



EVALUATION OF ST. LEONARD'S MINISTRIES

Case studies of former residents of St. Leonard's House
and Grace House



First in a series on reentry at St. Leonard's Ministries

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First in a series

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Key findings

This report, the first in the series for the St. Leonard's Ministries' evaluation, focuses on five case studies. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with three men who were former residents of St. Leonard's House and two women who were former residents of Grace House. The goal was to learn about the life experiences of program participants before, during, and after the program. The following are some key findings:

- At the time of the interview, the five research subjects were 34 to 70 years old—the average age was 46 years old. Three research subjects reported their race as African American, one as Caucasian, and one as Hispanic.
- All of those interviewed had been incarcerated in Illinois prisons—the average number of prior incarcerations was three.
- The length of stay in the residential programs ranged from six months to eighteen months.
- Of those interviewed, the range of time since leaving the residential program was five months to two years; the average was 11 months.
- At the time of the interview, all of the research subjects were living in Chicago in rental apartments. Three of those interviewed were unemployed, and two were employed.
- At the time of the interview, four of the research subjects were never married, and one was married. Four of the five research subjects had children.
- Four of the five research subjects were former addicts of cocaine, heroin, alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy.
- Overall, the men and women interviewed for this study thought the program facilities were adequate. In general, all interviewed thought that staff were supportive.
- The women recommended more consistency in enforcement of program rules at Grace House. In addition, one of the men reported staff did not always enforce program rules at St. Leonard's House.
- In general, the women liked all the services and activities of Grace House, in particular, the psychological services.
- Two research subjects recommended having more consistency with counselors because the psychology interns often changed.
- In general, interviewees would recommend St. Leonard's House and Grace House to others.

Introduction

St. Leonard's Ministries operates two, transitional, residential programs with supportive services. St. Leonard's House (SLH) provides housing for adult men exiting prison, and Grace House (GH) provides housing for adult women exiting prison. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) researchers embarked on a multi-year, multi-component evaluation to identify program components that are effective in contributing to successful resident outcomes, learn about the programs' residents and operations, and analyze client outcomes. This information will educate criminal justice professionals and the public about the potential benefit of a long-term, structured, reentry program for formerly incarcerated men and women.

The methodology of the broader evaluation includes the following components. This report focuses on the first component (in italics).

1. *Case study interviews with former program residents*
2. Interviews with program staff and stakeholders
3. Field observation
4. Outcome analysis
5. Cost-benefit analysis.

The outcome analysis will use quasi-experimental design and focus on SLH residents' outcomes including arrests, convictions, incarcerations, and employment. Outcomes will be presented in a companion report in the series.

The overall research goals of the evaluation are the following:

- Measure recidivism and employment outcomes of program residents compared to a control group
- Assess indicators of incremental and longer-term success for program residents
- Learn the day-to-day operations and interactions
- Provide a description of residents of the programs
- Identify effective components of the overall program model
- Gauge levels of resident satisfaction with programs
- Determine the cost and benefits of the programs
- Offer suggestions for program enhancement

About this report

This report focuses on findings from five case studies. Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with former residents of SLH and GH to provide in-depth qualitative information about life experiences of program participants before, during, and after the program.

The case studies attempted to answer the following research questions:

- What are the life experiences of SLM residents?
- What were the experiences at SLM for residents?
- What are the reentry experiences of SLM residents?

About St. Leonard's Ministries

St. Leonard's Ministries (SLM) was founded in 1954 as a result of the work of Father James Jones, who served as Episcopal Chaplain at the Cook County jail. SLM is located in Chicago, Illinois in the West Loop neighborhood and operates two transitional housing programs—St. Leonard's House (SLH) and Grace House (GH). SLH and GH, the focus of this evaluation, offer voluntary, temporary, supportive housing for adult men and women exiting prison.

The two other programs of SLM are St. Andrew's Court and the Michael Barlow Center (MBC). St. Andrew's Court opened in 1998 and offers a permanent residential setting for men who have successfully completed SLH. A subsidized rent program provides men with small apartments on the grounds of SLM. The MBC offers educational and vocational assistance to residents of SLH and GH but is open to non-residents.

In 2011, SLM calculated and reported a three-year reincarceration rate for SLH residents of 12.6 percent—34 out of 270 men returned to corrections. GH reported a 4.6 percent reincarceration rate—four out of 87 women returned to corrections. The reincarceration rate for all leaving the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) is about 50 percent. However, that percentage is calculated by searching on the IDOC website for incarcerations. Therefore, recidivism is only examined one day per year, so former residents may have already served at IDOC before that day or will be serving time later that year. According to the Congressional Research Service, “When using recidivism statistics to evaluate a program, it is important to understand exactly what is included in the definition of recidivism” (James, 2015). Therefore, one of the series of evaluation reports for SLM by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) will offer a more precise recidivism rate from a sample of offenders and includes rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration as measures of recidivism (Reichert & Cossyleon, in press; Reichert & Powers, in press).

In 2012, the National Criminal Justice Association awarded SLM the *Outstanding Criminal Justice Program for the Midwest Region Award*. In 2010, the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago awarded SLM the *Agency of the Year Award* based, in part, on its valuable and collaborative efforts in advancing the United Way Mission. In 2001, St. Andrew's Court was the recipient of the Fannie Mae Foundation's *Maxwell Award of Excellence* work in the field of supportive housing for homeless individuals.

Program logic model

Researchers created a logic model of SLM residential programs to depict logical linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the programs (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1
St. Leonard's Ministries residential programs' logic model

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact	
	Activities	Outputs	Intermediate	Long-term
SLM staff (administration, direct service)	Recruit residents from IDOC, community	Number of residents in residential program	Formerly incarcerated individuals find stable housing	Improve outcomes for residents
Volunteers, interns	Conduct assessments	Number of case plans developed	Formerly incarcerated individuals are in substance abuse recovery	Reduce recidivism
Board of directors	Develop case plans	Number of meetings between clients and case managers	Formerly incarcerated individuals complete educational services	Increase public safety
Service providers	Case manage clients	Number psychological individual group therapy sessions	Formerly incarcerated individuals gain employment or enroll in school	Increase public health
On-site employment Center (Michael Barlow Center)	Meet with clients' families	Number substance abuse group therapy sessions	Formerly incarcerated individuals fulfill parole or aftercare requirements	
On-site permanent housing (Gracie Commons, St. Andrews Court)	Provide residents needed services (substance abuse treatment, parenting, anger management, etc.)	Number other group therapy sessions	Formerly incarcerated individuals reduce recidivism risk level	
Funding (federal, state, county, city, private)	Refer to employment	Number of employment referrals	Formerly incarcerated individuals show increased readiness for change, reduced criminal thinking	
Donations	Offer literacy, job readiness training	Number of residents securing employment or enrolled in school		
Residents	Coordinate with IDOC, Parole Agents			
ICJIA evaluation support				

Operations

SLM is a non-profit organization with a governing board of 26 board members. The board has four committees—a personnel committee, a program committee, a fund raising committee, and a finance/audit committee. GH and MBC have additional advisory boards.

Agency staff

In July 2012, SLM employed 43 full-time staff and 22 part-time staff. Many of the staff are formerly incarcerated individuals or former residents. There were twelve staff employed at Grace House—five full time and seven part-time—in the following positions:

- 1 administrator
- 1 housing/ aftercare/ mentoring director
- 1 administrative assistant
- 2 full-time and 6 part-time house monitors
- 1 part-time maintenance worker

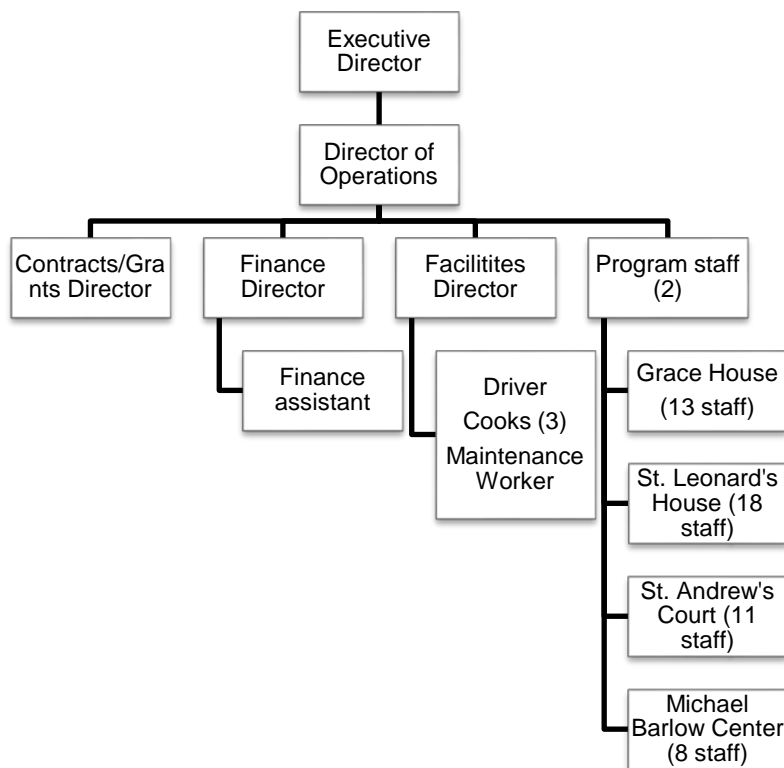
There were 18 staff employed at SLH—12 full-time and six part-time—in the following positions:

- 1 program director
- 1 intake worker
- 2 case workers
- 1 housing specialist/ aftercare
- 1 senior house monitor
- 5 full-time and 6 part-time house monitor
- 1 data specialist

In addition, a volunteer services coordinator and a volunteer chaplain worked with both residential programs and St. Andrew's Court. The agency also utilized about 10 unpaid interns per college semester who receive college credit. In addition, 12 volunteers tutored program participants.

Figure 2 depicts SLM's organizational chart as of June 2012.

Figure 2
St. Leonard's Ministries' organizational chart



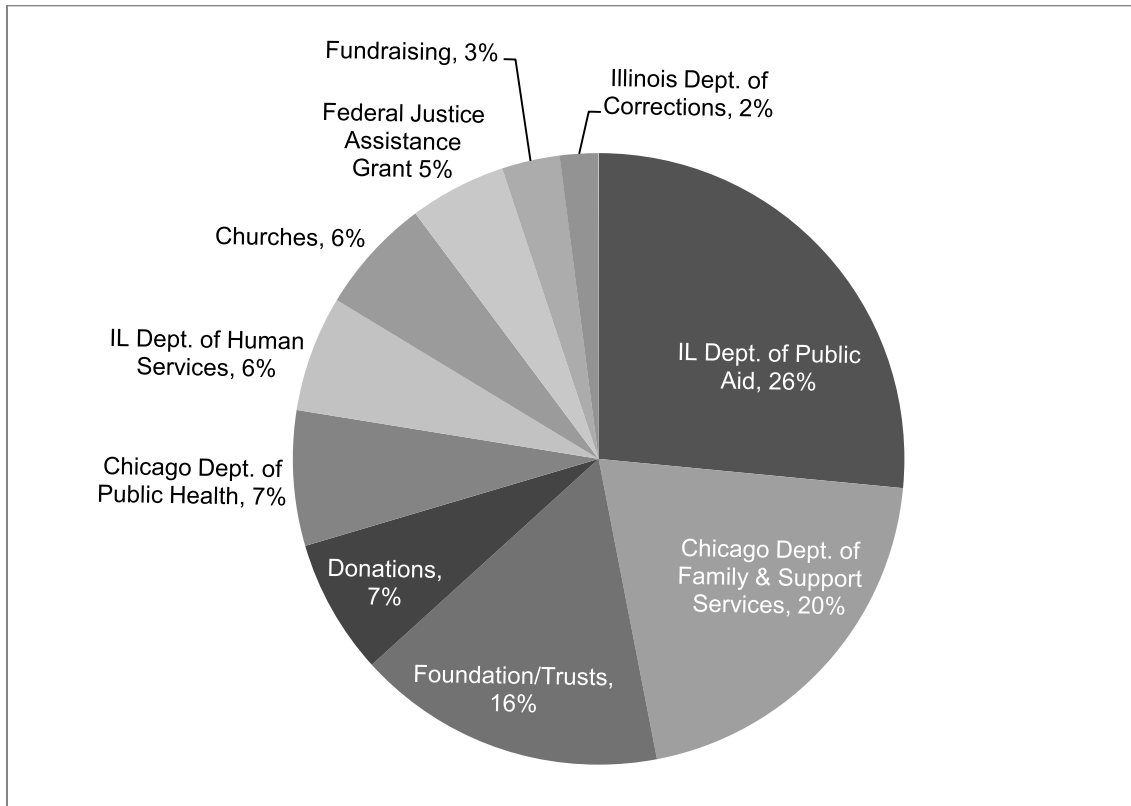
Employment at SLM requires appropriate education and experience depending on the position. Staff are not required to be licensed by any state or local entity. Among other opportunities, monthly in-service training is offered to staff of SLH and GH by the Adler School of Professional Psychology. The topics are selected based on experience with the participants and organizational requests by the director of operations.

Budget

The operating budget for Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) was \$411,000 for GH and \$765,000 for SLH. The budgets for both programs—slightly more than \$1.2 million—were 54 percent of SLM's total budget.

The majority of funding for GH and SLH was derived from state and local units of government. State agencies provided 34 percent of the budget and Chicago agencies provided 27 percent. ICJIA awarded a FY13 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant to St. Leonard's Ministries which is 5 percent of its budget. Annually, the Board of Directors sponsors one major fundraising event, and Grace House Advisory Board hosted a smaller fundraising luncheon each year. In order to solicit donations, those on the mailing list of nearly 1,300 individuals received two newsletters with donation envelopes. *Figure 3* provides a breakdown of GH and SLH sources of funding.

Figure 3
GH and SLH sources of funding, Fiscal Year, 2013



The residential facilities

SLH opened in 1954. It has two buildings located at 2100 and 2110 W. Warren Boulevard in Chicago which can accommodate forty men. The average stay is 120 to 180 days. SLH rooms range from six-person occupancy to single occupancy rooms. On-site amenities include a weight room, library, recreation rooms, and chapel. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided free of charge in the dining room. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served daily. The SLH dining room serves as a meeting place for special events, holiday activities, and large group gatherings.

GH opened in 1994 in one building located at 1801 W. Adams in Chicago. The building can accommodate eighteen women. The average length of stay for GH residents is 12 months. GH rooms range from three-person occupancy to single-person occupancy. On-site amenities include a library, computer lab, and meeting room. GH has a cook who prepares dinner during the week but not on weekends. Food is provided and available in the kitchen for the women to make their own breakfast and lunch.

Rules and regulations

The residential facilities of SLM are not required to have guards, and individuals are not locked up. Staff are on duty 24-hours a day. Residents are required to sign in and sign out when leaving.

They need to write their name, where they are going, the time they left, and the time they returned. Some residents have additional restrictions because of their parole. For example, if a resident is on electronic monitoring and misses curfew, St. Leonard's Ministries contacts the parole agent. There is a curfew for all residents, for men at SLH, it is 11pm Sunday through Thursday and 1am Friday through Sunday. For women at GH, the curfew is 10pm Monday through Thursday and 12am Friday through Sunday.

Residents are responsible for the cleanliness and maintenance of their quarters and common areas within assigned buildings. Residents not attending programs or working are asked to complete chores to keep their living environment clean and safe. St. Leonard's Ministries issues a property bag with toiletries and bed linens and a room key to an assigned room. Residents are allowed laptop computers or personal DVD players, personal music devices, alarm clocks, electric razors/clippers, cell phones, and a maximum of three bags of clothing. Wi-Fi, wireless Internet access, is not available.

New residents are not given passes to leave the grounds until after the ten-day orientation period. Passes can be limited because of relapse during a weekend pass, multiple unauthorized absences, or behavior detrimental to themselves or SLM, such as criminal activity. Visitors are allowed during program hours but are restricted to the first floors, dining room, and yard.

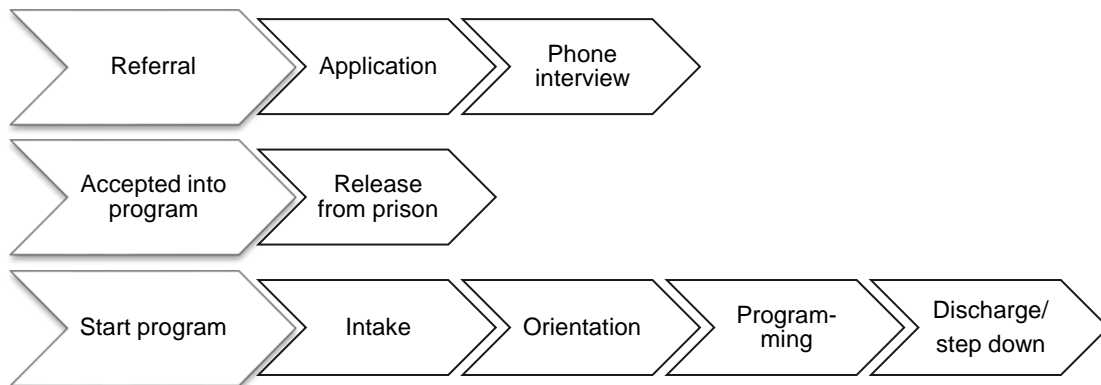
SLM has an appeals process for those residents who believe that they have been unjustly cited for a breach of SLH or GH rules or who believe that imposed penalties are unduly severe. Residents can appeal the decision through a grievance process. First, they discuss their concerns and intention to appeal with their caseworker. If the resident remains unsatisfied with the response, he or she then may appeal with program director of SLH or GH. If the resident is not satisfied, they may make a final appeal to the director of operations of SLM.

Program process

While still incarcerated, individuals learn about the program through word of mouth or from the Illinois Department of Corrections of Field Services Division. Field Services provides applications to SLH and GH. The application is completed by the inmate and sent to the program's intake coordinator. The intake coordinator decides who will be accepted into the program based on information collected from the application and the phone interview. The program emphasizes looking at individual's need and willingness to try to make changes in his or her life.

Figure 4 offers the flow of residents through SLH and GH programs.

Figure 4
Typical flow of residents through programs



Intake and case management

Once accepted to SLH or GH, residents must sign forms stating that they understand the program requirements and guidelines. New residents undergo a ten-day orientation period and are not given passes to leave the grounds during that time. This period allows the IDOC parole agent to conduct an initial meeting, SLM staff to conduct a staffing, and case workers to create an achievable service plan.

The program director, intake coordinator, case monitor, a representative of Adler School of Professional Psychology, and substance abuse treatment counselor perform an initial staffing of each new client. A staffing is an initial assessment of needs and the creation of an individualized service plan. Service plans assign programming to address addiction, lack of marketable skills, life skills, healthy life styles, learned deviant behaviors, barriers to creating interdependent support systems, and future employment and housing. The program director, intake coordinator, and case worker meet weekly to review progress and make adjustments to the service plan. Interns from the Adler School of Professional Psychology conduct an intake with residents which entails a written exam and hour long interview. Unless residents are excused by their caseworker, residents are expected to participate in all program activities identified as part of their service plan.

Residents meet with case workers once a week for at least 30 minutes to review their progress in achieving their goals and address any obstacles to their success. Case workers function as the first line staff addressing the residents' concerns as well as making appropriate referrals if needed. Case workers track the resident's progress while in the program.

Residents are expected to deposit 75 percent of their income from any source into a residential savings account, which will be held for them until the completion of their residency. Caseworkers may authorize a withdrawal from a resident's account when there is an authentic need. Residents are encouraged to open checking accounts with financial institutions once they have gained employment.

Discharge from the program

There are four ways to be discharged from SLH or GH.

1. Successful completion of program
2. Leave/ self-discharge
3. Administrative discharge 1— asked to leave the program
4. Administrative discharge 2— extensive medical or mental health needs

Residents who are not interested in fulfilling service plans or participating in the program are asked to leave. Staff members are required to contact the Illinois Department of Corrections if one of its parolees has a self-discharge or administrative discharge. SLM has both a formal agreement with IDOC and informal relationships with IDOC parole officers.

SLH staff follow-up with residents by phoning them after they are discharged. However, it is not a formal process. In addition, all former residents are invited to an annual Christmas party. GH tracks former residents through postcards sent at three, six, and twelve months after discharge. The postcards ask about addresses, employment, school, and attendance in recovery support meetings.

Program services

Many of the program services were initiated by previous SLH and GH program directors but have evolved over time. The problems and issues of residents, input from staff, and the reentry field have changed services over time. During the first 90 days, all services are mandatory. After that time period, residents are expected to attend all services unless excused to look for or attend work or to attend school.

SLH's mandatory services include the following:

- Substance abuse treatment services
 - Intensive outpatient treatment
 - Relapse prevention
 - Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)/ Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings
- Psychological services
 - Psychological assessment
 - Mental health counseling
 - Parenting
 - Anger management
- Life-skills development
- Educational and vocational services
 - Financial literacy

GH's mandatory services include the following:

- Substance abuse treatment services
 - Intensive outpatient treatment
 - Relapse prevention
 - Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)/ Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings

- Psychological services
 - Anger management
 - Emotional healing
 - Family restoration
- Educational and vocational services
 - Financial literacy

SLH and GH also require residents to obtain vital statistics forms, such as birth certificates, social security card, medical cards, as well as medical evaluations.

Psychological services

The Adler School of Professional Psychology provides mental health counseling, parenting classes, and anger management classes to SLH and GH residents. The school's mission is to prepare its students to be socially responsible practitioners who engage communities and advance social justice, during both their course of study and their later professional lives. The school and SLM have a direct service contract that allows students to meet the school's internship requirements. Students gain experience with mental health assessments, testing, individual, and group counseling on site. Students are overseen by a site manager, also a student, who remains at SLM for an academic year.

Substance abuse-related services

In addition to intensive outpatient treatment, SLH offers individual and group counseling, recovery management groups, and referrals to in-patient detoxification when necessary. Healthcare Alternatives Systems (HAS) is the male intensive outpatient treatment provider. These services are designed for individuals who have significant addiction symptoms but are medically stable and do not need detoxification or residential services.

Upon completing an assessment, residents are placed in either a 25-session intensive outpatient substance abuse group or a 10-session outpatient substance abuse group. Upon completion of the intensive outpatient drug treatment group, residents will automatically be placed in the lesser intensive outpatient group for 10 weeks. During outpatient counseling, participants learn about the disease process of alcoholism and drug addiction, work with staff to understand and accept their own chemical dependence, and explore healthy life-styles that do not include alcohol and drug use.

At SLH, a relapse prevention group meets weekly before the residents leave on weekend passes. The group assists residents in identifying situations they may encounter while off-site that will interfere with their sobriety. Residents are required to attend two on-site and two off-site Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or Alcohol Anonymous (AA) meetings. Urinalysis tests are given to residents after weekend passed and randomly throughout week. Tests are given by trained house monitors; results are indicated in five minutes and results are confirmed by another staff person. If a test is positive, the resident is sent to detox and the treatment provider is consulted. A treatment plan is developed and the resident's movement is restricted.

GH offers 60 to 70 hours of intensive outpatient services through Women's Treatment Center. Its mission is to provide women with a continuum of care, recovery tools, and parenting skills to maintain a sober lifestyle as they rebuild their lives and their futures, and mend the bonds with their families. Groups at GH cover drug affects, relapse prevention, introduction to the 12-step recovery process, and related health issues.

Life skills

Life Skills is a 12-week course curriculum run by a volunteer. The course helps residents improve their social development by introducing them to everyday topics they will need to successfully function in society. The Life Skills II course exposes the resident to cultural activities. Residents attend plays, write poems and participate in cultural outings like visiting the museum.

Educational and vocational services

The Michael Barlow Center (MBC) offers GH and SLH residents the following:

- Literacy assessment and tutoring services
- St. Leonard's High School Completion Program
- Odyssey project
- Money Smarts
- Employment Preparation Training
- Basic Culinary Skills
- Greenworks: Building Maintenance for the Future
- Computer lab
- Job placement and retention services

All resident are assessed for literacy, and, if their skills are too low to allow them to participate in education classes at the MBC, they are encouraged to participate in on-site tutoring. As needed, SLM offers tutoring to assist residents in improving reading and math skills. Tutoring may improve the resident's chances of obtaining employment and/or furthering their education

Residents who are at an appropriate reading and math level can attend the St. Leonard's Adult High School. Diplomas are awarded through Regina Dominican High School in Wilmette, Illinois.

The Odyssey Project provides a college-level introduction to the humanities through text-based seminars led by professors at colleges and universities. The project helps adults with low incomes more actively shape their own lives and the lives of their families and communities.

Money Smarts is a financial literacy class held twice a week. It helps residents with managing their finances, including how to develop and maintain a budget, how to check their credit scores, and how to open a checking and saving account.

Employment preparation training is conducted regularly by MBC staff. Additionally, the Inspiration Corporation conducts several three week-long, three-hour per day sessions that focuses on skills related to the job search such as resume preparation and job interview skills.

Basic culinary skills class is an 11-week, half-day class offered three times per year. Students learn the basics of food preparation and preservation as well as knife skills and general work in a food services setting. The class takes place in a fully-equipped kitchen classroom.

Greenworks: Building Maintenance for the Future is an 11-week, half-day class offered three times per year. Students learn the basics of electricity, plumbing, and carpentry, with an emphasis on green technology and eco-friendly ways of building and maintaining structures.

Adler School of Professional Psychology interns conduct an employment training group where residents can volunteer to participate in developing stronger interviewing skills.

The MBC has a computer lab with 18 computers which is open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm. GH has a computer lab with eight computer and is always open to residents. Frequently, computer classes are offered where tutors can provide computer assistance. Residents also have access to a job developer and retention counselor.

Housing assistance

GH and SLH residents meet with the housing specialist 90 days after entering and continue to meet weekly to learn a variety of tools to use in seeking housing. Discussions center on how to search for leads via the Internet, newspapers, and word of mouth. Preparation for future housing includes housing counseling, search, referrals, appropriate placement, and follow-up to appropriate housing programs to assist individuals to maintain housing.

Other programs and services

At St. Leonard's House

SLH residents can voluntarily participate in Back on My Feet (BoMF) program. BoMF is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to creating independence and self-sufficiency within the homeless and other underserved populations by engaging them in running as a means of building confidence, strength, and self-esteem. After one month of participation, BoMF members with 90 percent attendance or better move into the Next Steps phase, where they can receive job training programs, educational scholarships, and housing assistance.

Afterwards is a group where previous SLH residents who have successfully completed the program come back to speak to current residents. The goal is to assist residents in gaining a better understanding on what life will be like after they leave SLH.

At SLH, community meetings provide a forum for residents to voice their issues, concerns, and ideas to the program director. The program director can update residents of any changes in the program and invite guest speakers to inform residents on a variety of topics that will assist them in being well rounded individuals.

Understanding Relationships is a group for SLH residents to discuss ways to develop and maintain healthy relationships in a group setting.

Neighborhood Writing Alliance allows SLH residents to use the art of writing to express their thoughts and feelings. Since some residents are not comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally, the program gives them another form of expression.

House of Healing is a peer-led group where residents discuss a variety of issues. SLH staff are excluded from the group. The goal is to help residents develop interpersonal and conflict resolution skills.

At Grace House

Other GH programs include spiritual development; workshops on self-image, self-esteem, relationships, and stress management; meditation, a survivor's group, rational emotive therapy, legal rights, and recreational and social activities that compliment program services and programs. These projects may include gardening and other service projects, such as talking to high students about prison.

GH has a family reconnection program held six times a year, every other month. This is a day-long program with an educational piece, guest speakers, recreational time with kids, and some form of entertainment. There is a Mother's Day dinner, cookouts in the summer, and tree trimming in the Winter. If needed, the families can get counseling provided by Adler School of Professional Psychology.

Heartland Health Outreach provides medical check-ups, medicine, and referrals. Stroger Hospital provides limited medical treatment at no cost. For those with medical needs that require payment, they must pay out of pocket and get a payment plan. Mile Square Community Health Center also provides limited health care. Medications are stored, distributed, and recorded by staff. Residents with prescriptions are required to use them as prescribed.

Literature review

Incarceration and prisoner reentry

Nationwide, estimates indicate that 13 million women and men in the U.S. are either currently serving or have previously served a felony sentence (Mauer, 2010). This large accrual of prisoners has been partially attributed to the enactment of tough on crime policies, the war on drugs, and mandatory and determinate sentencing guidelines (Lynch & Sabol, 1997). Leaders in reentry research describe the dynamic and often complicated process of exiting prison as incorporating not only a physical resettlement but also a social and emotional process of returning to free society.

Reentry is not a new phenomenon as most incarcerated individuals return to their communities (Travis, 2005). Increased attention to the reintegration of former prisoners grew parallel to the drastic rise in incarceration rates (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). Since the 1980's, rates of incarceration have increased from one in 719 to one in 201 residents in 2010 (Guerino, Harrison, & Sabol, 2011; Blumstein & Beck, 1999). The two most recent prisoner population estimates indicate that substantially more than half a million individuals are released from state or federal prison each year (Carson and Sabol, 2012; Guerino, Harrison & Sabol, 2011). Notably, although African Americans represent 13.1 percent of the national population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), they comprise 40.7 percent of prisoners sentenced to at least one year in state or federal prison (Guerino, et. al., 2011). These figures quantitatively describe the current reentry dilemma, but they only begin to portray the social and economic realities millions of formerly incarcerated individuals face each year due to prior convictions.

The collateral consequences re-entering individuals face after leaving prison include formal and informal policies that hinder reentry into various social institutions (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2003). Common repercussions of a criminal record include a decrease in civic participation, difficulties in finding employment, and housing insecurity and homelessness (Wheelock, 2005; Gouvis-Roman & Travis, 2004). Exiting individuals often have limited pre-release planning (Nelson, Deess & Allen, 2011; Kupers, 1999), and many have significant debt, outstanding fines, and restitution payments (Levingston & Turetsky, 2007). The culmination of these costs and other policies lead two thirds of released prisoners to be rearrested within three years of release— many for committing another crime but nearly 25 percent for a technical violation of probation or parole (Langan & Levin, 2002). In fact, the number of people who returned to state prison for a parole violation increased seven fold from 1980 to 2000 (from 27,000 to 203,000) (Travis and Lawrence, 2002).

Issues that lead to incarceration

There are a number of factors that directly or indirectly influence an offender's likelihood of incarceration. Inmates have been shown to have higher rates of substance use, gang involvement, mental health issues, childhood abuse and neglect, and unemployment, and they have lower levels of education than the general population (Johnson, Ross, Taylor, Carvajal, & Peters, 2005; Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Varano, Huebner, & Bynum, 2011; Modestin & Wuermler, 2005;

Fondacaro & Holt, 1999; Widom, 1995; Harlow, 2003). Each of these factors may play a role in an offender's criminal behavior.

Substance abuse

Research has shown that drug and alcohol use is a risk factor for criminal behavior and incarceration (Sinha & Easton, 1999; Hattery & Smith, 2010). Drug use has been shown to be highly correlated with property and violent crimes (Harrison & Gfroerer, 1992). One-fourth of jail detainees reported abusing alcohol or drugs, and 40 percent reported alcohol or drug dependence (Karberg & James, 2005).

Gang involvement

Gang involvement has been found to be a significant risk factor for criminal behavior (Varano et al., 2011). Research has shown that individuals who are gang-involved commit their first offense at a younger age, are involved in more serious crimes, and are incarcerated more frequently than non-gang members (Huff, 1998; Levitt & Venkatesh, 2001).

Mental health

Individuals with mental health disorders are overly represented in the criminal justice system. According to James & Glaze (2006), over half of incarcerated individuals have mental health disorders. There is a lack of community-based mental health treatment providers and psychiatric beds for individuals with mental illness (Aufderheide & Brown, 2005). As a result, many mentally ill individuals do not receive adequate treatment for their disorders and frequently come into contact with the criminal justice system (Chelune, 2011; Aufderheide & Brown, 2005; Lurigio, Rollins, & Fallon, 2004).

Childhood abuse and neglect

There is a higher rate of criminal and violent behavior among victims of childhood abuse and neglect (Widom, 1989; Widom & Ames, 1994; Widom, 1995). Approximately 29 percent of adults and 26 percent of juveniles who are victims of childhood abuse and neglect are arrested at some point in their lives (Widom, 1995).

Employment and income

Unemployment rates are higher for offenders than the general population. Studies of unemployment have shown that between 34 and 53 percent of inmates were unemployed prior to their arrest (Lynch, Smith, Graziadei, & Pittayathikhun, 1994; Indig, Topp et al., 2009). In 2002, 29 percent of offenders reported that they were unemployed prior to their incarceration (James, 2004). In comparison, the unemployment rate for the general population at the end of 2002 was 6 percent (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). Some studies have found a correlation between unemployment rates and property and violent crimes (Parker & Horwitz, 1986; Raphael & Winter-Ebmer, 2001; Lee & Holoviak, 2006). Henderson (2001) reported that "unemployed

offenders are more likely to have contact with the criminal justice system and that such offenders do not fare as well as their employed counterparts in the criminal justice system” (pp.84).

Research has found a link between lower income and higher crime rates. Poverty and low income are related to violent crime with the exception of homicide (Hsieh & Pugh, 1993; Box, 1987). Research has shown that there is a strong relationship between income disparity and crime (Box, 1987). Areas in which there are high levels of income inequality have been found to have higher overall crime rates (Witte & Witt, 2000).

Education

Research has shown that a lack of education can be a risk factor for criminal behavior. According to Harlow (2003), the offender population has a significantly lower level of educational achievement than the general population. In 1991, 41 percent of offenders in the United States had not graduated from high school, compared with 18 percent of the general population (Harlow, 2003).

Reentry needs after prison

Reentry occurs when a formerly incarcerated individual is released from custody and transitions back into the community. The number of individuals incarcerated has increased over the past quarter century (La Vigne, Mamalian, Travis, & Visher, 2003). According to Petersilia (2003), prisoners, on average, will spend approximately five months in jail and 29 months in prison. Many released offenders return to disadvantaged communities characterized by high levels of crime, poverty, and drug use (Visher, La Vigne, & Travis, 2004; La Vigne et al., 2003). Offenders reentering the community are faced with a wide range of barriers that often make successful reintegration difficult (Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, & McPherson, 2008). Today, prisoners are typically less prepared for reentry into the community (La Vigne et al., 2003). Correctional facilities offer fewer prison programs and services to inmates (Petersilia, 2003). Often inmates are unable to attend prison programs due to long waiting lists (Petersilia, 2003).

Preparing inmates for successful reentry is vital to preventing offender recidivism factors that contribute to recidivism, include homelessness, poverty, unemployment, and drug use (Paylor, 1995; La Vigne et al., 2004; Uggen & Staff, 2004). According to Hattery & Smith (2010), “Barriers to reentry significantly shape the probability for recidivism” (pp. 14). Research has shown that offenders who were given support in finding housing and employment had better outcomes and were more successful when returning to their communities (Hattery & Smith, 2010). Furthermore, individuals that had strong social support networks and close ties to family were more successful at reintegration (Graffam, et al., 2008; Solomon, Gouvis, & Waul, 2001).

Physical and mental health

The majority of offenders leaving prison suffer from chronic physical health problems. According to Mallick-Kane & Visher (2008), 49 percent of male offenders and 67 percent of female offenders leaving prison reported a physical health problem. Research has shown that ex-offenders suffer from a wide range of health conditions, including asthma, diabetes, heart disease,

cancer, HIV/AIDs, hepatitis, hypertension, and tuberculosis (Visher, 2004; Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008; Williams, 2006; Thompson, 2008). Individuals with health problems have greater difficulty reintegrating into society. They struggle to find stable employment and housing and have greater difficulty with family reintegration (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008).

According to James & Glaze (2006), in 2005, over 700,000 incarcerated individuals had symptoms of a mental disorder. There are high rates of mental health disorders such as mania, depression, and psychosis among prisoners (James & Glaze, 2006). Many individuals with mental health disorders who do not receive adequate treatment have trouble functioning in the community (The Sentencing Project, 2002). The presence of a mental health disorder makes reentry even more challenging for offenders. Offenders with mental illness experience greater difficulty with finding stable housing, employment, and receive less support from family members (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008). Individuals with serious mental disorders are at a higher risk for recidivism and return to prison sooner than individuals without mental disorders (Cloyes, Wong, Latimer, & Abarca, 2010).

Ex-offenders often lack access to and financial support for health care. When an offender is incarcerated for a long period of time, their Medicaid benefits may be terminated (Thompson, 2008). While an offender may apply for these benefits to be reinstated, it often takes a substantial amount of time. As a result, many offenders with chronic physical or mental illnesses do not receive health care and treatment after release (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008).

Substance abuse

Substance abuse is another common problem for former prisoners. Approximately two-thirds of individuals entering prison report some form of substance abuse (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008). Research has shown that individuals with prior substance abuse problems are at a higher risk for continued use and criminal activity (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008; Gever, 2007; Sinha & Easton, 1999). Ex-offenders suffering from addiction are at an increased risk of developing serious health conditions or contracting infectious diseases (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008). Research has shown that offenders with substance abuse problems who obtain treatment have lower rates of recidivism; however, there is a lack of available treatment programs for released offenders (Gever, 2007).

Unemployment

Research has shown that finding employment can help reduce recidivism rates of ex-offenders (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003; La Vigne et al., 2004; Uggen & Staff, 2004). However, there are a number of challenges that ex-offenders face when seeking employment, such as a lack of education, work experience, qualifications, and employment opportunities, as well as negative employer attitudes (Uggen & Staff, 2004; Holzer et al., 2003, Visher et al., 2004; Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2004). Often wages earned are not enough to cover the cost of an apartment and other basic necessities. (Visher et al. 2004) found that eight months after release, only 65 percent of offenders were able to obtain some form of employment and less than half were currently employed at the time of the interview. Offenders who are unable to obtain legitimate employment or have low wages are often forced to rely on other sources of income, such as

support from family and friends, informal work, public assistance, and, in some cases, illegal income (Visher et al., 2004; Holzer et al., 2003).

Many ex-offenders have low levels of education and lack work experience (Uggen & Staff, 2004; Harlow, 2003; Holzer et al., 2003). Another employment barrier for ex-offenders is employer attitudes towards hiring ex-offenders. Research has shown that employers are often reluctant to hire ex-offenders, with approximately two-thirds of employers reporting that they would not hire an ex-offender (Holzer et al., 2004). According to Holzer et al., (2004), employers may believe that ex-offenders will be untrustworthy or unreliable employees. Employers may fear being held liable for the criminal actions of the ex-offender. An employer may be liable if they expose their employees or customers to dangerous individuals (Holzer et al., 2004).

Other barriers ex-offenders may encounter are state or federal laws prohibiting their employment in certain professions. Offenders with felony convictions are barred from holding jobs in some health services industries, the security industry, and any job where they may be in contact with children (Holzer et al., 2003). Furthermore, some companies may have policies that prohibit hiring individuals with criminal records (Taxman, Young, & Byrne, 2002). There are also licensing restrictions, depending on the state, that prevent offenders from obtaining employment in certain fields, such as health care, law, garbage collection, barbering, and cosmetology (Petersilia, 2003).

Federal assistance

Individuals who are convicted of a felony automatically become ineligible to receive certain federal assistance. Ex-offenders who were convicted of drug-related offenses are banned from obtaining food stamps or veteran's benefits or participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (Roman & Travis, 2004). While offenders may still be eligible to receive assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), these benefits may be suspended if an offender is incarcerated for more than one month. It often takes a significant length of time for these benefits to be reinstated (Roman & Travis, 2004).

Offenders convicted of drug-related felonies have additional barriers. Federal legislation was passed that prevents individuals with felony convictions for a drug offense from obtaining financial aid for education (Hattery & Smith, 2010). Furthermore, the federal government passed a law requiring that states suspend or revoke the licenses of individual convicted of drug felonies, including DUIs, for at least six months or lose federal highway funding (Hattery & Smith, 2010; Petersilia, 2003).

Housing

According to Cortes and Rogers (2010), "In most jurisdictions to which individuals return after incarceration, accessible and affordable housing is in exceedingly short supply." While there are several options for ex-offenders, such as residing with friends and family, community-based correctional housing, transitional housing, federally subsidized housing, supportive housing, and housing in the private market, there are barriers that make obtaining these different forms of housing challenging for ex-offenders.

As a condition of their parole, many offenders are required to have their residence pre-approved and are prevented from living with certain individuals (Bradley, Oliver, Richardson, & Slayter, 2001; Thompson, 2008). Research has shown that up to 80 percent of released offenders move in with friends or relatives for a period of time (Roman & Travis, 2004). Friends and family who allow a paroled offender to live with them are subject to visits by the offender's parole officer, as well as searches of their home (Thompson, 2008). Friends and family members may fear having the offender return to their home due to past violence or drug use (Roman & Travis, 2004; Thompson, 2008). Furthermore, an offender may be prohibited from living with another individual with a criminal history (Roman & Travis, 2004; Petersilia, 2003). Finally, the offender may be prevented from living within a certain distance of their victim or other specified areas (Petersilia, 2003; Logan, 2007).

Offenders who are unable to reside with friends and family may be required to live in community-based correctional housing or halfway houses. Halfway houses are run through federal or state department of corrections and are designed to transition offenders from prison life back into the community. Offenders that are eligible may serve up to ten percent of their sentence in a halfway house (Roman & Travis, 2004). Unfortunately, there are a limited number of halfway houses available and limited space (Roman & Travis, 2004; Shilton & Vail, 2005).

There are also government funded transitional housing programs that offer housing to homeless individuals that are disabled, mentally ill, or living with HIV/AIDS (Roman & Travis, 2004). Offenders who have been incarcerated for more than 30 days and meet other inclusion criteria are eligible for this type of transitional housing. However, the availability of this type of housing is limited and there are often long waiting lists (Roman & Travis, 2004).

Offenders are rarely able to find rental apartments when they are released from prison due to criminal history and lack of finances (Visher et al., 2004; Petersilia, 2003). Landlords often do not want to rent to individuals with a criminal history (Clark, 2007; Harding & Harding, 2006). Individuals leaving prison often receive less than \$200 dollars upon release, which may not cover a security deposit and rent for an apartment (Roman & Travis, 2004).

Released offenders who are unable to secure housing are often left homeless and forced to stay in shelters. Research has shown that individuals living in shelters have a less successful reentry process than those who find stable housing (Nelson, Deess, Allen, 1999).

Reentry housing programs

Transitional supportive housing like SLH and GH is another option for ex-offenders leaving prison. These typically run through private faith-based or non-profit organizations and are designed to support offenders as they move back into the community (Roman & Travis, 2004; Shilton & Vail, 2005). Transitional housing is typically short-term and designed to help residents become independent. Supportive services such as life skills, employment assistance, counseling, and substance abuse treatment are typically offered to residents (Roman & Travis, 2004). However, there is limited space available in transitional programs, and not all offenders are eligible to reside in this type of housing (Shilton & Vail, 2005).

Methodology

Case studies are analyses of persons or things studied holistically (Thomas, 2011). Case studies are explanatory and can offer context and a richer picture of a topic. They allow researchers to find out much more about a small number of complex cases or individuals. For this evaluation, case studies were used to provide a detailed illustration of five individuals in SLM programs. Five case studies, rather than one, allow for greater analytic benefits, providing some common conclusion. However, the case studies are not generalizable to all formerly incarcerated individuals or all residents.

SLM provided a list of 16 names—eight from GH and eight from SLH. The list had individuals that varied by gender, race and ethnicity, and length of time out of the program. SLH and GH staff initially contacted those individuals to let them know a researcher may get in touch with them regarding participation in an interview. Researchers selected five individuals—two from GH and three from SLH—and contacted them by phone to set up an interview. The interviews were conducted in private rooms at SLH or GH.

All research subjects signed informed consent forms which explained the interviews. The face-to-face interviews were audio recorded and each lasted between two and four hours. All participants were given a \$50 stipend. A counselor was on-site during the interview and an exhaustive listing of Chicago area services was provided to research subjects in case they wanted to seek their assistance after the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured, so a list of issues were covered rather than specific questions. This is the most commonly used interview arrangement in small-scale research (Thomas, 2011). There were six sections with 148 issues with suggested probes to gather more information (*Table 5*).

Table 5
Semi-structured interview issues

Section	Description	Issues per section
1	Demographics	5
2	Birth and childhood	20
3	Adolescence and teenage years	20
4	Adulthood	20
5	Experiences at St. Leonard's Ministries	51
6	After St. Leonard's Ministries	32

The case study audio were transcribed by a professional transcriber. Common themes were derived by using NVivo9, qualitative data analysis software.

Case studies

Researchers completed in-depth interviews with three men who were former residents of St. Leonard's House and two women who were former residents of Grace House.

Demographics of sample

At the time of the interview, the five research subjects were 34 to 70 years old with an average age of 46 years old. Three of the research subjects reported their race as African American, one Caucasian, and one Hispanic.

At the time of the interview, all of the research subjects were living in Chicago in rental apartments. Two of their apartments were subsidized, at least in part, by government funding. Two lived in neighborhoods on the South side of Chicago, two on the North side, and one on the West side.

At the time of the interview, three individuals were unemployed and two were employed—one full time and one part-time. One research subject who was unemployed received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and another received food assistance and was in school.

At the time of the interview, four of the research subjects had never married and one was divorced but had remarried. Four individuals interviewed had children, and one did not. Three had two children, and one had one child. The ages of their children at the time of the interview ranged from 14 to 21 years old.

Of those interviewed, one reported never having a substance abuse problem. The other research subjects reported daily drug use for years. Addictions included the following drugs: powder cocaine, crack, heroin, alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy.

All of those interviewed had been incarcerated in Illinois prisons before residing at a SLM' program. The number of prior incarcerations ranged from one to six and the average number was three. The criminal offenses for which they were sent to prison before residing at St. Leonard's House or Grace House included burglary, violation of probation for a theft offense, and homicide. Three of the five interviewed reported currently being on parole.

Overall comments on the residential programs

Length of stay in the residential programs ranged from six months to 18 months. The two GH residents stayed for 12 and 18 months; three SLH residents stayed six, eight, and ten months. Of those interviewed, the time since leaving the residential program ranged from five months to two years; the average was 11 months.

Grace House

Overall, the two former residents interviewed for this study thought GH was clean and the furnishings were nice. However, one said that food in the kitchen was often expired. The two women interviewed thought that staff members were supportive. However, one woman noted inconsistencies with the enforcement of the rules. She explained that responses to the same infraction would be different depending on the resident involved.

In general, the two women interviewed liked all services and activities offered at Grace House. The women said that the services at GH taught them patience, better communication, forgiveness, and anger management. Both women said they particularly liked the psychological services. However, one woman mentioned that the interns serving as their counselors rotated every few months, so she did not have a consistent counselor.

St. Leonard's House

In general, the three men interviewed for this study thought SLH was comfortable and the food was good. The men thought the staff members were supportive. However, one said that staff could communicate better with residents to try to understand their problems which would reduce chances of relapse to drugs. Another said that staff did not always enforce the program rules.

The men took advantage of substance abuse treatment, culinary arts, Green Works Technology/building maintenance, computers, life skills, employment preparation, computers, and psychological treatment. In particular, they mentioned liking the psychological services, computer classes, and substance abuse treatment.

Similar to what one of the women interviewed said, one man shared that he did not develop relationships with his psychological counselors because they were always rotating. Another man thought that some days there were too many programs to attend with very little down time. Another mentioned that the substance abuse treatment could be more focused on relapse triggers. Finally, one research subject reported that he did not like that he was not allowed to look for a job right away.

In general, the men would recommend SLH to others. The men reported learning skills such as independence and being humble.

The narratives

The following are narratives based on the interviews with five former residents of SLH and GH: David, Andy, Carlos, Cheryl, and Susan. Pseudonyms rather than their actual names were used.

DAVID: FORMER RESIDENT OF ST. LEONARD'S HOUSE

At the time of the interview, David was a 46 year old African American male who grew up on the West side of Chicago. He started using drugs in high school, and his drug use peaked in his late 30s when he was using heroin and crack daily. He was arrested 20 times for crimes, such as burglary and forgery, which he committed to get money for drugs. He went to prison four times; the last time was for six years. After leaving prison, he resided at SLH for ten months until January 2012. Today, he is eight years drug free with a job and his own apartment. He credits the changes in his life to his own determination and the help of SLH.

Childhood

David was an only child who was raised by both of his parents. His parents never married, but they stayed together until he was age 15. His father worked as a police officer, and his mother worked in hospital administration. His family lived in a rental apartment on the West side of Chicago. He reported having close relationships with relatives including aunts, uncles, and cousins. His family members spent time together regularly on weekends and holidays. He described his neighborhood as “close knit, safe neighborhood, knew everybody.” At age 12, his family moved to a larger apartment with cheaper rent in neighborhood a mile west of their original neighborhood. His mother still resides there. David shared that his mother was strict, while his father more lenient. He shared that he was well cared for and provided for, stating he was “nourished, clothed, fed, you know, all the things a kid can ask for.” His only reported health problem was asthma. Overall he said, “I had a pretty good upbringing. I had everything a kid would ask for. I lived a normal life. I wasn't abused by my family.”

David was baptized and regularly attended a Lutheran church in his neighborhood. David went to a private Catholic school until 5th grade. He reported that he liked school, especially reading and language arts. He felt that he was challenged and got a quality education. His grades were satisfactory, but he indicated that he often did not complete his homework. David went to a public school for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. He indicated that he was disciplined in grammar school for minor incidents. He said, “I got in trouble for my mouth, for swearing a lot.” He reported that he first tried drugs in grade school when a friend gave him marijuana. In his childhood, David reported that he enjoyed swimming, playing basketball, and throwing firecrackers.

Adolescence and teenage years

At age 15, David's parents split up. He stated that he lived with his mother but would still see his father, who lived nearby and patrolled in the neighborhood as a police officer. His mother laid down rules for him to follow. David reported that he had a curfew of 8:30 p.m. during the school year and 9:30 p.m. in the summer. He recalled that he was not allowed to have company in the house when his mother was not there.

David went to a large public high school on Chicago's West side. He reported that he was afraid at his high school in the 1980s when there were a lot of gang problems. David indicated that he would cut class occasionally but had perfect attendance his last two years of high school. He recalled receiving a three day in-school suspension after he was caught with marijuana. David

reported being a B student. He indicated that science was his favorite subject and topics like weather and physics piqued his interest. He played baseball and football through the park district.

David reported that he held several summer jobs when he was a teenager. He recalled that he worked at a hospital, a fast food restaurant, and the night shift at Coca-Cola his senior year cleaning the plant. David explained that he socialized with friends that were older because they had access to cigarettes and drugs. He stated that he was not involved in a gang, but he had friends who were gang members. He reported no serious romantic relationships, but he recalled that he dated a lot of girls.

At this time in his life, David shared that he began experimenting with marijuana and drinking alcohol. Soon, he indicated that he was using daily with friends. He recalled that it was easy to find people from whom he could buy marijuana, using money from his mother or from jobs. He said “as a teen... it seemed normal to smoke weed.” He started getting into trouble with his mother because his eyes were red and he smelled of marijuana. He reported that his mother would tell him he had to stay in the house, not use the phone, and not watch television. David indicated that his father’s attitude was that he should get high in the house rather than on the street. His father was more concerned about him getting arrested because it could affect his job as a police officer. “At the time, [drugs] limited me. It was a stumbling block I put in my own way. My mom tried to tell me all the bad things about drugs. My dad did, too.” He said he had no arrests or drug treatment during this time period.

Adulthood

David left home in his early 20s and moved with a friend to sell drugs in Michigan where the market for selling drugs would be better. After he left Michigan, he lived in Indiana for a couple years. As an adult, he had periods when he was homeless, staying at a friend’s or girlfriend’s house, somebody’s floor, or in a shelter. He reported that he moved back to Chicago and stayed with his mother. He recalled that he promised his mother he would no longer use or sell drugs. After he left his mother’s house and before his last imprisonment, he lived in Peoria, Illinois for a couple years.

David reported several traumatic experiences in his life. He shared a major accident when he worked at a place that fabricated steel and that he was burned on the job in an explosion. David recalled that he was beaten up in prison once and had witnessed domestic violence and other violent fights in his old neighborhood and while in prison.

Drug use

David reported that after graduating high school he was using marijuana and began snorting cocaine. In his 20s, he and a friend would go to the park to “smoke weed,” and “flirt with the girls.” He had other friends that were using harder drugs, such as powder cocaine. He stated that he “would dabble in that.” He added, “I think marijuana was a gateway drug to other drugs, which I started using. Started out recreational, you know, then it became, you know, a way of life, basically.”

David’s highest use of drugs was in his late 30s. “Right before I got locked up, because I was

snorting heroin and smoking crack. So I was, man, out of control.” For 14 years until he was locked up in prison, he used daily. He shared, “I never used drugs in prison, and when I'd get out, I wouldn't use, but then after a while I'd start back.” He only attempted treatment when it was required by the courts.

David said, “I'm kind of glad I went through what I went through. Because I had to feel that pain. I think I had to feel that pain in order to be what I'm becoming today.” David reported that has not used any drugs or alcohol since his release from prison. At the time of the interview, he was almost eight years clean. David explained that he attends Narcotics Anonymous meetings, sometimes at SLH.

Criminal activity

David reported that he sold drugs on the West side of Chicago. “I'd steal and do criminal activity to get high. I was really dealing drugs to get more drugs, when you really think about it. I wasn't making a hell of a lot of money. Well, it was, but it went right back—I became my best customer.”

He said he was arrested 20 times and was on probation twice. He recalled that he always violated his probation by getting another arrest. He reported that he no longer engages in criminal activity. However, he admitted to breaking his parole by leaving Chicago and going to Florida, as well as an instance of public urination. David stated that he does not want to hurt his family who now trust him. He said, “I don't want that life no more. That's a miserable life.”

David was sentenced to prison in Illinois four times. The first time was when he was 30 years old for burglary and forgery. He spent nine months in Shawnee and Sheridan prisons and then was placed on work release. The second time he went to prison was for retail theft when he was 34 years old. He was sentenced to four and a half years but only served a couple months before being placed on work release. The third time he was 38 years old and was convicted of fleeing and eluding. He reported that he would drive while other men would steal and sell MP3 players. He recalled that he was in a police chase and was arrested and sentenced to 18 months in prison. He served three months of his sentence. The fourth prison stay was for burglary and vehicle burglary when he was 39 years old. David reported that he would steal power tools. He stated that the police dubbed him “the Craftsman.” He was sentenced to 13 and a half years in Danville prison and served just under six years. He was released in March 2010.

David explained that prison was monotonous. He said “It's like Groundhog Day, same thing, day in, day out” so you need to get a job or go to school. The first couple years in prison he held a job within the prison, and he would spend time in the yard smoking, eating, watching sports, and socializing. A couple years into his prison sentence, another inmate encouraged him to go to school in prison because David wanted to help others. David had to get his math scores up, and, once he did, he was accepted into college. He attended college for the last three years he served in prison. He had trouble with study habits but got some tutoring from another inmate. He started in general studies and then began focusing on social work and substance abuse. He reported that he liked his classes and had a 3.8 grade point average. David indicated that one of his goals is to finish his college degree, but, at the time of the interview, he could not afford it.

Relationships

David had four significant relationships with women but never married. He reported that he was engaged once but his drug use got in the way. He said, “At the time when I met her, I was on work release, clean, doing fine. But then, you know, I backslid, so it just killed everything.” He has two children with two women. David admitted to being verbally and physically abusive when he started using heroin in his mid-20s. Once he started using heroin, he became more violent. “I would hit her—I used to hit her a lot.”

David has a 20 year old daughter living in Mississippi who has three children. He reported that he has not seen her in years. His son is 26 years old, living in Chicago, and is a supervisor at an insurance company. David said, “Me and my son, we like two brothers. I didn't really raise him. He was around his mom most of the time.”

David shared, “The only time I became estranged from my family is when I got real tough on drugs.” He continued, “In my 20s maybe. When I started getting on the real heavy stuff, right, my life revolved around getting high. I had some cousins that we would smoke crack together and this and that. But for the most part, my favorite uncle or being around my mom or aunts, none of that, because I just wanted to get high. That was it.” He associated with friends he knew from getting high or prison.

During David's last prison stay, his family became supportive and provided “a lot of positive encouragement.” He stated that his family visited him in prison including, to his surprise, his estranged uncle who works in security. He explained, “because there were times when he was a cop and I got locked up in his district, he said ‘lock his ass up.’ He wouldn't vouch for me.” He further shared, “So a lot of relationships that were, you know, frayed, during my drug abuse time, they're mended now.”

Experiences at St. Leonard's House

David heard about SLH through word of mouth in prison. He heard it was a place that would help men leaving prison get their life together. David reported that another prisoner said, “There's this place called St. Leonard's. It's like a transitional center. They got substance abuse, educational programs. He says, ‘hey, man, you seem like you trying to get your life together. Go there’.”

Applying to St. Leonard's House

David said that he decided to apply to SLH because he wanted to be near his family, particularly his mother. He reported that his mother was very supportive during his prison stay but that he wanted to live on his own following his release. The SLH application was mailed to him while he was in prison. He completed it on his own and sent it back. He reported that the application was understandable and the requirements to get in were made clear. He indicated that he did not get a chance to do a phone interview, so he was released to his mother's house. After a few days he called the intake coordinator at SLH who told him to come in for an interview. David reported that he waited for three hours to see the Intake Coordinator. He was asked questions about himself and what he wanted to do with his life. He replied, “I wanna change my life.” The

coordinator asked him to take a drug test and Breathalyzer. He was told to come back by dinnertime with any personal belongings he needed and they would be searched. David reported that he came right back with a few clothes and personal items. He felt that the program expectations were made clear to him.

Living at St. Leonard's House

David reported that he got along with the other residents, but he only associated with the ones that seemed like they were really determined to make changes in their life. Although there were few of them, there were some residents using drugs. He recalled that he had two young roommates who were getting high and had drugs in the house. He was concerned because "it's like a cancer, because it [can] spread. Because we're all kind of vulnerable." David said that he did his best to stay away from those people and temptations.

David reported that he did not see any fights or arrests while at SLH and that he felt safe there. He recalled that residents were disciplined if they broke a rule, like testing positive for drugs. The consequences would be no weekend pass. He stated that the staff and other residents were supportive. They would say, "You're setting a good example. Keep up the good work." David reported that he made a few friends with whom he is still in contact.

David stated that he thought the accommodations were "okay." He reported that he had just been in prison living in a cell with another person, so he was eager to live alone. Initially he reported that he was staying in a six man room at St. Leonard's House, but then he moved to a three-man room and then a two-man room. He recalled that the food was "not bad", but he had the option of eating elsewhere. He reported that privacy varied, but he was able to leave on the weekends or go to the television room and be alone.

One complaint was that house monitors did not always enforce the rules of the program. "You tell a guy, hey, you can't do this, you get kicked out, you can't do this, you're not gonna get a pass. Follow up on it. A lot of times it wasn't happening. When you do not keep some order, you're gonna have problems."

After ten days, David was allowed to leave on the weekends, so he would visit his mom. Sometimes he would visit his mother during the week, but he needed to be back by the weekday curfew.

Services

David said he felt "all the services needed were here if I needed it. You know, they got plenty of services like a culinary arts class and Green Works Technology." He reported that his favorite service was the Green Works class because he liked learning new things, such as building and energy efficiency. He also stated that he liked the software and computer applications. He thought the services were "excellent." David reported that he was not allowed to get a job right away. He indicated that residents were encouraged to complete some services before looking for employment. He reported that he did not like this requirement. He also stated that he would have liked more college courses.

David reported that the services taught him to be more responsible by preparing them for education and work. Furthermore, SLH also made him save money. He said “they prepared you — they gave you the tools, you know, to survive out in the real world. Because this is a safe haven. When you get out there where I'm at, that's the real world.”

David stated that it took a few months to get truly invested in the program. He attended all his services and participated in them. He reported that he met with his case worker once a week. He said on Thursday nights he ran a community meeting.

David attended group therapy sessions and a few one-on-one counseling sessions, as well as parenting and anger management classes through Adler School of Professional Psychology. He reported that he did not develop relationships with counselors because they were always changing. He said that he understood that students rotated in and out for an internship but recommended there be someone there on a regular basis representing Adler. He indicated that he had a concern about the credibility of the students running the parenting classes. He felt that those teaching a parenting class should be parents themselves. He said, “Like how is some little 20-year-old white girl tell me about raising a kid? That was my attitude. I'm sorry. But you can't use a book to raise a kid.” He felt that people respond more to people who have gone through the same experience.

David described the substance abuse treatment as “awesome.” He said that he had an excellent counselor, but he was “kind of odd” and unorthodox because “he kept things 100 percent real, and he would call you on your B.S. in a minute.” David recalled that substance abuse treatment was held in the church at St. Leonard's Ministries in the basement. He reported that he felt comfortable sharing during group sessions. “If you were having a problem I was always able to talk to any staff member about anything. And I didn't have to worry about anything getting out, you know.”

David was not sure if life would have been different had he not gone to SLH because he was determined to change his life. However, he said SLH “is a good place for people who get out of prison and got nothing else or who want something better. This place is the catalyst.” David said that he would recommend St. Leonard's “in a heartbeat if you want to get your act together.” He explained “The guys that want to change will benefit the most from [St. Leonard's House].”

Final thoughts on St. Leonard's House

David shared, “This is like being reborn again. This is the womb for me. You know, this is where it all started at. Everything that happened before I got here was wiped off the slate. It's a clean slate. This is where I came to get my start at.” He explained that St. Leonard's House “helped me to get my life on track.” He reported that he now pays his bills and has some money saved. He said he is going to keep striving for more but he added “I'm gonna do it the legal way now.”

David emphasized that even after leaving the program—“it will always be a place to go to for help and staff will always help you.” He explained, “This will always be my home. I can come down here to talk to anybody. I can come down here to eat if I have to. I can come here for anything. You know what I mean? It's like I never left. When I'm here, people are glad to see me, you know. People care about you. You know what I mean? Always. It's a good place.” He added,

“The resources are still here for me if I need them.” He added, “This place is everything -- you can't say enough about this place if you ask me. I love this place, and it's gonna always be a part of me.”

After St. Leonard's House

David stayed at SLH for ten months. He reported that he felt that this was the right amount of time for him. After St. Leonard's, he interviewed and was approved to live at St. Andrew's Court where he resided for a few months. St. Andrew's Court offers more permanent supportive housing on the grounds at St. Leonard's Ministries. David reported that he had his own apartment at St. Andrew's Court and paid rent. He stated that he wanted to leave because it was too small and visitors would have to leave their identification at the front desk. In addition, he wanted to let someone else who may need it more than him have a spot at St. Andrew's Court. He further explained that he left because he had a job and was able to obtain and afford an apartment in a building owned by a relative.

After St. Andrew's Court, David moved back to the West side of Chicago near his family. He reported that he lives alone and pays \$500 rent for a one bedroom apartment with a large bathroom and tiny kitchen. He reported that he found the apartment on his own and that he also owns a car. He said the neighborhood has changed and has more criminal activity, drug dealing and prostitution.

At the time of the interview, David said that he enjoyed watching sports, being on computers, and reading books. He reported that he has two girlfriends he spends time with but lives alone. He stated, “I'm pretty much a homebody person now. So I don't really go out and socialize.” His health problems include being overweight, high blood pressure, asthma, and seasonal allergies. He also reported that he has back problems from a work-related injury. He takes medication for high blood pressure and uses an inhaler when needed. He reported that he also experiences memory loss as a result of past drug use.

Employment

After his last prison stay, David applied for a number of jobs and interviewed at three or four. He reported that he would not get hired because employers would ask about his criminal history and he would disclose the information honestly. He recalled that it took him a few months to get a job but reported that it was not hard to find one.

David reported that he was hired as a laborer in an electrical plant for about a year. He was fired because there were some thefts and his boss threatened to fire him if he did not share the name of the person who was stealing. He did not share the person's name and was subsequently fired. David reported that he currently works at a printing shop packing products coming off the printing press into boxes for shipment. He said that he has worked there almost one year. He has been working nights but he will be switching to days. He said that he gets along with his coworkers but does not find the job personally rewarding.

David said that he currently makes approximately \$10 per hour. He reported that his salary pays the bills, but he feels that he could be better at saving money. He said that he has no debt. “Cause

I don't want to owe anybody, and I know what it's like to get put out. I know what it's like to have nothing to eat. I know what it's like to run out of gas. It's not a good feeling.” He reported no illegal income.

Relationships

David reported that since he left prison, his family has been there for him. He said that he is now close with his family and trusted by his family. “I'm trusted. I can be depended on.” He reported that he talks to his mother every day. “But since I been home after this last time, you know, my thinking changed, and they noticed it before I did.” His mother loaned him \$200 to help him buy a car, and he paid her right back. Furthermore, he indicated that his uncle, who works in security, trusted him with his burglar alarm code, so he can go to his house whenever he wants. He reported that a relative is his landlord, and when he got injured at work and was on workman's compensation, he allowed him to be behind on rent. David shared, “When your family says that, you know, hey, I ain't worried about you, don't worry about it... that's a good feeling.”

David reported that his father now lives in Texas, and he talks to him occasionally. He described his mother as a very loving and caring person. He said he still holds some resentment from when his mother kicked him out when he started using drugs. He added, “My mom did what she could do with me. After a while we become adults, you make your own decisions.”

David stated that he goes on picnics or holiday gatherings with his family. He indicated that he has one main girlfriend who he met at work. She is twelve years older than him and also lives in Chicago. He reported that they see each other every other weekend and go to movies, out to eat, or watch television. She does not use drugs or drink alcohol. He stated that St. Leonard's helped his relationships by teaching him to be “more respectful, more tolerant, more compassionate.”

David reported that he attends narcotics anonymous (NA) meetings at least three times a week sometimes at SLH. He goes back to SLH to talk to staff and for guidance. David stated that now he only associates with people that have turned their lives around. He met friends through SLH and sees them at NA meetings at SLH.

The future

At the time of the interview, David had completed one year of parole and had one year left. He reported that he saw his parole agent once every three months face-to-face at his apartment. He said he goes through a lot of parole agents because they are always rotating. He reported that his parole agent was trying to get him early release because of how well he was doing on parole. He indicated that he dislikes the travel restrictions placed on him.

David reported that his current goals are to get healthy and get a better job. He said that he wants “a job where I work until I retire.” He also stated that he wants to own property. He thinks he still needs to work on his attitude and said he still acts out and has a bad temper at times. He reported that he was better, but still acts immature sometimes. When asked about how he feels about himself and his life right now, he replied, “I'm hopeful.”

ANDY: FORMER RESIDENT OF ST. LEONARD'S HOUSE

At the time of the interview, Andy was a 70 year old Caucasian male. He grew up in rural Illinois, attained a 9th grade education, and worked as a farmer. At 20 years old, he was sentenced to prison for murder. After 45 years in prison, upon his release, he went to SLH at the age of 66. After six months at St Leonard's Ministries, he moved to a rental apartment in Chicago subsidized by the federal income supplement program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Andy explained that he appreciated SLH because it gave him a place to go after prison.

Childhood

Andy reported that he grew up in a rural area in Alton, Illinois with his mother and adoptive father, who was "a drunk." He had three sisters but explained that they never lived with him but in orphanages—one sister lived in St. Louis, Missouri; one sister in East Alton, Illinois; and one sister in Carpentersville, Illinois. He said he was not close to any other family members. Andy reported that he had enough food and clothing when he was a child. He had pneumonia at age seven years old. He said he was raised Baptist but did not attend church. He reported that his mother would beat him with a "switch" to discipline him. He said he attended public, one-room, "country schools" and had very good attendance. He learned math, reading, spelling, and history, and he thought he received a quality education. Andy indicated that one teacher in third grade hit him with her fist in his back to discipline him and his mother took Andy's side and yelled at the teacher. He shared he did not have any friends as a child. When not in school, he said he worked at home chopping wood for kindling and helping farm vegetables like asparagus. At 11 years old, Andy reported that he took matches and started a fire that ended up burning down a barn.

Adolescence and teenage years

Andy reported that at 14 years old, he moved to live in a one-bedroom house in the country with his father. His father was a tenant farmer, so, as a child, they moved a lot. Andy reported that he lived in different areas, including Jerseyville, Illinois; Springfield, Missouri; and Cottage Hills, Illinois. He reported that the house in Cottage Hills burned down in an accidental fire. Andy said that as a teenager, he had a curfew of 6 p.m. every night and was up at 6 a.m. every morning. The highest grade he attended was 9th grade. Andy said that he got a job for a short time assisting with roofing for "50 cents an hour" and worked from 9am to 6pm. He reported not having any friends as a teenager.

At 16 years old, Andy's father was killed in a car accident. After breaking into an abandoned house and forging a check, he was sent to live in a state reformatory for ten months and then was transferred to a forestry camp. At 18, he said he went to live with a police chief in Roxana, Illinois for one year. He said he had enough food and clothing.

Adulthood

Andy spent his adulthood in prison. After living in Texas and Pennsylvania and working for a short time as a farmer, he moved back to Illinois. He never married and had no children. In Chicago, Andy reported living at a hotel and working for a publishing service. In 1961, at age

20, he was sentenced to life in prison for beating his landlady to death. He was released in 2007 after serving 45 years of his sentence. He indicated that was his only arrest and incarceration as an adult. He reported that he has never drank alcohol or used drugs since his incarceration at age 20.

Experiences at St. Leonard's House

Andy reported that he heard about St. Leonard's Ministries from his lawyer who said it was a good place that would help him get out of prison. He stayed at SLH for six months. He reported active participation and being invested in the program. He took computer lab classes at the Michael Barlow Center and participated in softball. He said that he did not use his weekend passes but wrote letters to his sisters. He reported that he did not think there was anything that could make St. Leonard's better but that drug addicts would benefit most from St. Leonard's Ministries. He said that he felt all his needs were met. He met with his case worker three times a week and reported that all staff were "good."

After St. Leonard's House

After staying at SLH, Andy reported that he lived at St. Andrew's Court until SLH told him about an available apartment. At the time of the interview, it had been five months since he left St. Leonard's Ministries. Andy said he currently rents an apartment in a safe neighborhood on the North side of Chicago. However, last year, he reported that he was robbed by three young boys. He indicated that he receives SSI, which pays his rent. SSI, funded by general tax revenues, helps aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income, and provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. He said that he applied for jobs but found it hard to get interviews because "employers [are] reluctant to hire old people." He reported that he does not have a car and takes public transportation. He has Medicare and Medicaid and takes medication for high blood pressure and a diuretic.

Andy reported that he is on parole for life and sees his parole officer twice a month. He said that he now spends time on his computer, watching television, and listening to the radio. He reported that a reverend at an Episcopal church gave him the computer. Andy said that his current goal is to find employment and to work on his communication skills. He is in touch with his sisters and reports having "loving" relationships with them but reports having no friends. He said the hardest thing since leaving SLH is not having money.

CARLOS: FORMER RESIDENT OF ST. LEONARD'S MINISTRIES

At the time of the interview, Carlos, a Hispanic male born in Puerto Rico, was 39 years old. Growing up, he had a close knit extended family who lived near each other on the West side of Chicago. He joined a gang at a young age and was shot twice by rival gangs. Carlos was a drug dealer and marijuana and cocaine user. He resided at SLH twice. The first time he stayed in SLH for six months and then stayed at St. Andrew's Court for two months until he was asked to leave because he relapsed. The second time he stayed for eight months and at the time of the interview, he had been out of the program 15 months. Today, he is unemployed but is sober and lives with his new wife in an apartment in a nice neighborhood and spends time with his son twice a month.

Childhood

Carlos was born in Puerto Rico as a United States citizen. When he was born, he lived in a housing project that he called "one of the worst housing projects in the city" with a "very high drug element, very high crime element." Carlos reported moving a lot when he was young and being cared for by either his parents, grandparents, or other relatives. He recalled in the few years after he was born, his parents moved back and forth between Puerto Rico and Chicago. He was raised Catholic.

Carlos said his father was a heroin addict and went to substance abuse treatment. Carlos explained that his family wanted his father moved to the U.S., in hopes it would "break that cycle" of drug use and he would finish his college degree. In the U.S., his parents lived with his grandparents and his parents signed up for university courses at Northeastern Illinois University and his "father was clean." When his sister was born, Carlos stayed in Puerto Rico for a year with his grandparents while his parents stayed in Chicago.

Carlos moved permanently to Chicago when he was five years old and lived with his parents and sister in an apartment in the Logan Square neighborhood. He said in their neighborhood there was a "lot of drugs and gangs activity going on." When their apartment was burgled, they moved to the Lincoln Park neighborhood. After one year, his maternal grandfather bought a three-flat building in the Logan Square neighborhood, so his grandparents lived on the first floor unit with two of his uncles, his family lived on the second floor unit, and another uncle lived in the basement unit. They lived there for eight years and his other sister was born during that time. His parents were able to save money during that time in order to buy their own home.

Carlos explained that since he lived in a building with family members, they were all very close. He shared that he spent time with "the family, all the brothers and sisters, every weekend or even every day, especially during the summer." He continued, "my first cousins, we were all raised together... more like brothers and sisters rather than cousins." He stated that he was also close to his paternal grandparents who lived nearby in the Humbolt Park neighborhood.

Carlos reported that he was well provided for although his family did not have a lot of money. Carlos explained, "I always did have a warm plate of food three times a day, clothes on my back. I would call us lower middle class." He described their apartment as "roach-infested" and due to the lack of money, he had a "rough upbringing."

At school, Carlos said, “I was introduced to gangs at an early age; I was introduced to guns at an early age; to drugs at an early age.” He joined a gang, the Spanish Cobras. He shared, “I was ten years old when I first smoked my first joint.” He stated, “I started smoking marijuana. I started drinking. So my grades slipped.” When asked about parental discipline, he indicated that he received “spankings here and there, but of nothing to the point of abuse. I would be grounded for months at a time. I was disciplined pretty harsh.”

As a kid, Carlos said he was “gangbanging,” which involved “going to other neighborhoods and picking fights and having little rumbles and spray painting on walls and throwing bottles and bricks at cars and things like that.” He explained at that time it “was a different age” and “we still could feel relatively safe.” He shared that if on another gang’s turf, he and other gang members may get beat up but “we knew that we were gonna be able to walk out.” He reported being arrested for “minor” things like violating curfew, drinking, smoking marijuana, fighting, disorderly conduct, and trespassing.

Carlos said he enjoyed history and science but hated math and English. He said, “I loathed those classes. So I would never do my homework. So I would always be in trouble.” In grammar school, he received suspensions for “gang activity, for fights.” He reported that his attendance was good. He was in the school band playing trombone and on the baseball team, and he enjoyed break dancing. He had a couple friends and two cousins in the same gang. Mostly, he said he hung out with his cousins who were not in a gang.

Adolescence and teenage years

Carlos explained that he was “always trying to be accepted” by his parents and family, and he was “competing for the attention and for the love of the entire family.” Carlos shared that his older cousin was the “golden child” because he was “very bright and intelligent, always got As in his school, very athletically inclined.” He stated that his cousin was sent to a top private high school in the city, while Carlos went to the one of the worst public high schools.

High school

Carlos stated that he was able to audition to be in the band of a good high school, but his parents declined the opportunity as punishment for the bad grades and trouble he was getting into at the time. He shared, “To this day, I have a slight resentment” for that, and “it was to spite me, just to punish me.” He felt, “The family didn’t really care to take an invested interest in me,” and he said, “had I went or been given an opportunity to go somewhere else or go to another school, things might have turned out differently for me.”

Carlos said he attended “one of the worst high schools in the city.” He emphasized that at his school, “The gang activity was horrible, a real high amount of drug activity.” He played baseball in high school but explained, “my career in baseball never really took off because all I was worried about was smoking a joint and drinking a beer.” He said that he did not get a quality education, but he liked history and graphic arts.

Carlos got into trouble in high school including several suspensions. He admitted that he kept a

gun at school. He explained, "I would sell weed in school, so I had to carry a gun." When he was caught with the gun, he was suspended and got juvenile probation with community service. He also shared, "I would steal the passes, the excuse cards, and I would sell them and I would use them for me. Nobody else found out for a whole year later." Eventually he was caught and suspended for a week. In addition, he reported the school "had a corporal punishment program implemented at that school. If you got caught messing up, they had a police officer with this cane, kind of like that, and he would bend you over and whoop you with it. So I got a cane quite a few times." He had poor attendance and ended up dropping out of high school in his "fifth year as a senior."

Carlos had a girlfriend for a couple years but they broke up when he moved back to Puerto Rico. His friends were fellow gang members. At the time, his dream was to become a history teacher.

Drug dealing and drug use

At age 15, Carlos found out his father was HIV positive due to intravenous heroin drug use. When his father was diagnosed, Carlos reported, "He gave up on life. He said 'screw life.' He went further into his addiction." However, Carlos said he never viewed his father as a "junkie" because "he maintained a job" and "still paid the mortgage." His father became very sick and died about a year after his diagnosis.

Carlos explained that after his father got sick, "I hated my father, so I did everything in the world to rebel; this is when my drug use really excelled. I'm selling drugs out of my parents' home." At that time, Carlos admitted that he started using powder cocaine and sold crack cocaine. He reported trying heroin for the very first time, as well as using marijuana and drinking alcohol every day.

Carlos when his father was sick, his mom was preoccupied with his care and for the care of his two younger sisters. His mother tried sending him to a treatment program but due to lack of insurance coverage, he had to leave early. After his father died, his mother had a "nervous breakdown" and quit her job, so Carlos helped her out by giving her money earned from dealing drugs. Around that time, Carlos said he "was thrown out there to the wolves" and his mother "put me out of the house" at 15 years old. He reported being homeless for a while sometimes sleeping on the roof of a friend's house. At age 16, he recalled that he went to live with an aunt who lived in a rival gang's neighborhood. Therefore, he was "constantly carrying a gun" and said that was when he "got shot for the very first time."

Around this time, Carlos stated that he stole his mother's car and crashed it, which was the "last straw" for her. He said she sent him to Puerto Rico at age 17. There he got a job working for a factory. In Puerto Rico, he was with an uncle when he intravenously used heroin and cocaine and then "freaked out" and "had an attack." Later, Carlos was with his uncle selling jewelry from a burglary and both were later caught. After those two incidents, he explained, "My grandfather was like, nope, you gotta go back, so he sent me back to Chicago."

Adulthood

Carlos was age 18 when he returned to Chicago. He said upon his return he had a reputation as a big drug dealer, gang member, and violent person. He stated, "People were more afraid of me than they loved me, than they respected me." He got his own apartment where he lived a couple years before going to prison. After prison, he was on house arrest and lived with his sister. He got shot again in his neck by rival gang members. After a week in the hospital, they tried to shoot him again. His sister kicked him out because she had her children living there. Carlos left her home to go to a work release center.

At age 21, Carlos started a relationship with a woman but he explained "her gang affiliation was my rival." The other gang members "threatened her that they were going to kill us both if we didn't break up, so she broke up with me. He said he later found out "she was pregnant from me and had an abortion, so I got real deep into heroin use. So now my money as a drug dealer is all being blown to buying heroin."

At that time, Carlos found himself homeless again. He recalled an altercation at that time with his mother. He wanted money for drugs and when she would not give it to him, he broke a window in her house. His mother then called "the main guys in my gang." He continued, "They have this system in the gang called violation. Because I was using drugs and that's against the law in our gang, I got beat up." At that time when he was age 22, he decided to try to kick drugs and met a girlfriend who got pregnant and has his son. He shared, "I ended up getting a job for the airport, which I eventually lost because I couldn't stop using drugs." He moved to Florida for a couple years with her because that is where her family lived.

Carlos said for a brief period of time his life was good. His son "was the light of my life" and "we got this great relationship." He shared, "things are going so great until I decide one day that I'm doing so good, I deserve to treat myself to a good time, and my way of treating myself to a good time was by using a bag of heroin. And so I got back into the lifestyle of drugs." When he was 24, his girlfriend was pregnant and had his daughter. They married around that time.

When Carlos came back to Chicago for his grandfather's funeral, a friend told him about "a person that we could rob that I could get \$10,000, so I could go back to Florida with some money because things were bad for me." After the robbery, Carlos was arrested and again sent to prison, and his wife left him and filed for divorce. Carlos was incarcerated for seven years for the robbery and then was in and out of prison for four years after that for burglary and DUI.

Carlos reported being arrested about fifty times. When he was younger, the arrests included mob action, disorderly conduct, trespassing, and minor assaults. Later, he was arrested for burglaries, armed robbery, retail theft, DUI, auto theft, and burglary to auto. He has been incarcerated in prison six times. His last incarceration was for burglary. He described prison as "horrible."

After his last prison stay, he reconnected with a female friend from his old neighborhood. They got married, and he stated his current wife is his "best friend." He continued, "My wife is my rock. My wife loves me like no other person has loved me in this world. I've never had a woman treat me the way that this woman treats me."

Carlos said he used drugs “maybe three, four times a day. The heavy use has been going on, you know, since I was 21. Really the main stints that I have had sober have been when I was incarcerated.” Carlos has chronic Hepatitis C due to his intravenous drug use. Carlos shared that once he was “carjacked and they left me for dead. That's how I lost my teeth and I got this scar on my face.” As an adult, he was diagnosed with severe depression and was on prescription drugs for a couple years. Seven years ago, he spent one month in a psychiatric ward of a hospital because he attempted suicide because he was “depressed that I had gotten arrested yet again.”

Carlos shared some other traumatic experiences in addition to being shot twice. He has been in “three different car wrecks.” He also shared, “I've been stabbed. I have been beaten to within inches of my life.” He was stabbed and got into fights while incarcerated. He reported surviving “Hurricane George while living in St. Petersburg, Florida.” In addition, Carlos talked about his neighborhood and gang activity as similar to being at war. He explained, “people were shooting at me and I retaliated and shot back and felt the bullets flying by me. I would consider it a combat zone.” One of his very close friends got shot at and Carlos said “he was literally just feet away from me and the bullet struck him and he died in my arms.”

About the choices he has made in adulthood, he said, “I feel horrible. I wish that there was things that I could do to just erase them.” His current goal is to complete his substance abuse treatment, find a job, and to train and finish a marathon. He said he needs to work on “not allowing money to be a trigger for me.” Right now he has hope and faith due to “a newfound relationship with God.” He shared, “I really, really believe in what God is doing for me and what God intends to do for me.”

Experiences at St. Leonard's House

Applying to St. Leonard's House

Carlos resided at SLH twice. The first time, he heard about SLH through his drug counselor while incarcerated. He heard it was an “awesome program” which “had a lot of resources and a lot of facilities to help you reintegrate into society.” He said he was “really interested in it when I first heard about it.” He filled out an application, and was approved. He said at that time he went to St. Leonard's because he had “nowhere else to go” and “it's going to beat being homeless for sure.” He completed the program after six months in 2006 and went to St. Andrew's Court for one month before he relapsed and was asked to leave.

The second time Carlos said he “was kind of in the same predicament.” He said he failed at being sober and thought “obviously there was something I had missed the first time or that I didn't allow to sink in.” He was grateful that they gave him another chance. He stayed at the program for eight months and was released.

Living at St. Leonard's House

Carlos shared that his stay at St. Leonard's was “really comfortable” and got along great with his roommates. He felt the expectations of the program were made clear to him. He described the food as “awesome.” He shared that he put on weight and “never felt healthier in my life.” He shared that there was a “break out of bed bugs” while he resided there, but the staff handled the

problem right away.

Carlos said those residents who came in with doubts about the program “ultimately saw the work that was being done here and the good that was being done and they stayed.” He shared that he got along great with other residents and he made friends. He stated, “Most of the residents got along with each other.” However, once he had an altercation with someone but he would “commend [staff] on how well they took care of that situation.” He never observed fights or arrests but saw the staff discipline other residents. He reported, “I always felt safe there.”

Services

Carlos said he took advantage of all of the services available including culinary arts class, building maintenance, computers, life skills, employment preparation, and psychological treatment. The program hooked him up with Greater West Town Project, and he “eventually found a job through that.” He participated in the Back on My Feet program and was training for a marathon. He was grateful for being “able to see a psychologist one-on-one, once a week” for free. His favorite service was the psychological services, and he reported taking advantage of them. He met with a counselor and his case worker once a week. Carlos said he liked all staff and shared, “I especially liked how the director addressed the program. I really, really appreciated his input and his way of running it.”

He thought Tuesdays were hard because it was the day with the most programming. He explained, “It's like the day is all programming” with “barely any time for any free time.” Carlos thought that the substance abuse treatment could “be a little bit more focused on relapse triggers.”

At SLH, Carlos learned “independence” and to “not be so prideful.” He explained that he learned “if I couldn't do it on my own, that there are people here to assist me.” He said that many residents including himself become “institutionalized” after so many years in prison. He explained that prison has a structure, and he had “to learn to be able to build my own structure, to be able to build my own routine” and added “I think that [SLH] really, really helped me do that.”

When asked if SLH could do anything better, Carlos said staff could communicate better. He explained, “If there are things that are bothering people, I think that they can do a little bit better on trying to figure out what those things are. If staff probed a bit more, it could reduce the chance of relapse.” He shared, “Some of us aren't going to be just really that open to opening up ourselves, especially since we're so used to being in an environment in prison that you're supposed to be shut in. You're not supposed to tell anybody how you feel.” In addition, Carlos did not like that he was denied to go to St. Andrew's Court after finishing SLH because he relapsed and was kicked out of the program when he resided there previously. He explained that he had changed and thought he should have allowed him another chance at St. Andrew's Court.

Carlos reported having a year left on parole. He said while at SLH he had “the best parole officer I've ever had.” He met with his parole agent once a month. Carlos explained, “Once you move out of here, you get a new parole officer.”

While at SLH, he visited his family and called them. On the weekends, he would barbeque and

babysit his nieces and nephews. While he admitted visiting some old friends while at SLH, he “tried to keep that to a minimum because most of my outside friends were not conducive to my growth anyway.”

Final thoughts on St. Leonard's House

Carlos had many positive things to say about SLH. He shared, “This place really, really, really works with you, and they really, really, really try to give you information [you] need.” He shared, “I think that St. Leonard's House genuinely is a blessing to people in my situation, to people coming out of the penitentiary that don't have the things that other people may have, like a home to go to or resources to help them find jobs. I have seen the miracles happen. I have seen people, you know, do extremely well coming out of here.” He said, “This program has saved me.” He further shared, “The things that I've learned here I have taken with me and I will use for the rest of my life. I am grateful, completely grateful for them, you know, for offering me a place to learn, to grow—for free to me, to the client.”

After St. Leonard's House

At the time of the interview, Carlos was living with his wife in a rental apartment in the Bucktown neighborhood in Chicago. He stated in his neighborhood, “There's no gang activity. There's no drug activity. It's an awesome area. I love it.” He has been married for one year. His wife's two adult children live with them. Carlos and his wife spend time at church, dining at restaurants, going to movie theaters, and visiting his in-laws.

At the time of the interview, Carlos's daughter was 14 and his son was 16 years old and living with their mother in the suburbs of Chicago. He sees his son a couple times a month, and they go to church, watch baseball games, go to the movies, and he takes him skateboarding. However, he said his daughter is “still kind of upset at me for being gone for so long. So she doesn't really try to talk to me.”

Currently, he enjoys softball, running, going to the beach, being with family, and staying at home and watching movies. He completed his GED and has taken some college courses. He was able to get a job after three months of leaving St. Leonard's House. It was part time in shipping and receiving at a warehouse, but he got laid off and is currently unemployed. When asked about the hardest thing since leaving SLH, Carlos said, “So far it's because the job that I have found was only temporary, that's been the hardest thing, finding another job.”

Carlos said “I don't spend a whole lot of time with friends.” He shared that he has a couple of mentors now who give him “solid advice.” He currently attends recovery support group meetings, AA and NA, at least three times a week. He continues in an intensive outpatient program three times a week. Today, he is close to his mother and sisters. One sister is a registered nurse, and his other sister is an esthetician. He sees his sister and mother about once a week.

CHERYL: FORMER RESIDENT OF GRACE HOUSE

At the time of the interview, Cheryl was a 34 year old African American female living in Chicago. She grew up in a public housing project in Chicago and had one child at the age of 19, who was raised by her mother. After the birth of her child, she began drinking alcohol daily, smoking marijuana, and taking ecstasy. She was arrested only once for stealing from her job to get money for drugs. After violating her probation, she was incarcerated for five months. Following her release from prison, she lived at GH for one year. Cheryl is in school for cosmetology and lives in her own apartment. She credits GH with helping her remain drug free and work on her relationships, especially with her teenage son.

Childhood

Cheryl was born in Chicago. She lived in a housing project with her mother, father, older sister, and younger brother. She shared a room with her sister. She stated that she was a chubby kid, and her mother overfed her. She said, “We had clothes. We were never hungry.” She was not close with other family members. Her mother was religious and wanted them to attend church, but her father forbid them to go to church.

Cheryl stated, “My family was very dysfunctional.” She said her father “used to drink all the time” and her mom smoked marijuana and drank alcohol. She shared, “my mom and dad used to fight all the time.” She said she saw her mother “throw knives at him and pour hot grits on him.”

She indicated that she was respectful of her mother and did her chores because her mother was strict and Cheryl was afraid of punishment. She would get in trouble for minor things like “sneaking and getting some food, fighting with my brothers and sisters or she catch us cussing.” She reported that her mother would beat her and her siblings “with extension cords or a hanger or a belt.” Due to her mother’s discipline, she “barely had friends, maybe one or two.” Since the neighborhood was unsafe, her mother did not allow her to go outside, so she stayed inside “watching T.V., videos, playing with my hair, playing with my toys, maybe playing video game, eating. That’s basically it. Wasn’t really too much to do in the house.”

Cheryl attended a small public elementary school. She reported loving school “because that was my only freedom.” She indicated she was an average student who received Bs and Cs. She completed her assigned homework, and her favorite subjects were English and math. Cheryl explained that she was a shy child and “didn’t really want to say anything,” so she didn’t get into any trouble at school. She attended school every day unless sick. She felt that she could have been pushed to work hard and “do more, not just do it just to pass.” She reported no gang activities.

Adolescence and teenage years

During her early teenage years, Cheryl continued to live with her family in the Chicago housing projects. She said the neighborhood was dangerous and her mother continued to keep her in the apartment. She explained, “You had gangs, people was into robbing, breaking in people’s houses, drugs.”

Cheryl explained that in high school, she was sexually active and described herself as “a hot girl” and “fast.” She said, “I had a reputation in high school.” When she had sex for the first time her freshman year of high school, her mother found out and beat her with an extension cord. She ran away from home, but her parents found her and made her come back. Her father was verbally abusive and was “down on me, calling me names.” She explained he was “always talking down to you and making you feel so little.”

Cheryl attended a large public high school that had a lot of gang activity. She got along with her teachers and was particularly close with her English teacher. She said she liked her “because it’s like she cared.” She felt challenged in math class. She played trombone in the school band her freshman and sophomore year until her mom made her quit as a punishment. She indicated that her school could have pushed her harder. She only got in trouble once—a fight her junior year and was suspended for a few days. She shared, “I had plans to attend college and all that. I don’t know what happened with it.”

When Cheryl was a junior in high school, she left home and moved in with her cousin. She slept on her cousin’s couch and was “happy staying there” because she had freedom. She continued in school and did not drop out in order “to prove a point” to her parents who thought she would never amount to anything. She explained, “so I had to make it my business to graduate with my diploma.”

Cheryl stated that she had one bad boyfriend after another. She indicated that her boyfriends were in gangs and “liked to be in the streets, liked to sell drugs, [be] disrespectful.” She explained, “I felt like I never got loved at home, so I’d fall for anything. A guy say, ‘oh, baby, you pretty, oh, I love you’—I fall for it. And then I get into it and it’s nothing like that. They disrespectful, they are abusive, all that, but I end up staying with them because I’m used to that. And it’s like you grow up like that, you think that’s how it’s supposed to be. And you think somebody love you, but it wasn’t love. I found that out when I came to Grace House. It wasn’t love at all.” At that time, she said she had one best friend who was “like me, a fast girl. I guess we were a bad influence on each other.”

In her last couple months of her senior year of high school, Cheryl got pregnant. Due to her pregnancy, her cousin kicked her out of her home, and she went to a shelter. Around this time, the father of Cheryl’s child was killed because of his gang activities. She witnessed him getting shot in the head.

Cheryl got a job working at White Castle at age 19 as an operator. At age 22, she was promoted to manager. She worked there for ten years until age 29. At the time, her dream was to go to college to be a nurse. Cheryl said her health problems at the time included a heart murmur that she was born with and being overweight. She shared that her teenage years “wasn’t good at all. It was rough. I was unwise, uneducated.”

Adulthood

Cheryl moved around a lot in adulthood. After moving from her cousin’s home, she lived in one shelter for a short time and then went to another shelter called New Life, which housed families. The program was designed to let people live there a couple years and save money to get their

own apartment. Since Cheryl did not like all the rules—she could not have visitors and had a curfew—she left to live with her abusive boyfriend, Marcus, and his parents. She stated that his parents were on drugs, his brother was in a gang, and the house was “getting shot up all the time.” Her boyfriend’s mother watched her child, but when Cheryl found out she was on crack, Cheryl’s baby went to live with her mother. Cheryl continued to live at her boyfriend’s house until his mother kicked her out because Cheryl “wouldn’t give her more money.”

Cheryl stated that Marcus “used to jump on me a lot; give me black eyes, lock me up in a room. I went through hell with that person.” She said that her son would see her black eyes and, one day, when her son was about three years old he threatened to kill Marcus if he ever hit his mother again. Cheryl said, “And that was so hurtful to me because I didn’t think my son knew I was getting beat by him, but he did. And I knew right then I had to leave that man eventually.”

Cheryl moved out and lived alone, renting a small room for “\$90 a week” but had to move because it “got shut down.” Cheryl then had two apartments over the next eight years. When her mother got Cheryl’s wages garnished because she was caring for her child, Cheryl could not pay her bills and got evicted. She moved in with a friend for a while and then her brother in a two-bedroom apartment.

Cheryl worked at Wal-Mart for three years after leaving her job at White Castle. She was spending her money on drugs, so she did not have money for rent and began stealing from her job at Wal-Mart. She stole \$3,000 and never went back to her job; four months later, she was arrested. She was in jail for one month and was sentenced to probation. She went to live with a girl she met in jail in an apartment in Joliet. She explained, “I ended up violating my probation because I wasn’t paying the restitution fee because I wasn’t working.” There was a warrant for her arrest, and her friend did not want her staying there if she could not help with rent, so she turned herself in. She spent five months in prison. She said prison “wasn’t all that hard to me.” She kept to herself, read a lot of books, and worked in the kitchen.

Substance use

Cheryl shared that following the birth of her child, she started drinking alcohol and using marijuana and ecstasy daily. She said she got drugs from “whatever boyfriend I had and I just found anyone who was selling it and get it.” She took drugs to feel good because “at the time you don’t care about nothing in the world—all your problems [are] gone.” In addition, she stated it was “because of the peer pressure” because her boyfriends used drugs, so she did it with them. The pills made her feel very “sluggish” and “drowsy” which caused her to miss work. She indicated that she went to the hospital on one occasion as a result of her drug use because she took too many drugs to stop a “headache I just couldn’t get rid of.” Although she shared that she wanted to stop using drugs, she was unable to stop. She abused drugs and alcohol until she was 32 years old when she was incarcerated.

About her choices as an adult, Cheryl stated, “I have a lot of regrets. Even though my parents were strict, I still should have listened to them and do what I had to do. I was anxious to go out there and see what I’m missing.”

Experiences at Grace House

While in prison, another prisoner told her about GH. Cheryl explained that the women “was a resident here at Grace House before and that they are a good program; they help you get on your feet; and they will help you get your own place and everything.” Cheryl requested an application in prison and filled it out and the prison mailed it. Based on her request, she stated she was “sent a package asking me a whole bunch of questions.” She also had to do a phone interview with GH. Two weeks before she was released, she got a letter saying that she was accepted to GH.

Living at Grace House

When Cheryl got to Grace House, the intake person informed her of the rules. She was provided a booklet that the intake person went over with her and she had to sign. She initially had a room with three other residents. She indicated it was hard with roommates. For example, she said “One had music up all day.” She shared that she was concerned about one of her roommates that she noticed had relapsed back to using drugs. She tried to convince her to tell staff about it and get into residential substance abuse treatment, but she left the program instead. She said the other residents were “all right” but had “issues.” She kept to herself to stay out of gossip and drama in the house. She never had any confrontations with other residents. A couple of the residents would argue a lot and almost got into a fight, but staff handled it. She always felt safe at GH. She said she eventually got her own room and loved it. She explained, “That’s when you got your peace. You can read your Bible, your meditation book or just have peace of mind.” Cheryl said, “I started getting into religion when I got locked up and came to Grace House.”

Cheryl thought GH was clean due to residents being assigned chores to do each week. She thought the furnishings were nice and comfortable. There was a room to go to if you wanted to be alone, but most of the women liked to hang out together and smoke and watch television. She indicated that she liked to be alone and read the Bible. GH had a cook but sometimes the food would be expired. Residents could use a microwave but were not allowed to store food in the refrigerator.

Cheryl kept in contact with her son and cousin on the GH pay phone. She used her weekend passes to go to her sister’s house, and her son would come over. They would play cards or Monopoly, watch movies, make tacos, go to the park, and go to church on Sundays. Cheryl said that GH tried to include their families. She explained there was “family day, call your family, let them come over, barbecue and stuff.”

Services

Cheryl said the number, variety, scheduling, and quality of services were all good. She explained investment in the program began “once I started like going to meetings and listen to what they got to say and the motivations that they give you. I start progressing on my attitude, on the way I let people get to me. I don’t let them get up under my skin no more. They taught me how to have patience.”

Cheryl shared that she liked the weekly, one-on-one time with a mental health counselor the best. She explained, “Because she really helps you a lot, because it be so much you don’t even know

that you got on you that you need to release in order to make you feel better. And it was confidential.” She further explained “And she just let you spill your guts. And it's like she understand. So I really, really appreciate the psychiatry because she helped me a lot too on things I was going through.” She continued, “It was cool. I used to love to talk to her. I leave there relieved. You know. And it's a lot of stuff I be wanting to talk about that you don't feel comfortable talking to nobody else about.”

Cheryl reported liking the relationships class because “they give you an earful and a lot of information.” She also got a lot out of AA and NA meeting. She explained, “you have some powerful people that come here that been through a lot and how they overcame a lot of stuff, you know. They stories was amazing.” She also appreciated the spiritual activities. On the substance abuse treatment, Cheryl stated, “It was helpful.”

Cheryl stated she liked the parenting class the least. The class focused on how to handle and discipline children, but she was not ready for it. She was “still having a problem with not communicating with my son and how my mama was acting.” She indicated although the curfew was sometimes hard, she understood that it needed to be in place. She attended other classes like an exercise class and a writing class. She shared that the writing class completed a newsletter.

Cheryl attended job readiness program at the Michael Barlow Center. She got a certificate for completing the basic culinary arts class. She indicated that the job placement person tried to help her with job leads, and she had access to computers to look for job. However, the Michael Barlow Center did not find her a job, and she said “all they can do is get you some leads and you got to go there by your interviewing and how you send out your application and resume. So they're doing they're job.” GH helped her get in touch with a homeless prevention program, which helped her find her apartment.

Relationships

While at GH, Cheryl tried to work on her relationships with her mother and son. At the time of the interview, Cheryl's son was 15 years old and continues to live with Cheryl's mother. She stated that she wanted her son to participate in family sessions in her parenting classes at GH, but her mother would not let him come.” She explained “I feel like they try to turn him against me.” Her son came to GH once. She stated that her mother had told her son it was a “shelter” and “people got booze and all type of stuff and it's nasty, but when my son came here, he was like, ‘ma, this is a nice place you stay at.’”

Cheryl feels like her improvements in her relationships are “all because of Grace House.” She explained, “They kept me motivated. They kept me strong.” She shared, “Grace House helped me forgive my parents and love them for who they are.” She said Grace House taught her about “not giving up and me doing all that I can to build a relationship and to accept people for who they are, because they should be able to accept me for who I am.”

At GH, she learned about relationships with men. She shared, “I know how to pick guys now. And this guy I got now, he lovable, he there for me, he love me unconditionally.” She feels that he is responsible and the type of person with whom she should be in a relationship.

Final thoughts on Grace House

Cheryl said she left on good terms when her “time was up.” She still keeps in touch with a couple staff at GH. She stated, “I feel like this program is good and everything they doing is a benefit to everyone who come here, if they set they mind to it to get what they giving to them. Because look at me. I'm in school. I still got my apartment. I'm not smoking weed no more. I'm not drinking no more. You know, I'm not with multiple guys or nothing like that. I mean, they keep me grounded. And when I feel I fall off, all I do is grab that Bible.” The only thing she mentioned that would improve the program is better food. “They is a good program and that I appreciate them.”

She would recommend GH to others. She said, “Because it would help them. And if they was in the same predicament I'm in, have a drug problem, need some guidance and some groundedness in their life and people that care and that will actually help them, I would say go to Grace House because they helped me.”

Cheryl said GH prepares you for when you leave and how to deal with “a lot of temptations.” She explained, “They know you gonna end up going around to old people, places and things. It's just to keep you strong and motivated to not fall back down to where you came from. So from my experience here, I appreciate them, because I don't think I would be where I'm at if it wasn't for Grace House. So they're a good organization.”

After Grace House

Cheryl lived at GH for one year and at the time of the interview, she had been out of GH for six months. Towards the end of her stay at GH, Cheryl found a temporary job at Association House. She said the job was “like ground maintenance” and employed “people with felonies.” Since the job was temporary, she was only employed there a short time. At the time of the interview, she was unemployed. She explained that she will be able to get her conviction expunged soon because five years would have passed. She is currently looking for employment and has applied to about 200 jobs. She went on two job interviews set up by the Safer Foundation. She thinks her criminal background is the reason she has not found a job because she was charged with theft from her employer.

At the time of the interview, Cheryl was unemployed but gets food stamps and her boyfriend helps her out. She reports no illegal income. She is able to pay rent because she received financial aid to attend cosmetology school. She lives alone renting an apartment on the South side of Chicago. She said that there are “drug dealers” in her neighborhood and too many young people hanging on the block; however, she feels safe.

Cheryl reported having high blood pressure and being on medication. She does not have health insurance, but she goes to a free clinic.

Cheryl attends NA meetings sometimes; she said “but I feel I don't need it 'cause I don't be hanging around nobody, and I be going to school. I stay in the house and I hang around positive people, people that's in church and stuff like that.” She stated, “I spend my free time reading

motivation books, reading my Bible, homework, talking to my son, watching movies, cooking, listening to my music.”

Relationships

Since GH, Cheryl said, “I been learning how to build a relationship with my son, to call him every day, to go out with him and I explained to him how could I love you when I didn't know love myself.” Now Cheryl and her son talk on the phone and they see each other on the weekends, but he is busy because he is a teenager in high school. She shared that she wants her son to live with her someday. She explained, “Even though he don't feel comfortable moving with me yet, I'm grateful that we have a bond, we have a relationship, you know. He texts me ‘good morning, mom, I love you’.” That's a joy to my heart and it bring tears to my heart.”

Cheryl still does not speak with her mother. She is working on building a relationship with her sister and brother. She said, “My sister, we call each other every day now,” and she texts with her brother. She shared, “Before I came to Grace House, it wasn't none of that.” She only sees her family on her father's side of the family briefly at holidays, because they drink and smoke marijuana.

Cheryl has a boyfriend that she sees a couple times a week. They go out to eat or to the movies, or stay in and watch movies. She said that she does not have any friends. She just hangs out with her boyfriend and son.

The future

Cheryl currently feels good about her life and is “hopeful.” Since she is school and unemployed, she has concerns about paying her bills. She believes God is going to continue to take care of her and said, “I believe in faith now. I have trust. And He [is] the only one [who] can do it.”

Cheryl plans on graduating cosmetology school in about a year, taking her state board test, and getting her cosmetology license. She stated, “I love doing hair,” and her goal is to “get my own shop. I wanna own my own shop and have people working for me and making a lot of money.” She thinks she can use her ten-year experience as a manager of a fast food restaurant. She stated, “My dream is to have my own salon and restaurant.” Another goal was to get married to her boyfriend and have him adopt her son.

Since she lived at GH, Cheryl said her life has been “decent.” She explained, “I haven't smoked no weed, haven't been drinking. Now I'm in school. I still have my apartment from when I left [GH].” She said, “I appreciate Grace House. They help me a lot. Grace House is a good place.”

SUSAN: FORMER RESIDENT OF GRACE HOUSE

At the time of the interview, Susan was a 42 year old African American female who grew up on the West side of Chicago. She reported 15 years of daily use of heroin and four incarcerations all related to her drug addiction. She stayed at GH for 18 months. Today, she has been drug free for over two years. She is employed, has her own apartment, and lives with her two adult children.

Childhood

Susan's mother gave birth to her when she was 16 years old. She grew up on the West side of Chicago living with her paternal grandmother until she was about five years old and then with her mother. Her parents never married, but she said "my dad always been in my life." She explained, "I would be back and forth with my grandmother's house, over my mom's house, over my dad's house." When she was in grade school, her father got married and she had a step-mother and step-sister. In the summer she would go stay with her grandmother in Arkansas. Susan shared, "My childhood was pretty loving."

Susan's mother also got married, and she lived in "Section 8" housing with her mother and step-father. Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937, administered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides affordable housing opportunities for low-income individuals. She indicated she did not have a close relationship with her step-father. She moved a couple times in her childhood and then moved back to her grandmother's house. Her mother did not work, and her father worked for the local newspaper as a mechanic. She felt well provided for and could always ask her grandmother or father for things she needed, like shoes. She said she was healthy as a child. She stated that she regularly attended church with her maternal grandmother. She said she "definitely had a religious background."

Susan felt that her mother loved her but did not nurture her. She explained that her mother was very angry at her father because, when Susan was a baby, he married another teenage girl who was 17 years old. Susan's mother often took her anger out on her. Susan stated that her mother would say "you like your ugly daddy" and give her "spankings or whooping" without provocation. Susan explained, "So that impacted my self-esteem." She understands now that her mother was young and felt rejected by her father and was overwhelmed caring for a baby. She said she understood "that's why she like to treat me like that; not saying it was right." She shared that her mother needed "to expand my horizons and really get pushed and motivated to do something else." Susan explained, "I guess it wasn't until my later years that my mother really, truly started loving me as her child, I believe. It kind of shifted, where she was talking to me not angrily, but actually talking to me."

Susan reported that her mother was a drug user—using marijuana and cocaine. Her mother had two children with her step-father so Susan was the oldest child. She explained, "A lot of the responsibility fell on me as far as keeping the house clean and just making sure things are done. I had a lot of responsibilities. I grew up fast. And I grew up with not much of a childhood." Since her mother constantly would have other drug users over at her house and she was uncomfortable dressing in front of them, so she would sleep in her clothes. Susan said about her mother at that time, "She was there, but she wasn't there."

Susan started smoking cigarettes at age 13 and provided by her mother. Soon after, she started smoking marijuana because “this is what everybody else was doing and in order to fit in, because I felt like I never fit in, then I started off with marijuana.”

Susan attended public grade school and had good attendance. In school, she said, “I got good grades in school. I never was a troublemaker, never got into trouble, no fighting, and kind of quiet. I felt like the more quiet I was, the less people would see me.” She said there were two teachers that impacted her that helped her and motivated her. She said, “I loved reading, and I loved English.” She found math very challenging. She did not participate in any extracurricular activities at school and had few friends.

Adolescence and teenage years

In high school, she lived at her father’s house for a while and then would live with her mother at her grandmother’s house. She stated, “I was going back and forth.” She explained that it was more “more peaceful at my dad's” because her mother used drugs and slept all day and stayed up all night. Also, her mother continued to be abusive to her; however, she did not have to worry about money at her father’s home.

When Susan was 16 years old, she said she started dating a 25 year old man, Michael. She shared that he was a “father-figure type man.” She was with him for 11 years and, at 21 years old, had a daughter with him. She said, “I wasn't into high school. I was into this man.” She felt she was not “truly enjoying the high school [experience].” Her father did not like her dating an older man and tried to stop her. She explained that she felt like a kid “being taught how to be an adult” by her boyfriend. She felt Michael made her feel pretty and desirable and was good to her.

Susan got her first job at 16 years old at Kentucky Fried Chicken. After someone robbed the store, her mother did not let her work there anymore, so her boyfriend provided her with money. She did not get another job until after high school. In her free time, she enjoyed skating, listening to music, going to the park, jumping rope, and smoking marijuana. She explained that marijuana was easy to get in her neighborhood. She tried alcohol at age 14 but did not like it and has never drunk much alcohol. She was overweight but reported no other health problems.

Susan graduated from a large, public, vocational high school. She liked school and was close with one older teacher who she had “a rapport and relationship with.” She said she did the minimum to finish high school and got B’s and C’s. She said “the teachers really didn't push me.” She stated that she skipped classes occasionally, received detention once but was never suspended. After high school graduation, she aspired to be a flight attendant. She shared, “I wanted to travel and see the world.” However, she never pursued it because she said she was overweight and had low self-esteem.

Adulthood

At age 17, Susan stated that she got her own place where she lived until she was 21, when she had her daughter and moved back with her mom. She would move out of her mother’s home when she was employed and then move back in with her mother when she was not employed.

She shared that she had trouble holding a job because she was then addicted to cocaine as well as marijuana and later was addicted to heroin. She had jobs on and off and said the longest job was a year and a half. Her jobs were in fast food or in retail for minimum wage pay.

Her mother taught Susan how to steal from stores with her. Since her mother never was arrested or went to jail while on drugs, Susan thought she could do the same thing. She explained, "I had this thing where I'm going to get me some money no matter what the cost." She would "hustle for money," steal, or prostitute for money.

At age 30, Susan started using heroin, which she used every day for about 15 years. She explained that she kept using heroin to avoid withdrawal symptoms. She tried to stop using drugs many times but was unsuccessful. She explained that she would go to "detox for three days or whatever and come out and start back using again."

After her relationship with her long-time boyfriend, Michael, Susan reported only one other significant relationship with a man for a duration of 15 years, with whom she had a son.

Susan was incarcerated four times. Before her last incarceration, she was living in Indiana with her children when she was arrested and subsequently incarcerated for six months. She explained, "It all had to do with drug use. It all had to do with getting money for drugs. If I wasn't using drugs, I would have never got incarcerated." She was arrested for prostitution, drugs, and retail theft. She said prison was "terrible" because of all the chaos. She said she just stayed to herself.

Susan shared her thoughts about her adulthood, "I have made some bad choices. I have made some good ones, but I have definitely made some bad ones that altered the course of my life. So if it altered the course of my life, it always altered the course of my children's lives. So that's one thing that saddens me that I affected their lives and just continued to pray that they can rise above any damage that I have done and still succeed."

Experiences at Grace House

Susan heard about GH from her aunt and cousin, who had both stayed at GH. They told her it was a good program. She explained that once she got out of prison, she called GH and came in for an interview. She explained that in the application and interview GH wanted to "know your goals and the things that you want to work on and why do you need to come to this place and why do you even want to come." She stated that the requirements to get in were made clear to her. She recalled, "You had to be willing to want to change your life and abide by the rules." After the interview, Susan called the program administrator. She stayed at GH for 18 months.

Living at Grace House

Susan said other residents "got on my nerves." She explained there were "a lot of different personalities" but added "we had some good times here, too." She only recalled one fight between residents and they were disciplined. She said other residents, but especially staff were "encouraging and supportive in a lot of different ways."

Susan stated that she loved her accommodations at GH. She said the house was clean because they had chores including daily bathroom cleaning. She explained that new residents must share with three other residents and then over time you share with two residents and then you get your own room. Susan said that she was able to have privacy. She shared, “This is a pretty big house. If you didn't want to be in your room, you can always find an area to go in and be alone.” While at GH, she felt safe. She thought the food was good, but residents had the option of going out and getting their own food.

When a resident broke the rules, Susan said residents would “have meetings amongst themselves and the staff to see what kind of reprimand is going to go on or even if they going to kick them out.” She noted some inconsistencies with enforcement of the rules. For example, Susan explained a rule was that they were not supposed to have cell phones but one person got “kicked out 'cause of a cell phone but then I also know somebody who didn't get kicked out 'cause of the cell phone.” She explained that responses to rule violations were individualized and based in part on how well the resident was doing in the program at GH overall.

Services

Susan said that she attended all required services and was “definitely engaged.” About services, she said, “So all those services that was in play was helping me get in tune to who I am and to pull out some of the things that's inside me that got suppressed. So I needed the services.” She emphasized that she “loved all the activities” at GH. She shared that in particular, she loved the psychological services provided by Adler School of Professional Psychology, the writing group, and life skills class. She said that she did not receive any educational services, but knew other residents that did. She stated, “They actually pushed them women and they actually—they had homework. It was just like they was in school, in high school.” She said she participated in a lot of recreational activities such as plays, movies, writing classes, art classes, computer classes, and a sewing class. She explained that volunteers often conducted these activities.

When asked about counselors, Susan said, “I had a very good relationship.” She further stated, “They changed like every three months, so I ended up with like three counselors.” She indicated that her caseworker was good and that she taught her about finances and how to save money.

Susan thought she “learned a lot” from the services at GH. She said, “I learned better communication skills. I learned how to deal with my anger. I had to learn how to forgive myself from the things that I had done.” She explained that although sometimes the scheduling of services was inconvenient, she was okay with that. She would recommend GH to others, especially “anybody that's dealing with substance abuse and want help.” She shared, “it's an excellent program.” She emphasized that you can work on yourself and “you don't have to worry about paying rent.”

She felt the program could only be improved with more funding for more program options. She said, “I don't think it's the services or the plans. I think it's the lack of funding.” However, she could not think of anything in particular that was missing from the program. She added, “I can't say nothing bad about Grace House—absolutely nothing.”

According to Susan, all residents of GH had the same parole agent. Susan liked her parole agent whom she would call once a month while at GH. She said her parole agent was “real respectable to the ladies.”

During her stay at GH, Susan kept in contact with her family and would stay at her sister’s house with weekend passes. On weekends, she would spend time with her kids downtown. She explained, “Before I left here, I had counseling with me and my children downtown. They set it up free of charge.”

Susan shared, “Grace House actually gave me a chance to get my life back. Grace House truly helped me. I don't even want to think about where I would be if it wasn't for Grace House. I love this place.” After a year and half of leaving GH, she said that she still keeps in contact with GH and visits the program.

After Grace House

She said she has been clean of drugs and alcohol for two and a half years after her incarceration and living at GH. She shared, “I feel good about myself and I feel good about my life right now. There's a lot of things that I would like to do. I wanna get more motivated and push myself a little bit more to accomplish some [goals].”

Susan found a full-time, temporary job for nine months through the Michael Barlow Center at a reentry program that hires ex-felons. She said GH helped because they had “listings of jobs, there's some jobs that they'll send you on that they know that they hire ex-felons, like that.” She said it was difficult to get a job due in part to the recession and her felony conviction. She applied for 15 jobs and interviewed for six jobs. She had four jobs since leaving GH—she also cleaned at funeral homes and sold arts and crafts. She currently works part-time providing home care for seniors.

At the time of the interview, Susan reported renting an apartment on the South side of Chicago with her two children, age 18 and 21 years old. She explained that her rent was subsidized and she pays 30 percent of her income. GH told her about the program and she filled out an application. About her neighborhood, she said, “I don't feel safe... because it's a bad area... high-crime area.” She stated that there is drug dealing there and she said, “I wish it would be cleaned up a little bit better.”

Relationships

At the time of the interview, Susan reported having three good girlfriends and one male friend. She stated, “I got a very good support system, where I can call people up, you know, and talk to them. If I need lunch or dinner, you know, whatever. I do have friends now.” With her friends, she said she goes to church, movies, restaurants, fashion shows, and salons. She is not currently in a romantic relationship and has not been in one for three years.

Susan said that her relationships with her family are improving. She shared, “My personal relationship has gotten better with people, period. I'm learning how to tolerate people a lot. I guess I was a no nonsense type person where I was just too serious. So I'm learning how to do a

lot of communicating.” She admitted struggling with relationships because, when people get too close, it is “smothering,” “overwhelming,” or “uncomfortable.” She is close with her grandmother and father and is working on her relationships with her sister. She is trying to spend more time with her kids and is planning a trip to Florida with them.

The future

In the past couple of years, Susan has taken college courses in order to have a degree “to have another accomplishment.” She shared her current goal is to go to ministry school to become a minister. She currently spends a lot of time at church. She shared that GH “taught me how to do different things, how to live sober.”

Conclusion

This report focused on case studies former residents of St. Leonard's Ministries (SLM) temporary, supportive housing programs—SLH and GH. Each of the former residents was interviewed to gain details about their experiences before, during, and after their stays at SLM. The case studies are part of a larger evaluation of SLM; this report is first in a series of reports sharing findings from the evaluation.

SLM is a non-profit organization which opened in 1954 to house formerly incarcerated individuals. SLM employs 65 staff and the budget for its two temporary housing programs is approximately 1.2 million annually. SLH can house up to 40 men who stay an average of four to six months. GH can house up to 18 women who stay an average of 12 months. Prospective residents typically apply for acceptance into the programs while still incarcerated in one of Illinois' prisons.

There are numerous reentry needs for formerly incarcerated individuals. These needs include adequate housing, healthcare, substance abuse treatment, and employment. SLM attempts to meet many of those needs. Those accepted receive housing and a variety of services including substance abuse treatment, psychological services, life skills, and education/vocational services.

Five former residents were interviewed for this study. David was a 46 year old African American male who was addicted to heroin and went to prison four times. He resided at SLH for 10 months. Another interviewee, Andy, was a 70 year old Caucasian male who spent 45 years in prison for homicide and six months at SLH. Carlos, a Hispanic male born in Puerto Rico, was 39 years old at the interview. He was a gang member and drug dealer and was addicted to cocaine and heroin. He stayed at SLH twice, the last time for eight months. At the time of the interview, Cheryl was a 34 year old African American who was addicted to alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy. She was only arrested once for theft, but went to prison after violating probation; she stayed at GH for 12 months. Susan was a 42 year old African American female who was addicted to heroin. She was sentenced to prison four times and stayed at GH for 18 months.

Overall, the former residents interviewed for this study agreed that the facilities were nice, the services were helpful, and staff were supportive. In addition, they would recommend the programs to others. The subjects had few recommendations to change or improve the program. A couple mentioned that it was difficult to forge a lasting relationship with psychological counselors because they were interns who rotated every four months. Based on the former residents' experiences, the program should look into having longer internships for interns working with SLM' residents. In addition, one former resident shared that the program rules should be enforced more consistency. Therefore, staff be clear on the rules and agree on how they will be enforced to residents in order to ensure fairness and consistency. These adjustments would improve the residents' experiences at SLM.

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