

Meet Montrell Harrell



“One of the best decisions I made after leaving prison was to connect with Friends Outside. They don’t just talk the talk, they walk the walk.” - Montrell Harrell

Like thousands of fathers in Los Angeles County, Montrell Harrell had problems that were getting the best of him. He was unemployed and unable to provide for his three children. Striking out in frustration and disappointment, he made a serious mistake and ended up in prison. Upon being released in May, 2019, after serving 10 years for the crime, he was determined to become a better father and a more responsible co-parent. Later that year, unable to find a job on his own, Mr. Harrell came to Project IMPACT, one of Friends Outside Los Angeles County’s employment programs for the reentry population.

Arthur Smiley, Program Manager, and his staff, Michael Tompkins and Jimmy Agnew, helped Mr. Harrell prepare his resume, improve his job skills, access job leads, and, eventually, secure employment. The staff also connected Mr. Harrell to behavioral health services and to legal services for a non-criminal matter. Additionally, Friends Outside Los Angeles County provided workshops and support to help him improve his skills as a father.

To date, Mr. Harrell has not committed another crime. He says he no longer thinks like a criminal and is able to work out day-to-day problems without resorting to violence. Now working as a production assistant, he makes timely child-support payments, buys essentials and gifts for his two sons and daughter, ages 11, 14 and 15, and helps his children with their schoolwork. The children’s mother credits him with being a positive reinforcement in their lives and reports that, while once falling behind in school, the children are all now making A’s and B’s and progressing on par with their peers.

An independent analysis, conducted by Saint Wall Street LLC, assessed the cost-benefits and return on investment likely attributable to Mr. Harrell’s better life choices with the help of Friends Outside Los Angeles County programs and services.

As the chart shows, 2019 dollar values for income gain, recidivism avoidance, and savings on grade retention for his three children total \$150,462.

Given a program investment that averaged \$6,667 per participant in 2019, a net gain of \$143,795 is estimated — 22 times the investment value, for an estimated return of 2,157%! Plus, return on investment increases each year Mr. Harrell continues these better life choices.

GAINS	
<i>Annual earnings enabling child support</i>	\$33,280
SAVINGS	
<i>Annual recidivism cost avoided</i>	\$81,203
<i>Annual savings for 3 students not retained in grade</i>	\$35,979
TOTAL	\$150,462
<i>Less participant cost</i>	(\$6,667)
NET GAIN	\$143,795
RETURN ON INVESTMENT (rounded)	2,157%