OPERATION NEW HOPE

I first learned about Operation New Hope during a Meninak meeting. Life Coach Coordinator Bill Carroll spoke so passionately about the program and the nationwide recognition it has received. I was curious, but not convinced. I signed up to volunteer in hopes of learning more about the project, but I must admit that I was a little hesitant to work on a project that helped criminals find jobs. There are so many non-criminals who can't find jobs these days.

During the first orientation, I realized that my thoughts were completely foolish and stereotypical. I learned more about the rigid program and its continued success. More importantly, I really gained an understanding that any of us could one day find ourselves in the same position as our mentees. These were not hardened criminals who had ruined their lives. Instead, these were people who had gone down the wrong path and needed guidance to get back on the right path. They *wanted* to get back on the right path. We were the key to ensuring that at this fork in the road, they stay on the right path and don't become repeat offenders.

I also learned that many of the folks in this program had a history of drug or alcohol abuse problems. It was the manner in which the program addresses these issues and helps them recover from their addictions that really sold me on becoming a Life Coach.

When I first met my mentee, Samantha, I was so impressed with her. Despite everything she had been through, she radiated with confidence and optimism. It is a true testament to the program and the Operation New Hope team's efforts to prepare the mentees for the workforce. Samantha and I have become Life Coaches for each other, whether she realizes it or not. Her motivation and determination is an inspiration to me. She is a living example of someone who will do everything to beat the odds against her. I'm sure many Life Coaches come into the program as I did - thinking that his or her mentee is from a completely different walk of life. However, I found out that's simply not true. It turns out that Samantha and I have several mutual friends and we've probably been in the same place at the same time before and never realized it. Everyone deserves a second chance in life and Operation New Hope is a program that gives people a winning second chance. It is by far the most fulfilling and successful mentorship program I've had an honor of being part of and becoming a Life Coach is truly a life-changing experience.

Hetal Gandhi
Ready4Work Life Coach

Rebuilding Lives. Restoring Communities. Renewing Hope.