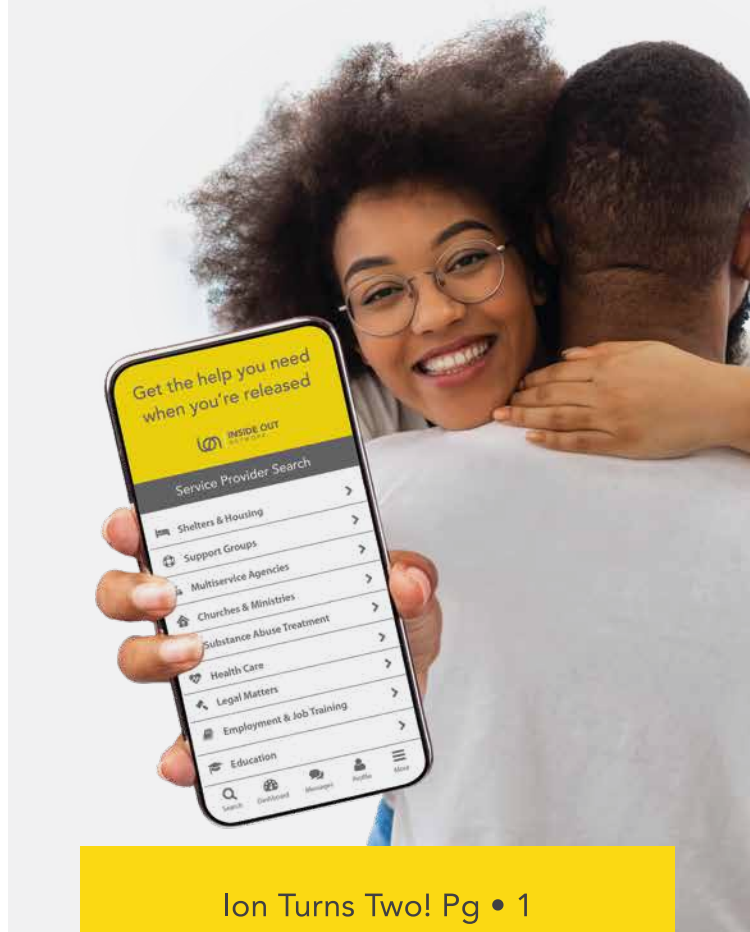


## ION TURNS TWO!

On April 24, 2020, just as the first wave of COVID-19 was underway—and after nearly fifteen years of existence as a ministry of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Park Ridge, IL—the Inside Out Network was officially born as its own independent organization. In spite of all the challenges posed by launching something new in the face of a pandemic, God has remarkably blessed our first two years of existence. We thought we'd share some of the more important milestones with you.

- Our pro bono legal team at Baker McKenzie helped us organize as an Arizona corporation and then successfully walked us through the complex process of becoming a legal nonprofit with the IRS.
- Our faithful and generous donors and grant makers have helped us become more financially stable, from approximately \$25,000 in income in 2020 to over \$200,000 projected for 2022.
- This financial stability has allowed us to bring on three full-time and two part-time paid staff and provide modest stipends for roughly 30 Arizona State University (ASU) interns. We have also been blessed by a team of dedicated volunteers who help create online profiles for inmates.
- We've registered over 4,200 returning citizens and 370 reentry service providers on the ION platform. Thousands of searches and messages have been exchanged.
- The underlying code for our website has been rewritten and updated, making the site more stable, functional, and secure.
- We've developed letters of support and Memoranda of Understanding with the departments of correction in Illinois and Arizona and have been accepted as a strategic ministry in the Grand Canyon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- We made presentations at the 2020 ASU Summer Institute and the 2022 Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association Summit, as well as exhibiting at the 2021 Fresh Start Reentry event in Tucson.

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# ION TURNS TWO!

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- Partnering with the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR) on a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant. During this summer and early fall, we'll work intensively in Arizona, in partnership with Denver-based Visible Network Labs, to do reentry network analysis.

There's a lot more, but you get the idea! We want to thank God for all that's happened and for everybody who's helped get us to where we are today. I personally want to thank our staff, interns, volunteers, board members, tech team, legal team, donors, grant makers, government workers, service providers, and prayer partners for sharing this vision of transforming reentry with us.

As with any two-year-old, it's still early days for us. We're still very much learning, discovering, stumbling, persevering, and growing. And we're excited to see what God has in store for us in the coming year.

## LOOKING AHEAD/NEXT UP...

True to our name, we've been busy networking, and we've generated a lot of potential opportunities and initiatives that we're pursuing. It promises to be a busy summer and fall. Here's a peek at some things we're working on...

- Expanding to the state of Oregon. We are one of the key partners working with Oregon Correctional Enterprises to apply for a BJA grant to fund a program that would help inmates secure a job offer before being released from prison.
- Working with our new tech team and Aventiv Technologies to develop a "whitelist-ready" version of the ION platform that can be integrated with inmate computer tablets. This would be a game-changing development.

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## SERVICE PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT:

### JOSEPH GREEN

*Community Support Advisory Council (CSAC) West*

My name is Joseph Green, and I am the Director of Workforce and Job Development here at Westside Health Authority as well as Reentry Coordinator for Community Support Advisory Council (CSAC). I started at Westside Health Authority in October of 2018, and what led me here was my father asking me one simple question: Did I enjoy what I was doing? The answer at the time left me thinking about my purpose and what I could really do to make an impact in the community. I want to create change in Chicago on the West Side, and especially in the Austin Community. So here I am today.

The CSAC model was created to empower men and women currently incarcerated in the Illinois Department of Corrections and provide them with resources, employment opportunities, skill-based programs, hope and encouragement to overcome any obstacles, so when they return to their communities they have the necessary tools to make an impact on their lives. CSAC is also here to educate and advocate for those incarcerated and also for those who are already returning citizens. We help them address the barriers they and their families may face. We also partner with multiple agencies around the city and state to collaborate and refer clients with specific needs to create wrap-around service connections.



I believe the Inside Out Network plays a vital role in connecting agencies and programs with women and men currently behind bars and on the outside. It's an easier and more efficient way for people to get to specific resources or programs they need to assist them wherever they are in Illinois. That leads to a more effective path to success. Signing up is easy for client or organization, and it allows us to build a rapport with people before they leave prison so we can have things in place or connect them with other agencies who can solve issues. But, if someone is already home in the community, it can be used as a quick reference guide. Inside Out was created to empower people immediately with information they need now instead of later, and it's a great simple tool to use via phone or on a computer.



## ARIZONA UPDATE

As ION's primary mission is to help returning citizens easily find and connect with reentry resources, we have been actively engaging in various methods that enable us to raise awareness of our network's ability to help. Our Program Managers are attending weekly parole orientations in both Maricopa and Pima County. At these orientations, our staff has the opportunity to engage with recently released individuals in person and educate them on how ION can connect them to service providers who truly want to help ease their reentry journey.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Department of Economic Security's Reentry Division, we have started monthly online presentations of ION to returning citizens in the RED Program, prior to their release.

Furthermore, in May our AZ Program Manager, Miranda Campos, began visiting inmates at the Manzanita Prison Unit in Tucson.

We are sincerely grateful for our recent collaborations and are continually seeking new, innovative ways to reach out to more returning citizens.

As of June 30, 2022, we have 2,271 returning citizens and 146 service providers enrolled on the network.



## ILLINOIS UPDATE

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has developed an implementation team in order to increase returning citizen enrollment pre-release. There are two deputies heading up this team, and we are excited to get the opportunity to work with them to train and encourage the rest of the IDOC staff who will be contributing to these efforts.

In addition, ION has connected with the Cook County Sheriff's Department. Their Resource Center is now including our info flyers in the exit packet for those who get released from the jail. This means that approximately 40-60 people per day are receiving information regarding ION.

Lastly, as of June 30, 2022, Illinois has 2,177 returning citizens enrolled in the platform along with 212 registered service providers. Highlight: Due to the IL team's efforts, 18 new providers were added to the network in the first 12 weeks of 2022, and we continue to add more each month.

## LOOKING AHEAD/NEXT UP... *(continued from Pg 2)*

- Possible expansion to the states of Washington and Colorado. We are currently in discussions with both departments of corrections and some key reentry organizations in both states.
- Creating enhanced analysis of the novel data that we're collecting in order to generate usable information for reentry market analysis. In a nutshell, we're working on creating "heat maps" that show where returning citizens are returning, the kinds of services they're interested in, and where relevant service providers are located.
- Our staff will be attending and hosting an exhibit table at the summer training event of the American Probation and Parole Association in Chicago at the end of August.
- We just started working on a project we're calling the "Reentry Congregations Initiative." Briefly, we're undertaking a broad survey of what's happening in congregation-based reentry ministry. We're looking to discover the kinds of ministries that congregations are engaged in, what's working well (and why) and what's challenging (and why). We're hoping to discover reproducible models of reentry ministry and pathways that ordinary congregations can follow. Our eventual goal is to create a practical how-to guide, "Effective Reentry Ministry for Ordinary Congregations," and to empower more ordinary congregations to engage in reentry ministry in a way that fits them.

## ION INTERN SPOTLIGHT: LESLIE ANTILLON

Hello, my name is Leslie and I am a native to Arizona. I have lived in Phoenix all my life, meaning the atrocious heat here is no stranger to me. I am currently a junior at Arizona State University, more specifically the downtown campus. I am double majoring in Criminology & Criminal Justice and Political Science. All this means that I am constantly learning about the structure of government as well as the criminal justice system from all aspects. I am anticipated to graduate May 2023 but, with juggling two majors, I may need an extra semester. So far I am on track and am excited for my senior year in the fall!

As I grew older, I began using social media, causing me to become exposed to the world around me. I have always loved criminal-based shows like Criminal Minds and CSI Miami, but it wasn't till I was about 13 that I remember seeing the video surrounding Eric Garner. I had never been exposed to something so heartbreaking nor had I really thought about racism still existing to that extent. I am Mexican, so police mistreatment has never not been something I was aware of. But seeing Mr. Garner repeatedly saying "I can't breathe" brought something new out of me.

Since that moment, I became interested in the criminal justice realm as a career path. I decided that I wanted to become a lawyer because I wanted to be a change to the system. I wanted to be someone that those who have been victims of any kind of criminal justice mistreatment—even if they don't speak English—can go to for help and trust the work I am doing for them. I still want this, but now I have seen through ION and school how interconnected everything is and how much change needs to be made starting from how we talk about people to policies created to how we help those incarcerated reenter society.

The criminal justice system has historically been male-dominated and, over the years, has tended toward a culture of racism and power hunger. The reason I decided to interview to become an intern for ION was because I wanted to be a part of something that was creating a positive change in our community. The school curriculum, at least in my experience, has not done a good job discussing the issue of reentry to the extent that they do about other topics in the criminal justice system.

From participating in ION, I have learned so much about reentry and the struggles that many citizens face. The lack of resources known to those formerly incarcerated or anyone who struggles with justice-involved issues is heartbreaking. ION has given me hope that there are people out there who have passion for what they are doing and who truly want to help others create a path to a better life.

Once I graduate next year, I want to take a year or two off to work and see what I want to do with my life. I know that, whatever I choose, I still want to get a Masters in Psychology and maybe one day get a Doctorate in Law. Who knows what the future holds and all the endless possibilities that at this moment may not align for me but might a few years down the road. ION has certainly opened my eyes to a realm of work that I never considered. I hope that they continue to expand nationwide, creating a change in the lives of those using the online platform and those working to keep it running! Thank you!

*Leslie Antillon*



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