Mental Health in the Black Community put on by Table of the Saints and Project RETURN

On September 21st, Project RETURN was blessed to be able to sponsor an event with Table of the Saints. With enlightening discussions, inspiring panelists, an amazing emcee, and intriguing questions, this event educated and inspired those in attendance. This day was put to on to start more conversations in the Black Community about mental health and the stigmas and stereotypes around that. The purpose of these events is to start good and honest conversation about your mental health and how to help yourself and the ones around you if they are not in a good mental health state. Also, we wanted to bring normalcy to the topic to let people know that taking care of yourself mentally is just as important as taking care of yourself physically.

We are hoping these conversations and discussions that we had make their way back to other people in the community. These conversations and new ways of thinking about mental could change the way people live and function on a daily basis. We also discussion the importance of having the support and help around you when dealing with mental illnesses. The first start is talking about mental health and illnesses a less stigmatizing way and then making sure that the support is around when needed.

This collaboration is part of the Table of the Saints quarterly and monthly events talking about everything mental health related. These events will talk about trauma, normalcy, and common mental issues. We want to change peoples’ opinions about mental and open up more and more discussion about issues that are affecting the Black Community and the community as a whole.
The NARRATOR to perform at Celebrate the Return

Project RETURN is excited to announce that local spoken word artist The NARRATOR (aka Thomas Hines) will perform at the 39th Annual Celebrate the Return. Hines interned with Project RETURN while studying at MATC. Since then he has provided original spoken word pieces to a number of local community based organizations. He has even performed at Summerfest. When asked about why he is drawn to spoken word performances, Hines said, “As a lifelong Milwaukee, WI resident, I began seriously writing positive, conscious poetry and songs in 2003. After sending lyrics to King Magazine and they were published, it was then when I realized that God had given me a voice and responsibility to edify and inspire through words, music, education, but more importantly, by example. I haven’t been perfect, but I aspire to be while sharing my story. This is my true calling, and I am grateful for any opportunity that presents itself. I am…… NARRATOR!”

The Don Bein Service Award
Conor Williams
A longtime supporter of the work of Project RETURN, Conor has used his position to effect change in the community. Conor chairs the Milwaukee County Re-entry Council and the Transitional Jobs Collaborative. Through these posts Conor is convening stakeholders in the community to address issues that impede the successful re-entry of many people back to the community. Conor has also been instrumental in the development and sustainability of the Circles of Support programming in the greater Milwaukee area. He is a trusted friend and ally of Project RETURN and many others in the community.

The Elijah O’Neal Award of Excellence
Sylvestor Jackson
Sylvestor Jackson has burst on the scene, working with Project RETURN partner organization ExPO to educate about the criminal justice system and advocate for smart and safe reform measures that will not only help the formerly incarcerated but also the entire community. Sylvestor has been particularly active on the recently launched “Unlock the Vote” Campaign, an effort to restore voting rights to those returning from incarceration upon their release from incarceration. Through this movement Sylvestor has shared his testimonial with faith communities, civic groups and elected officials. He is making a difference in our community and we are lucky to work with him.