



# community success initiative

HELPING INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITIES MOVE FROM WHERE THEY ARE TO WHERE THEY WANT TO BE



At the age of 16 Corey Purdie was convicted as an adult and placed in the custody of the NC Department of Corrections. With the help of prison ministry volunteers, Corey committed his life to Christ while in prison. After serving 8 years, Purdie was released. Following his release, Purdie developed a friendship with Jeff Smith, a local pastor who mentored him as a father figure. Smith instilled hope in Purdie through Biblical text like Jeremiah 29:11 and reminding Purdie that he still had a purpose beyond his past.

In 2006 Pastor Smith re-introduced Purdie back into the gates of the prison system. This time Purdie entered as a volunteer at Pamlico Correctional Institution where he was once incarcerated in 1998; when that facility first opened its doors. Faye Daniels, Superintendent of Pamlico Correctional Institution recalls, "Corey Purdie was the first offender ever allowed to reenter my facility after being released." Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening since 2006 Purdie has been faithfully traveling to Pamlico Correctional to minister to the inmates and staff and has participated as a volunteer, encouraging residents at correctional institutions throughout the State of NC. In 2015 he was named Volunteer of the Year in the same prison where he was once a resident, Pamlico Correctional.

In 2007, faced with the discrimination from local employers due to a 12 year old criminal record from a moment of his past, Purdie decided to start his own business. With a bucket, a borrowed water hose and some Joy dish detergent from his mother's sink he opened Miracle Wash Auto Detailing. Without a penny in his pocket Purdie was determined not to return to his previous life. Relying on his will power he established a successful business and within the first year received recognition from the Craven Community College Small Business Center. However, Purdie quickly realized that there were issues far beyond just his personal situation, there were many returning home, faced with the same barriers. Purdie focused on providing opportunities for returning citizens with employment at Miracle Wash as well as duplicating his efforts by helping those that had a passion for entrepreneurship establish their individual branches of Miracle Wash expanding to Roseville and Charlotte North Carolina.

Seeing that barriers surrounding reentry went beyond entry level employment, in 2010 Purdie established a 501(c)3 nonprofit called Wash Away Unemployment to address those underlying barriers such as housing, sustainability skills, lack of connecting resources, transportation, family reconciliation, etc. Since establishment of Wash Away Unemployment, Purdie travels throughout the state fostering relationships and learning from those who proceeded him in this work such as Dennis Gaddy, Daryl Atkinson, Reggie Longcrier, Meia Walker and a host of others who support the cause. In 2012 Purdie assisted Regional and State Reentry Coordinators to develop a local reentry council in Craven and Pamlico counties, bringing even more resources to returning citizens. He also currently sits on the Pamlico Craven Reentry Council Board as Housing Director.

Recently Purdie became the first formerly incarcerated individual to obtain full time employment within Pamlico Correctional Institution as a liaison, assisting with pre and post release home plans to reduce the high rates of recidivism caused by lack of knowledge and access to resources in the post release phase. In all of his efforts Purdie quotes “I do this not for fame or fortune but I have this commitment for life, because there are some who will never have the opportunity of release, so I count it as an honor to serve on their behalf and a voice for those who may not have an opportunity to be heard.”

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