

“If you’re good at something, don’t give up on it.”

“I wish I would have had these things told to me because I’m in a crazy situation.”

“My opinion is that I really think I changed my way, because I don’t disrespect nobody anymore, and I gave my life to the Lord.”

“I deserve everything I’m going through. I did it and I know it.”

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