



**Quarter 1, 2023**

# Impact Report



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# From “Downhill” to On Track: Shay’s Inspiring Story of Diligence and Reentry



Before she came to City of Refuge in December of 2022, Shay Williams's life was going “downhill.” A few months earlier, Shay had been released from prison, and she was looking for a fresh start. That’s when she heard about City of Refuge.

But in the process of transitioning into Eden Village, some legal issues resurfaced. For a while, it seemed as if it all might fall through for Shay. Greg Washington, City of Refuge's VP of Reentry, reached out to The Georgia Justice Project and asked if they would let the judge know that Shay was in the process of enrolling in COR's Reentry Program.

Thankfully, the judge agreed. Shay wasted no time in getting to work. She joined a recovery support group and started attending weekly meetings. She received encouragement and accountability from mentors.



But by far the most impressive growth occurred in the job training arena. For many formerly incarcerated individuals, finding work is incredibly difficult. And stable employment has been shown to reduce recidivism. That’s why City of Refuge has a number of programs designed to help men and women gain new skills and find a promising career.

In less than six months, Shay earned four different certifications, including ones for forklift, logistics, and observation. Certifications like these will make it much more likely that she’ll be able to find a stable job.

Shay also completed Arby's Management Training Program, a new partnership with City of Refuge which helps individuals prepare for a career in restaurant management.

“She’s truly taken every opportunity that City of Refuge has put in front of her,” said Greg.

Today, Shay is putting her Inspired by Arby's certification into practice! Shay is currently working at a local Arby's where she can apply the soft skills and restaurant skills she's learned.

Long term, she hopes to get her Commercial Driver's License (CDL). But most importantly, Shay says, “I want to be in a better space with God, myself, and family.”

We couldn't be prouder of Shay's remarkable initiative and diligence, and we can't wait to see where the Lord leads her next.



# From “Broken” to “Healing”: Talisha’s Story of Recovery and Resilience

“The only person who can fail me is me. And I refuse to fail right now.”

When House of Cherith resident, Talisha, walked into our community job fair in February, she had no idea she'd leave with a newfound hope.

“I literally came to City of Refuge broken,” said Talisha. “I hadn’t had a job since 2020, and I had never kept one for longer than six or seven months.”

On top of struggling to reenter society and find a stable job, Talisha also carried the grief of losing her infant son and the trauma of an abusive relationship on her shoulders.

That’s when she found House of Cherith and City of Refuge.

“This place gave me time to heal,” said Talisha.

After just over a year on our campus, Talisha has found hope in many ways. She went back to school for her BA in Human and Health Services to help women like herself, is 14 months sober, and landed an interview at our job fair.

“I was nervous about the interview. But the staff helped me look presentable and get my resume squared away. They practiced questions with me and it was really great.”

We are so proud to share that Talisha left our job fair with a new role as Telephone Operator at The Westin Hotel!

We can’t wait to see where God leads Talisha as she continues with school, recovery, and her new job.



## Impact Metrics

**25,220**

meals served

**80**

women and children housed

**150**

jobs placed

**271**

youth impacted

**2,619**

medical services provided

**36**

reentry citizens



## Groundbreaking Growth & Strengthening Community

In less than three months, we have broken ground on our Welcome Home House, hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for The 345 men's housing complex, and had 30 volunteer groups contribute to the many projects, youth events, and campus events at City of Refuge!



 345 Chappell Road NW, Atlanta GA 30314

# CITY LIGHTS

A City of Refuge Membership

## Give Every Month. Change Lives Every Day.

[cityofrefugeatl.org/citylights](http://cityofrefugeatl.org/citylights)

City Lights is our monthly giving community where supporters make monthly contributions to our mission and receive exclusive insider updates on what's happening on campus each month!

### A Message from City Lights Member, Avion Abreu



"City of Refuge is a safe haven for those who have experienced trauma, housing / food insecurity. COR provides hope from life's circumstances and necessary life skills, job training and financial counseling to ensure their residents have a high success rate once they leave the program. It is because of their unique process; I've chosen to volunteer my time and make a recurring financial commitment to City Lights to ensure they can continue this level of support throughout the community. I have comfort knowing my monthly contribution provides access to free healthcare, food, and shelter to a family in need. Just imagine how many families we can save together if each person you knew sponsored at least one family. Imagine how your impact can change the lives of those around you."

- Avion Abreu

#### \$25 Per Month

Could provide safe housing for a family in need



#### \$75 Per Month

Could provide safe shelter, meals, and childcare for a family



#### \$100 Per Month

Could provide safe shelter, meals, childcare, and job training for a family



### City Lights Member Perks

Scan the QR code to read one of our exclusive monthly City Lights newsletters to get a feel for what it's like to be a member of this impactful community! →



You can make a difference, every single month.

[cityofrefugeatl.org/citylights](http://cityofrefugeatl.org/citylights)



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