

## **Inside Justice: A Summer Interns Perspective**

### **R.E.S.T.O.R.E. Duval Observations**

#### **Entry 3: Healing from the Inside Out**

R.E.S.T.O.R.E. makes great efforts to prioritize internal growth alongside external resources, implementing programs such as Operation New Hope and Optimism to the Future to equip residents with tools to succeed. Operation New Hope is a job training program that teaches professionalism, requiring residents to arrive in business casual attire. This program helps them obtain IDs, birth certificates, and other necessary documents. Additionally, residents who complete three months of job training get three months of their program fee covered, providing an opportunity to save money and job hunt without stress. Optimism to the Future is a monthly workshop that allows residents to build their skill set for the future. This month's lesson centers on the importance of customer service both personally and professionally.

Valerie is a waitress at a local steakhouse and says that the restaurant likes to hire R.E.S.T.O.R.E. women for their hardworking and reliable nature. Though pouring and serving alcohol is a requirement for Valerie's job, she hasn't felt the urge to drink or use drugs. She attributes this to the mental health and substance use counselors at R.E.S.T.O.R.E., who helped her "heal from the inside out." Additional literacy and education services are available for residents seeking to increase their knowledge, gain confidence, and create future career opportunities.

Strict rules are common in many reentry homes, such as an 8 PM curfew and no contact with the outside world for 60 days after arrival. This creates additional barriers for residents who work late or have loved ones they've been waiting to see. Oftentimes, it feels like prison again, so people leave and return to the same bad habits.

R.E.S.T.O.R.E.'s rules are designed to eliminate barriers and grant residents the freedom they need to succeed. Curfew is typically 10 PM on weekdays and 11 PM on weekends, but an exception is made for residents working the night shift. Instead of having to reconfigure their work schedule to meet curfew, they're expected to be home an hour after their shift ends to account for bus travel. Valerie clarifies that though this flexibility is a great privilege, "there's enough rope to hang yourself with," so residents must hold themselves accountable. Rebecca is clear that no second chances are

afforded within this program. The organization prides itself on being supportive, but excusing every mistake stalls progress for all residents.