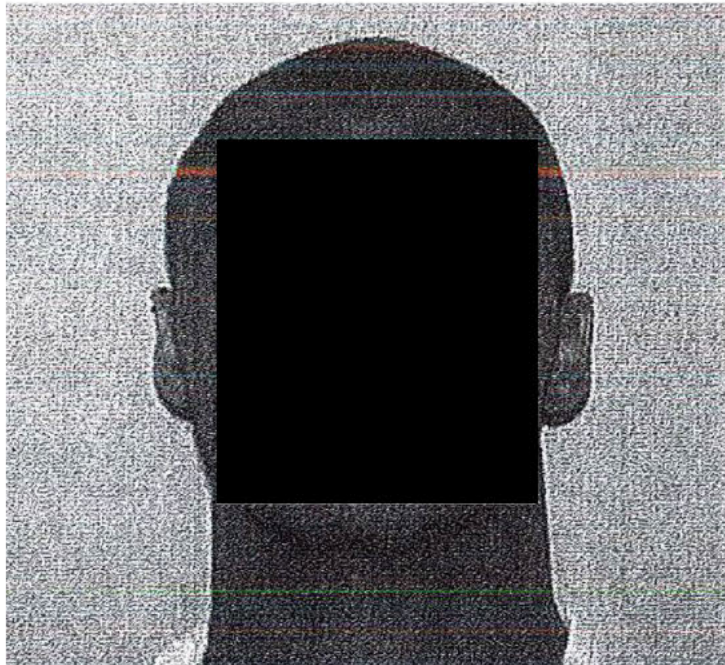


To: [REDACTED]
From: Haley Volpintesta and Lillian Huang Cummins
Re: Mitigation report for [REDACTED] Jr. and his prospects for future success.



[REDACTED], Jr., January 2003, age 18

A childhood filled with death and violence made [REDACTED] prone to maladaptive reactions in the case of perceived threats. After his mother's death from AIDS, [REDACTED] was abandoned by his other relatives, and forced to live with his father, who beat and tortured [REDACTED] for nearly two years. Approximately 11 months after [REDACTED] was removed from his father's control, [REDACTED] was arrested and charged for the death of 26-year-old [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was 16 years old. Today, [REDACTED] is a 38-year-old man. During the last 22 years, [REDACTED] has matured. He has taken advantage of the opportunities available to him in

the Illinois Department of Corrections that have prepared [REDACTED] to successfully return to society.¹

¹ Since 2005, the Sentencing Advocacy Group of Evanston has conducted investigations into the life histories of more than 100 death-penalty, juvenile-life-without-parole, and other cases in federal and state jurisdictions. SAGE is a multidisciplinary practice led by Betsy Wilson, an attorney and mitigation specialist with nearly two decades of experience in sentencing and mitigation investigations. Haley Volpintesta is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with master's degrees in human rights and sociology. She has worked at a mitigation specialist at SAGE for eight and a half years. Lillian Huang Cummins is a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of California. She teaches at Lake Forest College and has been a mitigation specialist at SAGE for four and a half years.

In December 2022, [REDACTED] hired the Sentencing Advocacy Group of Evanston to conduct a biological, psychological, and social history for Mr. [REDACTED] Jr. Since then, we have spent more than 180 hours conducting our investigation. We completed in-person, telephonic, and virtual interviews with Mr. [REDACTED] and his family. We reviewed discovery and collected over 40 documents, including education records, medical and mental health records, criminal court records, and media and scholarly articles to prepare this report.

█████ mother, █████ met █████ “█████” █████ Sr. when she was 23 years old. █████ was an educated woman and aspiring nurse who worked hard to support herself. █████ did not know and could not predict that meeting █████ would lead to more than a decade of brutal physical and sexual violence.

█████ beat and raped █████ repeatedly during her pregnancy with █████ Jr. and after his birth, until the birth of █████ younger twin brothers: █████ and █████ Shortly after █████ gave birth, █████ died for reasons related to his prematurity. After █████ funeral, █████ escaped with █████ and his three other siblings and moved to █████, █████ . █████ was on the run from that point forward until █████ found her a final time in █████, █████ By that time, █████ was sick; her health rapidly declined after she was diagnosed with AIDs. After nearly a decade of running with his mother, █████ moved back to █████ to live with his maternal grandmother, █████ █████ Overwhelmed with █████ care, █████ sent █████ and his brothers, █████ and █████ to live with their paternal grandmother, █████ █████ When █████ died on October 4, 1998, █████ and his siblings were surrendered to █████, who would neglect and brutalize his children physically and psychologically. The trauma █████ witnessed and experienced created extraordinary vulnerabilities for his developing brain.

By the time █████ was 16 years old, █████ had lived in a dozen places in three different states. When his mother died, █████ was abandoned by the safer adults in his extended family. In his father’s care, █████ was repeatedly beaten with two-by-fours and other weapons.

It was at that point, on October 10, 2001, that █████ was in a physical fight with the victim in this case, █████ . █████ and other adults in the neighborhood had beaten and threatened to injure █████ in the past. █████ was terrified that the violence would never end. █████ young age and immature brain, in addition to his cognitive impairments and hypervigilant stress responses, diminished █████ ability to fully process what was taking place or predict and understand the potential consequences of his actions on October 10. After the fight, █████ got a gun intending to scare █████ During the chaotic interaction, █████ fired the gun and shot █████ causing his death.

The mitigation presented in this report does not excuse the harm that █████ caused █████ in fact, █████ takes full responsibility for his actions. █████ holds tremendous remorse for the harm he enacted and has thought about █████ every day of these last 22 years. The information presented in this report offers a picture of █████ life and places the crime in the context of █████ early brain development, childhood trauma, and a childhood environment utterly lacking the safety and stability to prevent the disabilities that impacted █████’s behavior on October 10, 2001.

A typical mitigation report includes letters of support from parents, childhood photos, and stories about how caregivers tried their best to mediate factors that were largely out of their control. In █████ case, these things do not exist. The egregious violence that █████ and his siblings endured

made it difficult for them to recall childhood memories from before the violence began. [REDACTED] also died from AIDS in 2007. None of the family members we spoke to possessed artifacts or traces of [REDACTED] childhood. The only things we found to document [REDACTED] childhood are the records that describe the horrendous abuse and neglect [REDACTED] experienced before his arrest on this case. The few images we recovered are from the child protection investigation and [REDACTED] incarceration records.

Despite his chaotic and violent childhood, [REDACTED] has matured. During these last 22 years, [REDACTED] has shown that he will use the resources he can access to heal and learn. Today, [REDACTED] is no longer the same frightened 16-year-old boy who was sentenced to 45 years in prison. [REDACTED] is a 38-year-old man who has served more than two decades in the Illinois Department of Corrections. [REDACTED] has spent this time engaging in programs and building supportive relationships. [REDACTED] has held jobs, attained his GED, and is working hard to better himself and the community around him. This report illustrates the relevance of [REDACTED] age and cognitive development to help explain the circumstances of the offense and [REDACTED] prospects for future success.

[REDACTED] mother, [REDACTED], was physically assaulted and raped by [REDACTED] father, [REDACTED] “[REDACTED]” [REDACTED] Childhood exposure to domestic violence can result in mood disorders like depression and anxiety, PTSD, learning and behavioral disabilities, and long-term physical and mental health consequences.²

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] grew up on [REDACTED]’s west side. [REDACTED] was born on February 21, 1961, in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was born on November 30, 1964, in [REDACTED]. Both of their families migrated to [REDACTED] in the late-1960s to have better opportunities than what were available to Black families in the south.

[REDACTED] graduated from [REDACTED] High School in 1975 and went to college for nursing. [REDACTED] graduated from the same high school four years later. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] met in 1983, shortly after [REDACTED] gave birth to her first child, [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] was a well-known member of the [REDACTED] who had a reputation for being violent – he was not the kind of man [REDACTED] was looking for after ending her relationship with [REDACTED] father. [REDACTED] stability was attractive to [REDACTED] who was in and out of jail for battery, auto theft, robbery, and the possession of controlled substances.³ According to [REDACTED], [REDACTED] cousin, [REDACTED] never chose to be with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] chose [REDACTED] and used violence to control [REDACTED] life.⁴

[REDACTED] had an apartment on [REDACTED] Road, and [REDACTED] came and went whenever he wanted to.

² Blake Griffin Edwards, “Alarming Effects of Children’s Exposure to Domestic Violence.” *Psychology Today*, (Feb. 26, 2019), <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/progress-notes/201902/alarming-effects-childrens-exposure-domestic-violence>.

³ [REDACTED] Police Department Rap Sheet for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Sr.

⁴ Interview with [REDACTED] (Aug. 9, 2023).

██████████ Jr. was born to ██████████ and ██████████ on December 25, 1984. His sister, ██████████ was born less than one year later, on October 31, 1985. ██████████ was unable to maintain the rent with three young children and no financial support, so she moved in with ██████████, ██████████'s mother.

There, ██████████ ██████████ brother, saw ██████████ beat ██████████ for the first time. ██████████ punched ██████████ in the face repeatedly, causing her nose to bleed. Other adults were around, but no one intervened. ██████████ heard ██████████ beat Linda often; he heard them argue and yell, heard slaps and punches, and ██████████ cries for help.⁵ ██████████ and his younger siblings were also present when the abuse took place.

██████████, ██████████ paternal aunt, was also the victim of ██████████'s violence. ██████████ would beat all the women in his life, no matter their relation. When ██████████ moved in with ██████████ ██████████ was a high school student. She knew ██████████ was beating ██████████ and the children, but when she tried to confront ██████████, he turned his aggression towards ██████████ yelling and threatening her. Everyone was afraid of ██████████.⁶

On December 29, 1986, ██████████ gave birth to the youngest of her children, twin boys, ██████████ and ██████████ at Mt. Sinai Hospital. Both babies were in the neonatal intensive care unit. When ██████████ was healthy enough, ██████████ was able to bring him home, but ██████████ health declined, and he died a short time later. ██████████ was devastated. At ██████████ funeral, ██████████ wailed with grief and tried to remove ██████████ lifeless body from the infant casket. ██████████ was carried out of the funeral home.⁷

After ██████████ death, ██████████ decided to flee from ██████████. She moved to ██████████ with ██████████, ██████████ ██████████ and ██████████ They lived with ██████████ Aunt ██████████ and Uncle ██████████ ██████████ a promising nursing student, took a job at the local Kentucky Fried Chicken to make money and keep food on the table, eventually moving her young family into public housing.⁸

██████████'s abuse of ██████████ and the instability that pervaded ██████████ childhood shaped the development of ██████████ young brain, putting him at risk for negative mental health and academic outcomes.

In ██████████ ██████████ was in a classroom for children with learning and behavioral disabilities. These disabilities ran in the family: He and ██████████ were in the same grade because ██████████ also suffered from learning disabilities and was held back a grade.

When ██████████ was about seven years old, he and his brother ██████████ were playing outside of their apartment building when they saw ██████████ drive into the parking lot. They ran inside to warn ██████████ afraid that ██████████ would beat her. ██████████ told ██████████ that if she did not return to ██████████

⁵ Interview with ██████████ (March 13, 2023).

⁶ Interview with ██████████ (March 17, 2023).

⁷ Interview with ██████████ (March 13, 2023); Interview with ██████████ ██████████ (March 17, 2023).

⁸ Interview with ██████████ (March 13, 2023).

he would take the children.⁹

After [REDACTED] found [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], [REDACTED] sister [REDACTED] helped [REDACTED] flee with the children to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] and other maternal relatives were living in [REDACTED]. At first, [REDACTED] lived in a shelter for women and children who were victims of domestic violence. [REDACTED] received assistance in applying for benefits and locating housing.¹⁰

In [REDACTED], [REDACTED] was enrolled at [REDACTED] Avenue School for second grade through fifth grade.¹¹ [REDACTED] recalls receiving special education services and being evaluated by a child psychologist for learning and behavioral disabilities. [REDACTED] Public School records confirm that [REDACTED] received special education services.

[REDACTED] moved to South [REDACTED] to be near her sister [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] enrolled in South [REDACTED] Middle School for sixth grade. [REDACTED] liked school and developed a supportive relationship with his teacher, Mr. [REDACTED] who was a role model for [REDACTED] and kept [REDACTED] focused on his schoolwork. [REDACTED] social support in [REDACTED] was unfortunately short lived: [REDACTED] found [REDACTED] again.

When [REDACTED] was riding his Big Wheel outside, a man started calling his name from the window of a car. At first [REDACTED] was happy because he hadn't seen [REDACTED] in four or five years. Then it sunk in that [REDACTED] would harm [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] ran home yelling, "Daddy is here!" When [REDACTED] got to the house, he told [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to go outside. [REDACTED] went to find her aunt [REDACTED] for help. [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] was hurting her mom.

[REDACTED] ran back to the house and saw [REDACTED] on top of her mother, holding her down, and raping [REDACTED] in front of his friends.¹²

Following the rape, [REDACTED] forced his way back into [REDACTED] and the children's lives. He would drive to [REDACTED] on Fridays to pick up [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].¹³ [REDACTED] did not want to go with [REDACTED] and often refused. When [REDACTED] refused, [REDACTED] would yell at [REDACTED] and push her around. [REDACTED] would yell at [REDACTED] to stop and try to protect his mother. Sometimes, [REDACTED] went with [REDACTED] so that he would not beat [REDACTED]

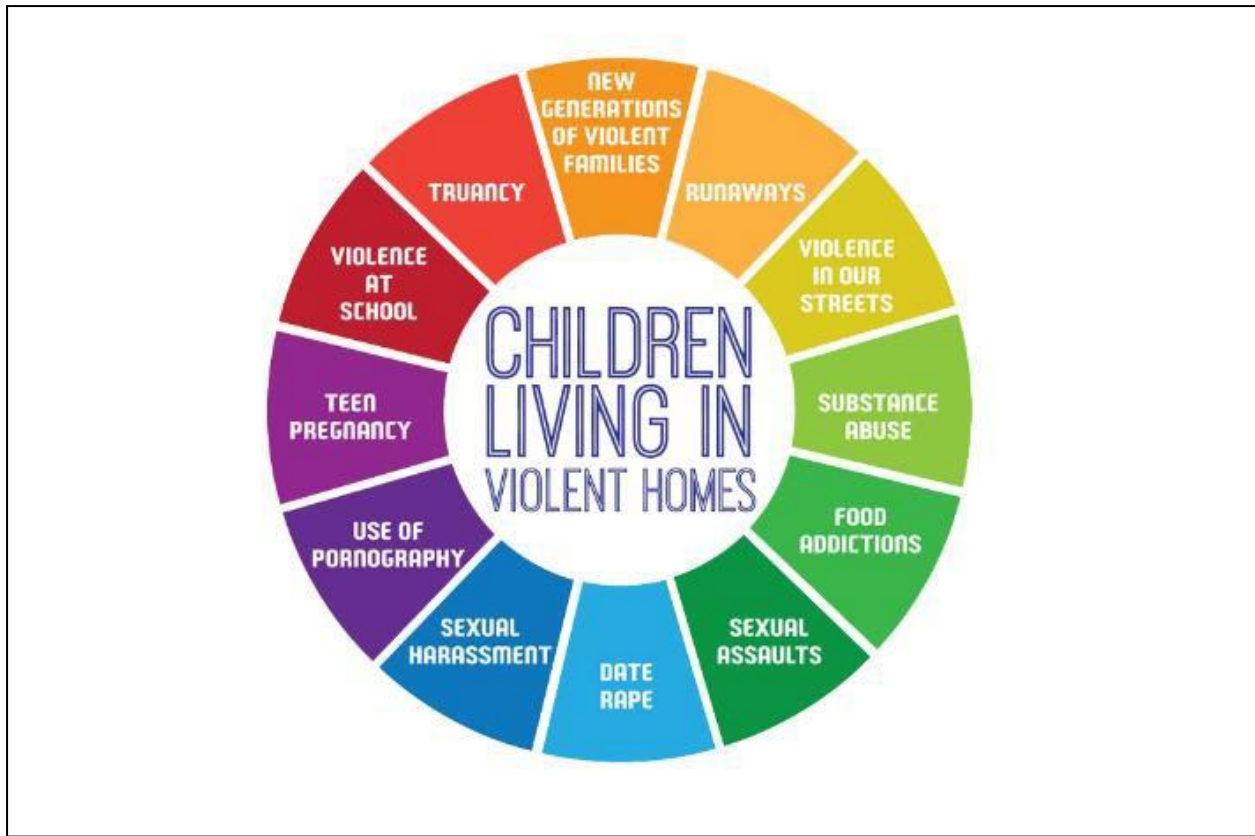
⁹ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 13, 2023).

¹⁰ Interview with [REDACTED] (Aug. 8, 2023).

¹¹ [REDACTED] Public School Enrollment History for [REDACTED] (1992-1996).

¹² Interview with [REDACTED] (March 16, 2023); Interview with [REDACTED] (March 13, 2023).

¹³ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 13, 2023).



The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children, TESSA, 2023

Children who grow up around and witness domestic violence experience fear and chronic stress that can have profound and long-term impacts on their development. Research shows that children, like █████ often develop psychological, emotional, and behavioral problems. Children often feel responsible for the abuse, try to protect their abused parent, carry guilt for their inability to prevent the abuse, experience constant anxiety, are afraid that they will be abandoned, seek attention in negative ways, fear that they will be physically harmed, and exist in a constant state of worry.¹⁴ The graph above captures how children, like █████ are also more vulnerable to running away, experiencing violence, using drugs and alcohol, and are more likely to be victimized themselves.

Furthermore, the Center for Disease Control¹⁵ reports that children who witness domestic violence are at a greater risk of alcohol and substance abuse, poor performance in school, mental health conditions like anxiety and depression, and health conditions like diabetes, all

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office on Women’s Health, Effects of Domestic Violence on Children, *OASH* (Feb. 15, 2021), <https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/domestic-violence/effects-domestic-violence-children>.

¹⁵ Center for Disease Control, Intimate Partner Violence, *CDC* (Oct. 9, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>.

which [REDACTED] experienced.¹⁶

When [REDACTED] was 12 years old, his mother [REDACTED] was diagnosed with HIV leading to her death from AIDs. The likelihood that [REDACTED] would experience long-term physical and mental health issues like depression, anxiety, substance abuse, PTSD, school disruption, and behavioral problems increased exponentially when [REDACTED] died.ⁱ

While living in [REDACTED], [REDACTED] health started to decline. One afternoon, she was riding a bike with her children and fell. [REDACTED] injured her leg and was taken to the hospital. [REDACTED] learned that she was infected with HIV. [REDACTED] told her children and family members that she had cancer.

During the next two years, 12-year-old [REDACTED] and his siblings [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] watched their mother become more and more weakened from the disease. Other health problems emerged. [REDACTED] would spend days in the hospital at first, then longer and longer periods of time.¹⁷

[REDACTED] and his siblings cared for their mother and themselves mostly alone. [REDACTED] sister, [REDACTED] and her aunt, [REDACTED] helped when they could. When they couldn't, [REDACTED] and his siblings were left to care for themselves. They would buy groceries and cook basic meals. [REDACTED] had a feeding tube, and 11-year-old [REDACTED] learned how to feed her mother and administer her medications through the feeding tube.¹⁸ When neighbors inquired about [REDACTED] whereabouts, [REDACTED] told the children to lie to avoid a child welfare investigation. Two neighbors eventually learned that [REDACTED] was sick, and would keep an eye on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].¹⁹

When [REDACTED] became too sick to take care of herself, her mother, [REDACTED] moved [REDACTED] and the children back to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] lived in North L [REDACTED] close to where [REDACTED] lived with his mother [REDACTED] in East [REDACTED]. While [REDACTED] and his siblings stayed with [REDACTED] periodically, [REDACTED] told them they would have to live with [REDACTED]

On the evening of October 4, 1998, [REDACTED] woke [REDACTED] and told her that her mother had died. [REDACTED] ordered [REDACTED] to wake [REDACTED] and her brothers. [REDACTED] took them all to [REDACTED] house. [REDACTED] dead body was still in her bed.

¹⁶ [REDACTED] School records for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Department of Corrections records for [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

¹⁷ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 16, 2023).

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 13, 2023).

reported that the loss of a parent had an early and persistent negative impact on the academic and social functioning of the child.²⁴ They found profound changes in daily functioning: children who had lost a parent showed higher rates of functional impairment than nonbereaved children across all points of the study.²⁵

The domestic violence █████ and her children endured, and █████ death alone could explain the changes in █████ behavior and stress response, but after █████ died, the circumstances of █████ life exponentially increased his vulnerability to trauma-related mental illness.

After her death, █████ experienced near-constant emotional and physical abuse and neglect that further altered his brain architecture, making it even more difficult for █████ to regulate his emotional and stress responses.

Child maltreatment and abuse are associated with negative physical effects on the structures and activity of children's brains.²⁶ These changes can lead to increased risk of psychological, social, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Emotional abuse and corporal punishment can cause anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues as well as negative health, behavioral, and developmental outcomes.²⁷ The violence that █████ experienced as a child affected his cognitive and mental health development.

Within days after █████ death, █████ began abusing and neglecting █████ and his siblings. He would not let them talk about their mother, limited their contact with their maternal family members, locked █████ and his brothers out of the house, and refused them food and shelter. █████ began selling drugs to buy clothes, shoes, and food. Because █████ was not █████'s biological child, █████ was mostly homeless and eventually dropped out of school. █████ and █████ would sneak food from the house for █████ when they could.²⁸

Within weeks of █████ death, █████ began beating the children. He would hit them for no reason at all. He often accused █████ and his brothers of stealing from him. █████ would hit and punch his young sons. In December 1998, when █████ was 14 years old, █████ accused █████

Parental Death. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (2005); G.C. Tremblay, and A.C. Israel, Children's Adjustment to Parental Death. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* (1998).

²⁴ S. Pham, et al., The Burden of Bereavement: Early-Onset Depression and Impairment in Youth Bereaved by Sudden Parental Death in a 7-Year Prospective Study. *Am J Psychiatry*, 175(9): 887-896, (2018); K. Cullen, Persistent Impairment: Life After Losing A Parent. *Am J Psychiatry*, 175(9): 820-821 (2018).

²⁵ Id.

²⁶ Child Welfare Information Gateway, Child Maltreatment and Brain Development: A Primer for Child Welfare Professionals, *Issue Briefs* (March 2023).

²⁷ Jorge Cuartas et al., Corporal Punishment and Elevated Neural Response to Threat in Children, *Child Dev.* (April 9, 2021); Veena Kumari, Emotional Abuse and Neglect: Time to Focus on Prevention and Mental Health Consequences, *BJ Psych* (Sept. 7, 2020).

²⁸ Interview with █████ (March 13, 2023), Interview with █████ █████ (March 16, 2023).

██████████ and their cousin ██████████ of stealing. ██████████ and his brothers ██████████ "██████████" and ██████████ "██████████" tied the boys to a weight bench and chairs and beat them with two-by-fours, a weight belt, and the wooden handle of a hammer. Other times, ██████████ and his brothers would strip ██████████ and ██████████ naked, spray their bodies with water, tie them up, and beat them until their skin was broken and bleeding.²⁹

GENERAL OFFENSE CASE REPORT 150 POLICE		1. OFFENSE/INCIDENT - PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION BATTERY		2. BATTERY - CLASS 0.480		3. BATTERY - SUBCLASS SIMPLE		4. DATE OF OCCURRENCE - TIME 20 NOV 00 2100		5. BEAT OF OCCUR. & BEAT/UNIT ASSIGN. 1125 1242	
6. ADDRESS OF OCCURRENCE 2732 W MONROE		7. TYPE OF LOCATION OR PREMISE WHERE OFFENSE OCCURRED (GIVE NAME OF LOCATION IF APPLICABLE) Residence		8. TIME RELATED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		9. BATT. R.O. ARRIVED - TIME 20 NOV 00 1755		10. LOCATION CODE 290		11. ASSIGNED BY 1125 1242	
12. VICTIM INFORMATION											
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"In summary vic related to R/Os that above off, accused vic (nephew) of stealing his jewelry when vic denied taking it. Above off. Struck vic several times on right outer thigh of leg. The following morning vic's mother noticed two welts and bruises on vic's right leg. Mother took vic to vic hosp. for treatment per Dr. Williams vic in ██████████ hospital for treatment per Dr. Williams."

██████████, Sr., police report for battery against ██████████, November 20, 2000

The physical abuse persisted for the two years that ██████████ was living with ██████████. On November 19, 2000, when ██████████ was 15 years old, ██████████ accused him, ██████████, and ██████████ of stealing his jewelry and beat the boys, leaving welts and bruises. ██████████ mother, ██████████'s sister ██████████ saw the bruises and welts on ██████████ body and took ██████████ to ██████████ hospital for help. At the hospital, ██████████ reported that he was beaten with an extension cord.

²⁹ Interview with ██████████ (March 13, 2023).

The day after the beating, [REDACTED] went to school as if nothing had happened. In the classroom, [REDACTED] could not sit at his desk because of the welts and bruising on his backside and legs. [REDACTED] friend and classmate, [REDACTED], asked him what was wrong. [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that he had gotten into an argument with his father over stolen jewelry, and that his father struck him on the hip with a piece of wood. [REDACTED] informed the school administrators, who called 9-1-1. The EMTs transported [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] County Hospital. [REDACTED] sustained injuries to his right hip and leg, bruising to his face, a sprained wrist and a broken thumb.³⁰

GENERAL OFFENSE REPORT		OFFENSE (INCIDENT)-PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION		LOCAL OFF. CODE		SECONDARY CLASSIFICATION		F-724055	
JACO POLICE		OFFENSE INVOLVING CHILDREN		17.50		CHILD ABUSE			
4. ADDRESS OF OCCURRENCE NO.		1. OFFENSE (INCIDENT)-PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION		2. DATE OF OCCURRENCE - TIME		3. BEAT OF OCCUR.		8. PLATABILITY DESIGN.	
[REDACTED]		OFFENSE INVOLVING CHILDREN		20 NOV 00 2100		1125		1222	
5. TYPE OF LOCATION OR PREMISE WHERE OFFENSE OCCURRED (GIVE NAME OF LOCATION IF APPLICABLE)		16. LOCATION CODE		11. DATE R.D. ARRIVED - TIME		12. ASSIGNED BY		13. SUPERVISOR	
RESIDENCE		2.90		21 NOV 00 2055		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	

1. NAME (LAST, FIRST MI.)	IDENTITY VERIFIED	22. HOME ADDRESS (NO., DIR., STREET, APT. NO.)	23. SEX - RACE - AGE	24. HOME PHONE	25. BUSINESS PHONE	26. TIME AVAIL.	27. OCCUPATION	28. IN. NO. (SEE 29)	29. VICTIM REL. CODE
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	M, 15	N/P	NONE	ANY	STUDENT (GRADE H.S.)	X	07
PARENT/GUARDIAN, IF JUVENILE		30. REPORTED OFFENSE		31. POLICE FILE NO.		32. DATE OF OFFENSE		33. OFFENSE CODE	
[REDACTED]		F.230		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	
41. OFFENDER'S NAME (OR DESCRIBE CLOTHING, ETC.)		42. HOME ADDRESS		43. SEX - RACE - AGE		44. HEIGHT		45. WEIGHT	
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		M, 13		6'1"		160	
46. HAIR		47. EYES		48. COMPL.		49. MARKS, SCARS, ETC.		50. OFFENDER REL. CODE	
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		BLK		[REDACTED]		N/V	

51. OBJECT WEAPON USED		52. FURNISH FEATURES		53. POINT ENTRY		54. POINT EXIT		55. BURGLAR ALARM		56. SAFE BURGLARY METHOD		57. IF RESIDENCE, WHERE WERE OCCUPANTS	
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	
58. UNUSUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSE		59. GANG RELATED - AFFILIATION		60. VICTIM RELATED - AFFILIATION		61. OFFENDER RELATED - AFFILIATION		62. OTHER		63. OTHER		64. OTHER	
SEE NARRATIVE		NONE		NONE		NONE		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	

71. DESCRIBE PROPERTY IN NARRATIVE		72. MONEY		73. JEWELRY		74. CLOTHING		75. FUR		76. OFFICE EQUIP.		77. TV, RADIO, STEREO		78. HOUSEHOLD GOODS		79. CONSUM. GOODS		80. FIREARMS		81. VEH. (MAKE, MODEL, YEAR)		82. VEH. INVENTORY NO.		83. VEH. INVENTORY NO. FOUND	
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	

41478 IN SUMMARY, VICTIM STATED THAT AFTER A VERBAL ALTERCATION WITH HIS FATHER REGARDING MISSING JEWELRY, THE FATHER STRUCK THE VICTIM WITH A PIECE OF WOOD, IN THE RIGHT HIP CAUSING A DEEP BRUISE. VICTIM ADMITTED AT ROH CHILDREN'S HOSP PER DR. CIESLAK UNTIL HIS GRANDMOTHER PICKS HIM UP ON 22 NOV 00. VICTIM ALSO HAS AN INJURED RIGHT HAND.

"In summary, victim stated that after a verbal altercation with his father regarding missing jewelry, the father struck the victim, with a piece of wood, in the right hip causing a deep bruise. Victim admitted at ROH Children's Hospital per Dr. Cieslak until his grandmother picks him up on 22 Nov 00. Victim also has an injured righthand."

[REDACTED] Sr., police report for child abuse against [REDACTED] Jr., November 20, 2000

[REDACTED] wanted his father arrested for the assault, but [REDACTED] sister's [REDACTED] did not want to press

³⁰ [REDACTED] Sr., police report for child abuse against [REDACTED] Jr., November 20, 2000; DCFS records for [REDACTED]

charges against her brother.³¹ █████ paternal grandmother, █████, and aunt █████ convinced █████ not to as well.

The trauma of childhood maltreatment and abuse has been shown to result in negative cognitive effects for children in two main areas: 1) stress response and 2) executive functioning and self-regulation.³² When faced with a threat, the body's first automatic, involuntary physiological response is to fight. This response exists so that an individual can face and escape danger. When a child's brain develops under conditions of frequent and extreme stress, as █████ did, that brain can grow more sensitized to stressful situations, triggering the child to shift quickly into a defensive mode and causing them to either shut down or overreact. In these situations, the child may engage in impulsive or maladaptive behaviors because their threat detection system has learned to stay on hyperalert, and they may see a threat in what might others might perceive as a low-threat situation.³³ What is more, children who have experienced abuse can also develop cognitive deficits in their executive functioning and self-regulation such that they are less adept at the self-control and mental flexibility that might aid them in responding more successfully in such situations.³⁴ Negative emotionality, a propensity toward depression and anxiety and a tendency to react to stressful situations with unpleasant emotions, is known to have a particularly detrimental impact on the cognitive functions most affected by PTSD, such as memory, attention, planning, and problem solving.³⁵

█████ turned 16 a month after DCFS removed him from █████'s care. █████ was placed with his elderly grandmother, █████ who neglected █████ medical, educational, and mental health needs.

After █████ assaulted █████ on November 20, 2000, █████ became a ward of DCFS and was placed in a group home. █████ was not bothered by the other boys in the group home, but the staff were aggressive. The first day █████ was there, a male staff member grabbed the collar of █████ shirt and yelled in his face. █████ was reminded of his father and decided to flee. █████ contacted his GAL to report that he would not stay in the group home and walked to his grandmother █████

³¹ █████, Sr., police report for battery against █████ (Nov. 20, 2000).

³² Child Welfare Information Gateway, Child maltreatment and brain development: A primer for child welfare professionals. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/braindevelopment/\(2023\)](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/braindevelopment/(2023)).

³³ B.D. Perry et al., The impact of neglect, trauma, and maltreatment on neurodevelopment: Implications for juvenile justice practice, programs, and policy. In A. R. Beech, A. J. Carter, R. E. Mann, & P. Rothstein (Eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Forensic Neuroscience* (pp. 815–835). Wiley Blackwell (2018).

³⁴ B.C. Kavanaugh et al, Neurocognitive deficits in children and adolescents following maltreatment: Neurodevelopmental consequences and neuropsychological implications of traumatic stress. *Appl Neuro: Child* 6 (2017).

³⁵ Jasmeet P. Hayes et al., Emotion and Cognition Interactions in PTSD: A Review of Neurocognitive and Neuroimaging Studies, *FRONT INTEGR NEURO.*, 6 (2012).

grades. They recommended counseling services for [REDACTED] because of his history of child abuse. [REDACTED] was unable to remedy his attendance issues, failing grades, and behavior issues. Instead of investigating the cause of his difficulties or offering additional support, [REDACTED] High School dropped [REDACTED] from enrollment. [REDACTED] took no steps to enroll [REDACTED] in another high school.⁴⁰

During his home visits with his caseworker, [REDACTED], J [REDACTED] agreed to participate in counseling services at the [REDACTED] Boys Foundation and expressed interest in Job Corps. Although [REDACTED] took the steps to enroll [REDACTED] in these services, [REDACTED] did not provide transportation and the safety concerns that further obstructed John's participation went unaddressed. Instead of problem solving, [REDACTED] threatened to close [REDACTED] case.⁴¹

[REDACTED] was then referred to [REDACTED] Challenge Academy, a five-month residential program funded by the Department of Military Affairs. [REDACTED] was excited about the opportunity and attended the orientation, but the program required family sponsorship, and no one in [REDACTED] family would sponsor him.⁴²



John Young, 16 years old

On the street, [REDACTED] did not have the ability or resources to support or protect himself from the violence and sexual abuse he experienced.

After DCFS removed [REDACTED] from his father's violent home, [REDACTED] was left to spend most of his time on the street, where he began smoking marijuana daily and drinking alcohol. The feeling of being high or drunk was an escape for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] also started selling drugs and was arrested for possession of cocaine when he was 15 years old. John was detained for loitering a few weeks later but had no other arrests until his arrest on this case.⁴³

⁴⁰ DCFS records for [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] records for John Young.

⁴¹ DCFS records for [REDACTED].

⁴² Id.

⁴³ [REDACTED] Police Department records for [REDACTED]

When [REDACTED] was 15, he met [REDACTED], who lived downstairs from [REDACTED] grandmother [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would sneak [REDACTED] into her house to spend the night when she could. At the time of [REDACTED] arrest, [REDACTED] was pregnant. [REDACTED] was born on November 27, 2001, about six weeks after [REDACTED] arrest.

[REDACTED] insecure housing also increased his vulnerability to sexual abuse. Youth who are homeless or housing insecure are more likely to experience sexual violence than youth who are housed, and 48% of homeless youth are forced to trade sex for food or a place to stay.⁴⁴ When [REDACTED] did not have a safe place to sleep, he practiced survival sex, which refers to the exchanging of sex for basic needs. When [REDACTED] was 15 years old, a woman old enough to be his mother took him in and raped [REDACTED] repeatedly when he stayed with her. [REDACTED] did not want to have sex, but did, so that he did not have to sleep in the street. This was not the first time that [REDACTED] had been sexually victimized.

When [REDACTED] was 12 years old, he was visiting his paternal relatives in [REDACTED], and a 30-year-old woman forced [REDACTED] to have sex with her and became pregnant. [REDACTED] oldest child, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was born on February 9, 1997. Unlike [REDACTED] who [REDACTED] has not met in person, [REDACTED] held and fed [REDACTED] when he was a baby. [REDACTED] was 13 years old.

Shortly before the crime, [REDACTED] was jumped and assaulted again. A group of boys beat [REDACTED] with a metal pole and split his lip open.⁴⁵

On a separate occasion, a group of boys beat [REDACTED] forced him in the trunk of a car and kidnapped [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was able to escape with the help of his sister [REDACTED] and brother [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] had nowhere else to go and was the victim of violence many more times.⁴⁶ It was under these conditions that 16-year-old [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was arrested and incarcerated for the murder of 26-year-old [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

At the time of the crime, [REDACTED] was 16 years old and displayed all the distinctive attributes of youth that have been recognized as mitigating by the [REDACTED] and U.S. Supreme Courts.

The United States Supreme Court has held that the eighth amendment prohibits capital sentences for juveniles who commit murder,⁴⁷ mandatory life sentences for juveniles who commit nonhomicide offenses,⁴⁸ and mandatory life sentences for juveniles who commit murder.⁴⁹ *Roper v. Simmons*, *Graham v. Florida*, and *Miller v. Alabama* established that “children are

⁴⁴ National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Homeless Youth and Sexual Violence. *NSVRC* (retrieved on Sept. 4, 2023) https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/HomelessYouth_Final%20508.pdf.

⁴⁵ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 16, 2023).

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005).

⁴⁸ *Graham v. Florida*, 560 U.S. 48 (2010).

⁴⁹ *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. 460 (2012).

constitutionally different from adults for purposes of sentencing.”⁵⁰

These landmark decisions were informed by a growing body of scientific and behavioral health research on adolescent brain development and by a recognition of the “transient immaturity” of youth.⁵¹

In *Miller*, the Supreme Court explained that science has demonstrated that three significant characteristics of juvenile offenders diminish the culpability of adolescents who commit crimes. First, children lack maturity and a fully developed sense of responsibility, which can lead to behavior that is careless, impulsive, and reckless. Second, children are more vulnerable to negative influences and outside pressures, they have limited control over their own environment, and they lack the ability to extricate themselves from crime-producing settings. Third, children are more capable of change than adults, and their actions are less likely to be evidence of irretrievable depravity.⁵²

At the time of the crime, █████ exhibited all these distinctive attributes of youth. The typical impulsivity and lack of self-control found in children were likely exacerbated for █████ due to his cognitive and adaptive impairments that developed from a childhood of neglect and abuse. Prior to this crime, █████ was arrested once for possession and once for loitering after he was removed from his father’s abusive home.⁵³ These offenses demonstrate █████ lack of judgment and impulsiveness, not a propensity for violence.

█████ has been incarcerated for 22 years and has grown up. Over the course of his incarceration, █████ has demonstrated resilience and persistence and has developed the maturity necessary to achieve his educational goals.

When █████ was first incarcerated in the █████ County Juvenile Detention Center at age 16, he was still under the care of DCFS. His caseworker noted at that time that █████ was enrolled in school and cooperating with staff.⁵⁴

When █████ turned 17, he was transferred to █████ County Jail. While █████ father, █████, occasionally brought █████ younger siblings to visit, █████ had no financial support. █████ monthly visits from his DCFS caseworker were interrupted by lockdowns at the facility, and █████ did not consistently receive the \$23 monthly stipend that DCFS provided. Given █████ lack of resources and support during this time, his caseworker recommended that █████ receive a substance abuse

⁵⁰ *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. at 2 (2012).

⁵¹ Center for Law, Brain & Behavior, *White Paper on the Science of Late Adolescence: A Guide for Judges, Attorneys and Policy Makers* (Jan. 27, 2022) <http://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/white-paper-on-the-science-of-late-adolescence/>; John M. Court, Immature Brain in Adolescence, *J. Paediatr* 49 (2013), pgs. 883-886; Mariam Arain, et al. Maturation of the Adolescent Brain *Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat* 9 (2013) pgs. 449-461.

⁵² *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. at 8 (2012).

⁵³ █████ Police Department records for █████.

⁵⁴ DCFS records for █████.

assessment and treatment as well as regular therapy. [REDACTED] never received any of these services.⁵⁵ Despite this, [REDACTED] signed up for and was eventually able to take a few GED classes at [REDACTED] County Jail before he was sentenced and transferred to the IDOC. [REDACTED] was 19 years old when he began serving his 45-year sentence at [REDACTED] Correctional Center. There, [REDACTED] wanted to work and continue his GED studies, but his long sentence put him at the bottom of the waitlist for programs. At [REDACTED], [REDACTED]'s DCFS caseworker visits were cut from once a month to once a quarter, and the facility's distance from [REDACTED] meant that [REDACTED] received no visits from family.⁵⁶

[REDACTED] increased isolation at [REDACTED] was compounded by repeated lockdowns at the facility. In [REDACTED] first year and a half at [REDACTED] from 2004 to 2005, his caseworker made note of at least six times that [REDACTED] was in lockdown for weeks at a time. During these lockdowns, [REDACTED] was confined to his cell 23 hours a day and was allowed out of his cell once a week to shower. [REDACTED] sister, [REDACTED] became concerned about his physical health when she learned that [REDACTED] was passing blood in his urine.⁵⁷ [REDACTED] DCFS caseworker observed how these harsh conditions discouraged [REDACTED] changing his previously positive attitude.⁵⁸

[REDACTED] requested a transfer to a prison closer to [REDACTED] but was denied. By the end of 2004, [REDACTED] told his DCFS caseworker that he was determined to maintain a positive outlook and stay out of trouble. [REDACTED] began imposing his own structure for himself, exercising and doing his own laundry, including his sheets, by hand in his cell.

[REDACTED] received a total of nine disciplinary infractions in more than two decades: eight for minor infractions and one for a fight. Of those infractions seven of them occurred within the first ten years that [REDACTED] was housed in [REDACTED]. From 2012 through 2017, [REDACTED] did not receive any disciplinary tickets. Since [REDACTED] was transferred to Hill Correctional Center in 2018, he received two citations for unauthorized property and fighting after [REDACTED] attempted to break-up a fight, was punched, and defended himself. [REDACTED] has not received any disciplinary tickets in nearly four years.

[REDACTED] never tested positive for drugs, nor was he cited for any gang related activity.

Over time and as his brain matured, [REDACTED] adjusted to the challenges of prison life. Starting in 2012, when he was 27 years old, [REDACTED] was able to engage in meaningful activity by working in the kitchen at [REDACTED].⁵⁹

At [REDACTED], [REDACTED] was finally able to gain access to the education he had been wanting for over 15 years, and on August 24, 2021, he earned his GED. He also participated in a dietary life skills program.⁶⁰ When [REDACTED] learned he would be transferred to [REDACTED] County Jail for his resentencing, he requested to remain at [REDACTED] so that he could continue to stay on the waitlist for programming

⁵⁵ DCFS records for [REDACTED].

⁵⁶ DCFS records for [REDACTED].

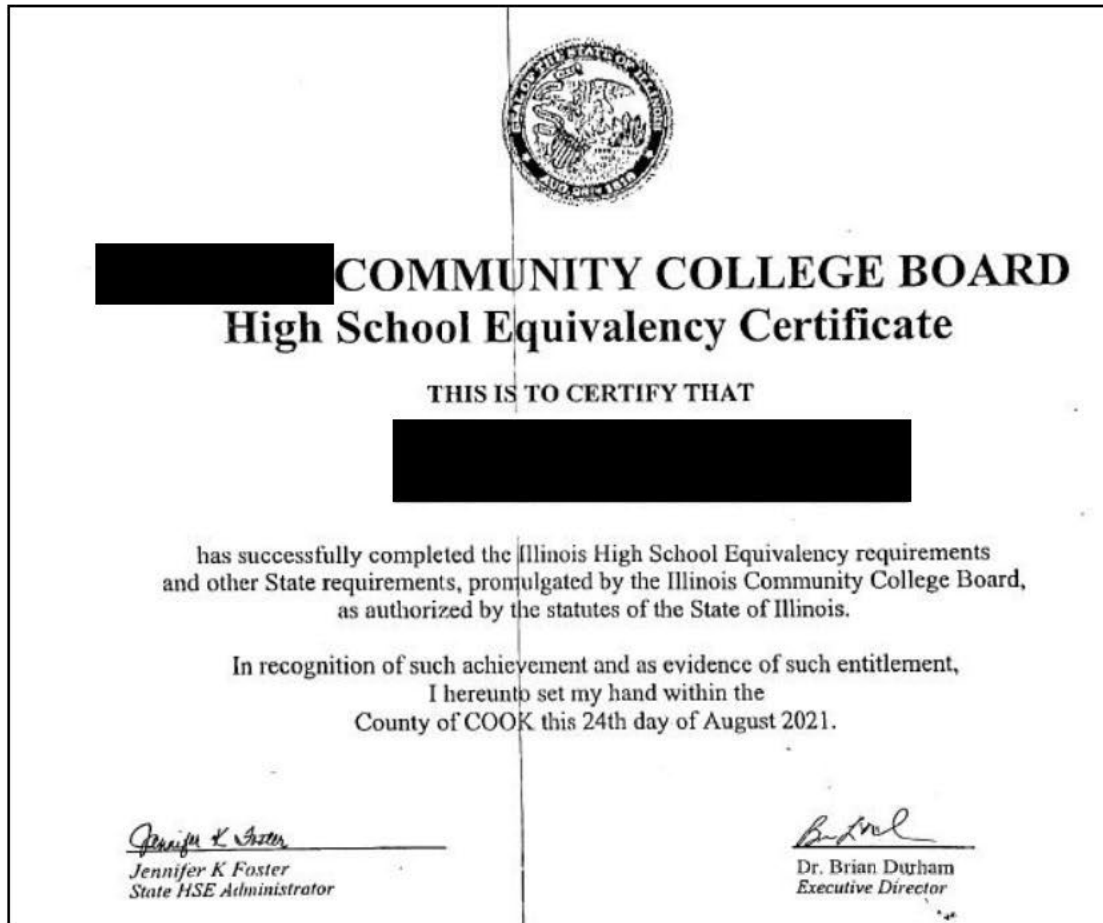
⁵⁷ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 16, 2023).

⁵⁸ DCFS records for [REDACTED].

⁵⁹ IDOC records for [REDACTED].

⁶⁰ Id.

there. [REDACTED] recently completed a roofing class and hoped to take a forklift class as well as the behavioral life skills class, Thinking for a Change.



High School Equivalency Certificate for [REDACTED] 2021

[REDACTED] has matured into a hard-working, contributing member of his community who is ready to rebuild his life. Support from well-established organizations will provide John with the resources he needs to succeed in the community.

While incarcerated at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] looked up to [REDACTED], who facilitated Thinking for a Change groups. [REDACTED] was serving a life-without-parole sentence for a crime that occurred when he was 17. After [REDACTED]'s resentencing and release, he became the Mentor Coordinator for Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) and has mentored many men like [REDACTED] on the outside. Precious Blood provides re-entry support and services for men and women returning to the community from prison. They offer case management services, individual and group mental health services, mentoring, and career training.

[REDACTED] has committed that on his release, [REDACTED] will be able to transition to Hospitality House, a housing program for men who were sentenced to more than 20 years in IDOC. In this program,

men receive free housing for a period until they can find employment and begin contributing to their rent. Precious Blood has a proven track record of success with participants and supporting them towards becoming healthy, contributing citizens.⁶¹ In 2022, Precious Blood was the recipient of the Berrigan-McAlister Award for their success with fostering reconciliation, just, and peace for all.



Residents and Staff from Hospitality House, 2023

█████ cognitive impairments may also qualify him to receive services from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitative Services. DRS helps clients apply for transitional and assisted living programs funded by the █████ Housing Authority. They can also assist █████ with applying for disability benefits to aid in financial support while providing employment, education, and independent living resources to help with John’s reintegration into society. An employment coordinator, case management, and crisis staff can offer █████ the resources and support he needs to successfully re-enter society.⁶²

Despite serving over 21 years, █████ has maintained an extended network of friends and family members who have pledged to provide him with financial and emotional support as he transitions back to the community.

█████ childhood friend, Iesha Jones, has worked for the Department of Human Services for over 20 years. Iesha knows that much has changed in the 22 years since █████ was first incarcerated, and she is prepared

⁶¹ Interview with █████ (June 2, 2023).

⁶² █████ Department of Human Services, “Rehabilitative Services,” DHS, (retrieved on April 1, 2022). <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29736>.

to help [REDACTED] navigate these changes to support his education and employment.⁶³ [REDACTED] has also known [REDACTED], who works as a commercial truck driver, since childhood. [REDACTED] owns her own truck and has offered to help [REDACTED] obtain his commercial driver's license.⁶⁴

[REDACTED] paternal aunt, [REDACTED], has assisted other returning citizens with obtaining jobs at DHL Supply, the candy factory where she works in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] would eventually like to house [REDACTED] once he has established a support system and engaged in the services offered at PBMR.⁶⁵ [REDACTED] maternal aunt, [REDACTED], and his maternal cousin, [REDACTED], both want to help [REDACTED] when he is released. [REDACTED] has offered both financial and emotional support and will also connect [REDACTED] with other members of his extended maternal family.⁶⁶

[REDACTED] sister, [REDACTED] works as a Licensed Professional Nurse at a nursing home in [REDACTED]. His brother [REDACTED] is a mechanic in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have eagerly awaited [REDACTED] re-sentencing, and plan to support [REDACTED] in any way he needs. They plan to introduce [REDACTED] to his nieces and nephews and look forward to including [REDACTED] in their lives.

[REDACTED] children have also played an important role in his rehabilitation these last two decades. Although [REDACTED] is currently incarcerated, [REDACTED] hopes that [REDACTED] will learn from the mistakes that he made and change the course of his young life. [REDACTED] who lives in [REDACTED], began developing a relationship with [REDACTED] when she was 17 years old. Over the last four years, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have spoken regularly over the phone. [REDACTED] looks forward to meeting her father in person when he is released.

Conclusion

In the landmark cases *Graham v. Florida*⁶⁷ and *Miller v. Alabama*⁶⁸, the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated mandatory life-without-parole sentences for youth under 18 and juvenile life-without-parole sentences for nonhomicide offenses. These decisions were informed by scientific and behavioral health research on adolescent brain development and by a recognition of the "transient immaturity" of youth. From those scientific studies it cited, the Court reached the conclusion that youth are less morally culpable, more susceptible to peer pressure, and more amenable to positive change relative to adults.

As a 16-year-old boy, [REDACTED] never considered the possibility that he would be involved in a situation that would result in the death of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is haunted by his actions of

⁶³ [REDACTED] letter of support (July 14, 2023).

⁶⁴ [REDACTED] letter of support (July 17, 2023).

⁶⁵ Interview with [REDACTED] (March 27, 2023).

⁶⁶ Interview with [REDACTED] (August 9, 2023).

⁶⁷ *Graham v. Florida*, 560 U.S. 48 (2010).

⁶⁸ *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. at (2012).

that night and the anguish he caused [REDACTED] family. [REDACTED] is sorry that his action took [REDACTED] life. [REDACTED] hopes to repair the damage he caused by helping other people when he is released.

Now that [REDACTED] has grown up and served nearly 22 years of his 45-year sentence, his adolescent brain and stress reactivity have matured. Through his strong relationships with others, he will have access to housing, services, and support that will sustain him. Despite tremendous odds against him, [REDACTED] is a survivor who has overcome cognitive and mental health disabilities, using the time he has served to help himself grow. The skills he has gained and the network of family and friendships he has kept close suggest strong prospects for his future success.



PRECIOUS BLOOD
Ministry of Reconciliation

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you that Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) will be providing its Reentry Service, Job placement, Housing, Workforce Development, and Case Management, to assist Mr. [REDACTED] upon his release from IDOC.

Mr. [REDACTED] will have a reentry team of people providing accompaniment for immediate needs to obtain his vital documents and social service needs (State ID/License and Link/Medicaid) along with long term needs like housing, employment, and education resources to transition supportively into society.

PBMR staff, including myself (Fred Weatherspoon), have been in communication with Mr. [REDACTED] and together we have identified his needs and developed a successful plan that Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation will be supporting upon his release.

If more information about Mr. [REDACTED] is needed, please feel free to contact me:

Fred Weatherspoon Program Manager
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
5114 South Elizabeth Street
Chicago, IL. 60609
Mobile:773-587-541
fred@pbmr.org

Sincerely, Fred Weatherspoon.

Fr. David Kelly- Executive Director
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
5114 South Elizabeth Street
Chicago, IL. 60609

March 17, 2023

Dear Judge:

My name is [REDACTED]. I am 53 years old. [REDACTED] is my favorite nephew, and I am his favorite aunt. [REDACTED] is like a son. We were very close when he was a child. [REDACTED] was a good boy. I would take him to the park to play.

[REDACTED] did not have the easiest childhood. His mother, [REDACTED] died when he was 14 years old. [REDACTED] moved in with me, my mother [REDACTED] and his father [REDACTED] Sr. My brother, [REDACTED] Sr. would whoop his children. I tried to stop my brother from whooping my nephew and eventually he moved in with his grandmother [REDACTED]. At that time, [REDACTED] was being beaten up by other boys and men from the neighborhood. I wanted to help [REDACTED] but before I could, [REDACTED] took matters into his own hands.

At the time of the shooting, [REDACTED] was a child. He had lost his mother and his life turned upside down. [REDACTED] has been away from his family for over 20 years now. It hurt me and my family to see [REDACTED] get taken from us. [REDACTED] was the sweetest boy and was unable to live up to his potential because of his hard life. This does not excuse what he did but please know that [REDACTED] and his family are sorry for what happened. I know we can't change it, but we can support [REDACTED] to do good in the world.

When my nephew comes home, I am going to help him get a job with me at DHL Supply Chain. I am a team leader there. [REDACTED] can live with me in Kankakee until he is able to get on his feet. I will be responsible for [REDACTED]

I miss my nephew so much and would love for him to come home so that he can reunite with his loved ones. [REDACTED] father, [REDACTED] Sr. passed away while [REDACTED] has been incarcerated, so did his grandmothers. Even though he lost both parents, [REDACTED] has support from me, his other aunts and uncles, his siblings, and many cousins. I hope that learning about my nephew's life will help him come home. His family loves him dearly and we want him to come home.

Sincerely Yours,

[REDACTED]

July 14, 2023

Dear Judge,

My name is [REDACTED], and I have known [REDACTED] since he was 14 or 15 years old. [REDACTED] grandmother owned the building where my family lived at 3530 West 13th Street. My mother dated [REDACTED] uncle, and we were like family.

I have worked for the Department of Human Services for over 20 years. I got my first job with them when I turned 18, and I will turn 46 this year. I have my own apartment. When [REDACTED] is released, I can help him first of all by being his friend. I can help him find a job and make sure he's in school. Things will be different so he will need someone to show him how to find a job, like making phone calls together and doing job searches online. I can help him with this and with other things that have changed, like using public transportation.

[REDACTED] has always been a nice, respectful young man. He has a great sense of humor and was funny, helpful, intelligent, and bright. He loved being around his family. In his teenage years, his parents abused him. He ended up in the hospital because his father broke his hand. He wound up getting taken away from his parents because his mother was sick. She wasn't able to attend to him, so he ended up at his grandmother [REDACTED]. Losing his mama was devastating – she was sick with AIDS and got it from his daddy. Still to this day, he talks about it and gets emotional about it.

It crushed my heart when he went to prison. It hurt my feelings because [REDACTED] wasn't a bad person. I was hurt, upset, and emotional about it. Through the years, I've kept up with [REDACTED] through letters, telephone calls, and sending pictures, but it hurts because we only get such a short time with each other.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

July 17, 2023

Dear Judge,

My name is [REDACTED], and I have known [REDACTED] since I was seven years old, and my adoptive mother has known him since he was born. My family lived next door to [REDACTED] and his family. Where we grew up, we all played on the block together. We were all like family.

I saw the things [REDACTED] went through growing up. It was rough, and I never understood why they happened. I was a foster kid, and normally those kids get mistreated. My mom was everything to me, and I didn't have to go through that. [REDACTED] was with his own family, but they mistreated him. He had a brutal life. He got brutalized and molested by his family. I would sneak over to [REDACTED] house to ask if he needed anything. Sometimes I had to bring him food so he could eat. It brings tears to my eyes even to this day to think about [REDACTED] and his siblings and how they were treated.

[REDACTED] has always been so sweet. When someone would bother me at school, he would tell me to just walk off from it. He was a protector and told me not to get in trouble because we all knew what the outcome would be.

I have been with my husband since high school, and we have five children together. I work as a commercial truck driver and own my own truck. We are renting a house by Midway now and currently trying to buy a home. I saw the trauma and abuse that [REDACTED] and his siblings went through from [REDACTED] father and aunts, and I have tried to help and mentor other people in his family. When [REDACTED] comes out, I will tell [REDACTED] not to be around people who drain your energy. You need to be in your own space and have your own time to think. I tell this to my kids too. There are so many opportunities other than being in the streets and the drama that comes with that.

I told [REDACTED] that if he can get licensed, I will help him get a truck. I'll help with whatever he needs. He writes to me, and we talk every few weeks, and I will continue to help him whenever he is released.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

August 9, 2023

Dear Honorable Judge Patrone,

My name is [REDACTED], and I am the cousin of [REDACTED] mother [REDACTED]. I grew up on the West side of [REDACTED]. My mother is the sister of [REDACTED] mother [REDACTED]. We both attended and graduated from [REDACTED] High School, after which [REDACTED] was studying to become a nurse. I went to school to be an early childhood educator and moved to [REDACTED] in 1991, after I became a mother myself. I currently work at St. [REDACTED]'s Hospital as a pharmacy tech and have held that job for nearly six years.

I am writing this letter on behalf of my cousin's son [REDACTED]. Although I moved to [REDACTED] when he was just a boy, our families stayed in contact over the years. [REDACTED] was a hardworking woman who wanted the best for her children. She was kind and always focused on her education or employment. We all believed in her and expected that she would fulfill her dream to become a nurse. That unfortunately did not happen, because [REDACTED] father, who was commonly known as [REDACTED], took [REDACTED] future away from her. [REDACTED] was a violent man, who would give my cousin busted lips and bruises on her body and rape her. In fact, [REDACTED] was the kind of man who would beat on any woman he was in contact with, including [REDACTED] mother [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] did not want to be with [REDACTED], but he did not give her a choice. At least twice, [REDACTED] fled the state to save her life and protect [REDACTED] and his siblings. If it wasn't for her untimely death, [REDACTED] would never have been in the situation that led to his arrest.

After my cousin was infected with AIDS, from [REDACTED], she passed away, and [REDACTED] was forced to live with his father, where he was beaten and neglected. [REDACTED] was left to fend for himself the only way he could. He was a 16-year-old boy who should have been loved and cared for so he could grieve for his mother, but instead he had to figure out how to protect his own life and raise himself. If [REDACTED] had not been in the streets, he would not have had to carry a weapon to protect himself from the adults that harmed him.

There are no excuses for what [REDACTED] did and our family is sincerely sorry that his actions led to the loss of a life. With that said, [REDACTED] was a child. He has now been incarcerated for 24 years and has paid the price for making a bad decision. He should not be punished for the rest of his life and deserves the chance to make amends with the support of his family.

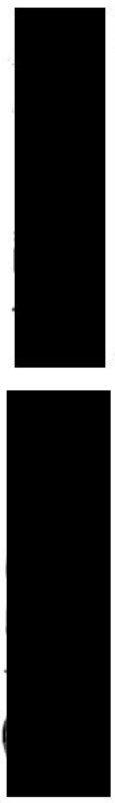
When [REDACTED] is released from prison, he would like to go to a program that will help him acclimate to his new life. I plan to be there for [REDACTED] to emotionally support him and to help him rebuild relationships with his maternal relatives. We look forward to his visits to [REDACTED] and celebrating his future success. I am asking that you please consider reducing [REDACTED] sentence, so we can give him the love he was denied as a child.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT



IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

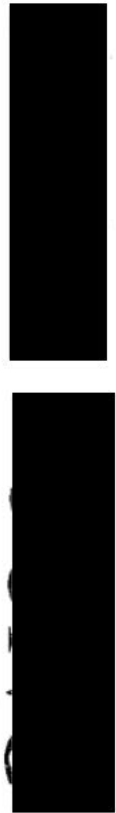
CONSTITUTION CERTIFICATE

FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION
OF THE CONSTITUTION EXAM
ON THE 7th DAY OF MARCH 2007


Tara Maschhoff, Educator

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT


THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT



IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

OUTSTANDING EFFORT AWARD

WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL
AS OF THE 15th DAY OF MARCH 2007


Tara Maschhoff, Educator

NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS THAN YOUR BEST!!!

Koinonia House™ National Ministries

Certificate of Recognition

presented to

_____ for participation in _____

**Freedom—God's Way: From Prison to the Promised Land
through Revived Hearts and Reformed Minds**

Menard Correctional Center, Menard, Illinois, November 1 - November 3, 2013

*Thank you for your participation in studying Biblical truth, experiencing true
repentance and participating in communion, all for God's glory.*


Tommy Mill


Tom & Wendy Horton

Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. *Joshua 1:9*

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

Anti-Violence Awareness Certificate

FOR COMPETENCY IN THE SKILLS OF
ANTI-VIOLENCE AWARENESS

ON THE 11th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2013

K. Allsup

KRISTIA ALLSUP
CONSULTING NON-PROFIT

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT



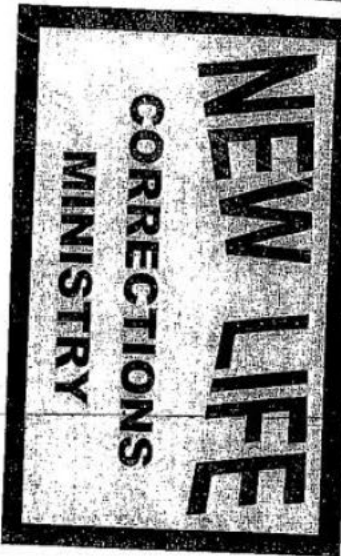
IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

ART WORKSHOP CERTIFICATE

FOR COMPETENCY IN THE SKILLS OF
ART AND DRAWING

ON THE 17 DAY OF June, 2015


TIM SAPP/LTS



This Certificate is presented to

██████████
██████████ JR.

upon his satisfactory completion of the

TRANSFORMING INCARCERATED DADS
2-DAY SEMINAR
in the
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Tom Beatty
Director - New Life Corrections Ministry

Alan Rankin
Instructor

Date 06-12-2016

New Life Corrections Ministry, a division of Wayside Cross Ministries, 215 East New York Street, Aurora IL 60505



CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT



IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

ART WORKSHOP CERTIFICATE

FOR COMPETENCY IN THE SKILLS OF
ART AND PAINTING

ON THE 25 DAY OF August, 2017


TIM SAPP/LTS




ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD High School Equivalency Certificate

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

[REDACTED] JR.

has successfully completed the Illinois High School Equivalency requirements and other State requirements, promulgated by the Illinois Community College Board, as authorized by the statutes of the State of Illinois.

In recognition of such achievement and as evidence of such entitlement,
I herewith set my hand within the
County of COOK this 24th day of August 2021.


Jennifer K Foster
State HSE Administrator


Dr. Brian Dutham
Executive Director



ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD High School Equivalency Certificate

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT



JR.

has successfully completed the Illinois High School Equivalency requirements and other State requirements, promulgated by the Illinois Community College Board, as authorized by the statutes of the State of Illinois.

In recognition of such achievement and as evidence of such entitlement,
I herewith set my hand within the
County of COOK this 24th day of August 2021.

Jennifer K Foster
Jennifer K Foster
State HSE Administrator

Brian Durham
Dr. Brian Durham
Executive Director