

Monday, May 24, 2010

Barbara S. Sampson, Chair
Office of the Parole & Commutation Board
Grandview Plaza Building
PO Box 30003
206 E Michigan Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48909

RE: Joshua Puckett
MDOC # 250645

Dear Ms. Sampson:

I am writing today to ask for the commutation of Mr. Joshua Puckett. As a Life Coach and Career Coach I daily work with clients that are interested in making some changes in their lives to find fulfillment and happiness. Many of my clients find themselves at a stage of transition based on decisions they have made in the past. These range from choices made regarding education, career, relationships, finances and others. It is my privilege to help individuals to embark on a new path, first by changing the way they think about themselves, then by helping them to realize the unlimited possibilities that exist for them. I have worked in conjunction with the Michigan Works Offices in Detroit for the past few years, as well as with individual clients. I have assisted people with less than a high school education receive training that allowed them to obtain technical positions so that they could support a family. I have worked with returning citizens from release date through full-time employment by assisting with resume writing, interview skills, online job applications and raising self-esteem. I have coached retirees into feeling productive again through volunteer and other opportunities.

Why do I tell you all this with regards to Mr. Puckett?

Much like my clients, I feel that Mr. Puckett is at a point of transition in his life. His decisions of the past have brought him to where he is. He is now ready to make significant changes and embark on a productive, fulfilled life that will make a difference not only for him but for countless others. He has a lot in common with many of my clients. One thing sets him apart. Until he is released from prison, those endless opportunities for change are blocked from him.

I have not met Joshua, but his story has touched me deeply. When I think about myself, my own children, and the hundreds of clients I have served, and try to imagine what our lives would be like now if for the rest of our life we were living according to the choices we made in our teens its scary and sad. However, we grow and learn and change and make wiser choices. I believe that Joshua is ready to do all that.

This young man was tormented by the cold-blooded murder of his mother and her partner, a hate crime which left him an orphan. He was alone and angry, hurting and confused. He was a teenager; a child. Joshua became involved with others that adopted him as family; a gang. He wanted to belong. Joshua knew that some of their activities were criminal. He admits to making poor choices. He is not a murderer. He is not a criminal. He simply made poor choices. His worst choice may have come when he chose loyalty to his "family" over the plea bargain offered which could have set him free or greatly reduced his sentence. Once again he was frightened. Even after legal persuasion, he feared going to prison as a "snitch" and decided to remain loyal to his "family."

He is now serving life in prison for the decisions he made as a boy. Mr. Puckett is in year 14 of a life sentence. Again, I state: He is not a murderer. He is not a criminal. He simply made poor choices. He has changed. During his imprisonment he has worked to better himself academically, personally, spiritually, and is ready to be a productive citizen.

Please consider this young man's future as well as the past he has already endured. Based upon what I have learned about his character, his case and his future plans and outlook, I ask that you please take my letter into consideration with the parole board.

Regarding Joshua Puckett's application for release, I support it wholeheartedly and hope that you will too. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Cindy Perri
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