



CJM Connection

The bi-monthly newsletter of Criminal Justice Ministry St. Louis

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CJM SUCCESS STORIES

As Easter draws near, we'd like to reflect on our mission to serve, and not to judge, and to celebrate the Easter spirit by sharing the successes of our clients and staff.

Update: Remarkable Women

In our last issue, we shared Toni Jordan's nomination for the Remarkable Women Award. As a finalist, Toni was interviewed for local news and shared her inspiring journey. Watch her interview [here](#).



Staff Welcome

Ronnie Axell (Amiyn), a former R2R client, joins CJM as our new Housing Assistant. He brings with him advocacy experience from Expo St. Louis and was recently featured in an article for the [Kansas City Star](#). We're proud to support the ongoing success of our program graduates. Welcome to the team, Ronnie!

Client Testimony

"I am a former drug addict and I was released from prison on October 9, 2020. While in prison a friend told me about the program. Brandon at CJM interviewed me and decided it was a good move for me. I was bused with the clothes on my back. Mikie (another case worker) met me at the bus station and my apartment was fully furnished. CJM provided food, housing, clothes and support. All the tools that I needed to get back on my feet. If it weren't for CJM, I probably would have went back home and who knows what would have happened. I needed to start over where I could be anonymous and not face the stigma of my addiction. Because of CJM, I began attending Let's Start meetings, where I was able to find a sponsor. CJM was the biggest blessing and they still gave me room to grow."

- Lashawn C., R2R Women and Let's Start Client

Vets 4 Pets

Spring is in the air, and with it comes the return of Vets 4 Pets at local farmers' markets. Starting April 10, peruse the handmade treats, scarves, dog beds, and more that our Veterans produce and sell at [Tower Grove Park](#) on Saturday mornings from 8 AM - 12:30 PM .

READ THE HISTORY OF IBONES HERE



MAKIN' IT WORK

For the last several years, CJM volunteers have offered the Makin' It Work program to residents at the Transition Center in St. Louis. We asked Board Member Paul Faust to share his experience as a long-time instructor for this workplace training course.

"Every time I teach the course I learn something about myself. Our goal is just to connect with these guys... having them realize we're here because we want to be there and want to help them. If we create an atmosphere where we're doing the lessons together, the guys listen a lot more and there's a lot more value from their standpoint. We teach how to navigate the workplace in a positive way, how to handle criticism and not take it personally, and we teach it in a very casual way, even though it's based on Rational Behavior Therapy. We read stories together about people in the process of navigating the system so the guys can relate to it, then dissect thoughts, beliefs, triggers, etc. and tailor that discussion to the workplace. Our instructors have backgrounds in HR and business, and that experience is really valuable for instilling confidence for interviews and entering the workplace."

After successfully completing monthly sessions of Makin' It Work via Zoom since December 2020, below is some feedback from March's program graduates:

- "The lessons were very helpful, real-life situations."
- "[The instructors] made themselves our friends and trusting... I learned a lot from them."
- "[Instructors were] always positive and helpful, willing to spend extra time in areas we needed to and used common sense to help us learn the material. Social skills were broken down to be easy to apply in daily life application."

Interested in getting involved with Makin' It Work? Fill out our [volunteer application](#) or contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Victoria Pettit, at victoriap@cjmstlouis.org to find out more.

GIVE STL DAY



Give STL Day is fast approaching! Traditionally, our annual Recognition Gala serves as a way to gather as a community while meeting our fundraising needs. With our Gala postponed until next Spring, we are using this annual giving day to meet our needs instead. Mark your calendars for May 6th's event, and for Early Giving starting Monday, April 5th. Offline donations received between April 5th-20th will be counted toward the additional incentives we receive from this event. Your support is invaluable for the continued success of our programs.

givestlday.org/CJM

STAY TUNED: INCARCERATION

FORUMS AND MORE!

In 2021, the CJM staff are hard at work planning events for our supporters. Follow our [social media](#), [website](#), and upcoming newsletters for specific details.

- April 20th, 6-7 PM (Zoom): Volunteer Appreciation Event
- May 20th, 3-5 PM (Zoom): Incarceration Forum on COVID-19's Impact on Reentry
- TBA Summer and Fall 2021
 - Summer Client Appreciation Event
 - Trivia Night
 - Incarceration Forums on the Pretrial System and Diversion Programs