



IMPACT REPORT

FY 2023-2024



734 W Main St Suite 106,
Louisville, KY 40202



kiara@pushingforwardinc.org



In Review: 2023 and 2024

The last two years have been pivotal for Pushing Forward Inc., both from a growth and development standpoint, as well as from an **impact** standpoint.

Thanks to the contributes through the Craig Neilsen Foundation, Kentucky Department for Public Health Office of Health Equity and Louisville Metro Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, we were able to create processes and procedures, connect patients with resources, push the limits of what we can do as an organization, and create a lasting, tangible **impact** on the lives of those who have sought our help. This report will showcase some of the highlights, but one report isn't enough to accurately convey the hours of blood, sweat, and tears that went into making this organization what it is today. It is only through the dedicated efforts of our team, partners, and community that we were able to do all that we have. While this report serves as a testament to the work done in the last few years, it should also serve as a preview for all the meaningful work we hope to achieve in the years ahead.



Our Mission

Pushing Forward's mission is to respond to the needs of individuals who have experienced traumatic spinal cord injuries (SCI). Through acts of service and resource utilization, we allow individuals to be independent, empowered, engaged, and connected to their community.

VISION

We envision a society in which we can eliminate all barriers for individuals who live with paralysis due to traumatic spinal cord injuries. Pushing Forward supports individuals with SCI while collaborating with and providing complimentary services alongside local nonprofit organizations and businesses interested in improving the quality of life for those **impacted** by SCI.



Our Client Population or We Serve

We specifically work with individuals who have suffered from traumatic spinal cord injuries in Louisville, KY, as well as the surrounding areas. These injuries can be caused from a number of circumstances, including motor vehicle accidents, gun violence, workplace accidents, and more. Such an injury can have a lasting, permanent effect on an individual, especially if they find themselves permanently wheelchair-bound. This drastic change can be challenging for many, especially those who don't have the means or accessibility to resources to help them adapt to their new life. That's where our team steps in, to help patients regain some independence and provide resources to make the transition to a life post-accident more manageable.





Imagine a normal day; your alarm goes off. Maybe you have enough time to sneak in a workout before getting the kids ready for school. You need to cook their breakfast, pack their lunches and backpacks, and get them out the door before getting ready for your workday. After driving to work, you spend at least 8 hours running around, completing your tasks before driving home and running errands, getting your kids to after-school activities, and trying to find some time to relax.

Now imagine that same day with limited or no use of your legs. Furthermore, imagine navigating that same day with a wheelchair being your only mechanism for getting around. Then imagine that same day, with only a wheelchair to get around, in an uncertain living situation that could change in an instant.

Many of our patients lack the funds or resources necessary to accommodate a pivot to life in a wheelchair. Some of our patients don't have a permanent house or apartment, and have challenges meeting their basic needs. It is only by informing the public about the challenges so many in our community face can we initiate meaningful conversations and changes that will have a lasting **impact** on the underserved in our communities. We call on our partners and community members to find and contribute to organizations, like Pushing Forward Inc., who can connect patients with the resources they need to survive, and adapt to their new lives.

By the Numbers

We live in a data-driven world. Here are some of the numbers from our work that have had the greatest **impact** on our patients:

22



Number of clients we were able to help assist with housing, utilities, court fees, application fees, & groceries.

16



Number of ramps constructed in 2023 & 2024.

25



Number of volunteers who have contributed to our mission.

65



Number of times wheelchair van transportation services were provided from September 2023 - December 2024.

45



Number of services we filled to help our patients meet their immediate needs in 2023 & 2024.

7



Number of inclusion events we've hosted to create a community for individuals with SCI & their families.

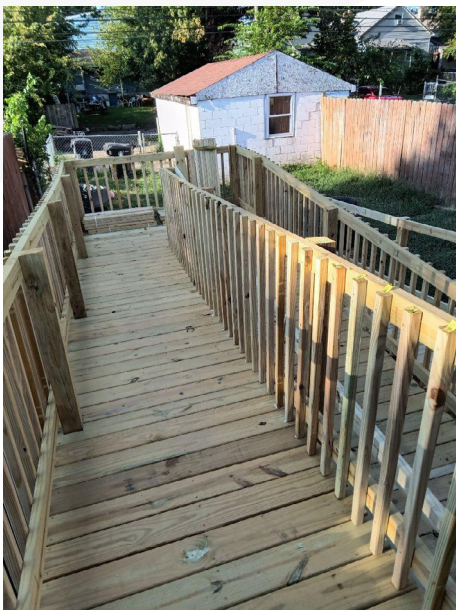


A Voice for Others:

Advocacy for Health Equity, Housing and Transportation

Many of our efforts completed to this point have been done through collaboration with the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation and Health Equity Grant, a resource which has allowed us to fund our efforts in Louisville, KY. Thanks to this collaboration, we were able to complete a number of initiatives that address social determinates of health and promote health equity for individuals living with a traumatic spinal cord injury and their families.

- **Focus Groups** – In collaboration with the School of Public Health and Information Sciences at the University of Louisville, we were able to conduct a focus group which provided valuable insights into some of the underlying issues our patients experience, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. This valuable information and the subsequent insights have given us a better view of the things we're doing well, as well as potential areas of improvement.



- **Wheelchair Ramp Installation** – Thanks to funding through the Health Equity Grant, we were able to construct 12 wheelchair ramps for our patients and their families. One of the most immediate issues someone new to life in a wheelchair will experience is the need for mobility and accessibility in and out of their home. Many houses, apartments, and other living spaces aren't always designed with accessibility top-of-mind. These ramps allow our patients to access the inside and outside of their homes more easily, facilitating the transition to life in a wheelchair. This **impact** will be felt for the rest of our patients' lives.

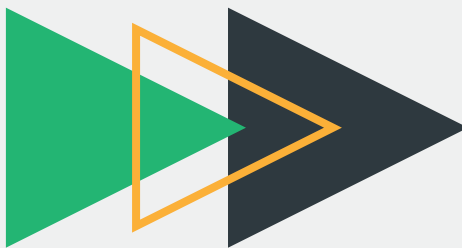
HEALTH EQUITY

(CONTINUED)



► **Wheelchair Repair Clinic with SOS International**

- In 2024 we were able to participate in a Wheelchair Repair Clinic through collaboration with SOS International, a non-profit organization striving to improve global health and environmental efforts by connecting people with little income with surplus medical supplies and resources. By educating our patients on wheelchair repair and maintenance, we help them strengthen their sense of independence and resiliency, allowing them to better cope with the challenges associated with adapting to life in a wheelchair.



Pushing Back Barriers to Housing:

Creating Fair Housing Opportunities for All!

April is Fair Housing Month, to celebrate, the [Metro Housing Coalition](#) and Pushing Forward hosted an insightful in-person event, highlighting the progress in expanding housing opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The event featured two engaging panel discussions:

Panel 1: Individuals with varying abilities shared their personal experiences navigating the housing market, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of finding accessible and inclusive homes.

Panel 2: Leaders from community organizations discussed their efforts and initiatives to increase access to affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities.

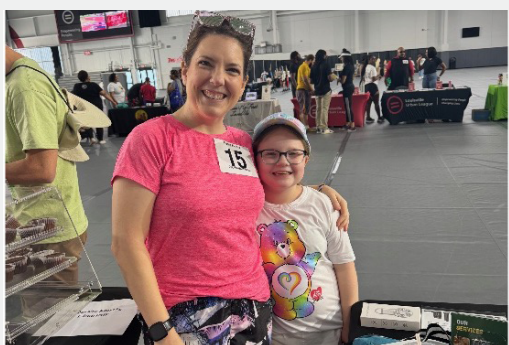
Fair Housing Month – This past year we were able to participate in Fair Housing Month, an effort designed to advocate for those without a house. Life after a traumatic SCI can be challenging enough, especially if a patient doesn't have a safe or reliable place to call home. Through our education and outreach efforts, we were able to connect various non-profit organizations to individuals living with disabilities with a more reliable housing situation which will facilitate their continued recovery.

- ▶ With over 40 participants they learned about local nonprofits that assist with home repairs and advocating for housing rights at the local and state level.
- ▶ In turn the participants were able to share their experience to event goes sparking conversations on ways business communities can improve accessibility creating more inclusive housing solutions.



SOCIAL EVENTS

A major part of our work is working with community partners, as well as helping our patients to find a group where they feel like they belong. Through social events such as rock climbing, cookie decorating, attending soccer games, and more, we were able to connect our patients to groups and individuals who have had similar life experiences. In creating these bonds, we help our patients to feel less isolated, a critical part in the journey to recovery and preparing for a life beyond their accident.



RACE FOR JUSTICE

Being selected to be a recipient nonprofit during the second annual Race for Justice organized by [Future Ancestors present The Race for Justice](#), a student-led MOVEMENT to become better ancestors. Inspired by Breonna Taylor and the movement that followed her tragic loss, this event aims to unite Louisville to move forward. Run, walk or roll the 26 laps, each dedicated to one year of Breonna's life.

This student led organization was able to raise **\$4250** to support the needs of individuals living with a spinal cord injury as a result of gun violence.



KARAOKE DURING SPINAL CORD AWARENESS MONTH

Norae Bar Karaoke Venue

“A major challenge for wheelchair users in accessing public spaces is the uncertainty about whether those places are wheelchair accessible. Pushing Forward aims to highlight and promote inclusive venues in Louisville, Kentucky, giving wheelchair users confidence to visit these locations and return with their families and friends.”

– Kiara James

PUSHING FORWARD CHRISTMAS

Pushing Forward had the honor of supporting 12 children whose parents have experienced a traumatic spinal cord injury. Navigating the challenges of a new injury is already an overwhelming journey, but doing so while ensuring your children are cared for and can experience the joy of the holiday season is even more difficult.

Through the generosity of our community and supporters, we were able to step in and help bring a little extra joy to these families during a challenging time. Together, we ensured these children had the Christmas they deserved, reminding them and their parents that they are not alone in this journey.

As we reflect on this year’s efforts, we are deeply grateful for Humana, Amramp, and PinWheel group who made this possible. Your kindness and support continue to make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.



COVID 19:

Felt Then and Now



In the spring of 2020, the world was brought to a halt by COVID-19. The spread of Coronavirus forced billions of people around the world to lockdown, seeking refuge in their homes and apartments. Connection to the outside world was limited, and many experienced feelings of loneliness and isolation, the effects of which are still felt today. In an instant, the world changed. The ways we work, study, learn, connect, and live are very different now than they were before 2020. The ways in which we interact with each other and forge connections have been altered, and the ways in which people seek out resources or opportunities have changed.

Because COVID-19 is still a relatively new virus, there is still much we don't know about how the virus operates, and how it can affect different populations. In our case, many individuals living with a spinal cord injury have an underlying health condition, and many of our clients wonder how their injury and their health can be affected by COVID-19. A major question we often get is whether individuals with a spinal cord injury should get the COVID-19 vaccine.



To assist with educational efforts, we created a video called, “What people with SCI should know about COVID-19.” This video is designed to educate individuals living with an SCI about the virus, how it can **impact** them specifically, and what they can do to prevent or even treat the virus if they were to come into contact with it.

We captured this quote from the Director of the Spinal Cord Medicine Program, Dr. Camilo Castillo:



Having a spinal cord injury (SCI) can potentially increase the risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. COVID-19 primarily affects the respiratory system, and individuals with SCI may have compromised respiratory function due to paralysis or weakness of respiratory muscles. This can make it harder for them to clear respiratory secretions and may lead to respiratory complications if they contract COVID-19. However, the severity of the risk can vary widely depending on the level and completeness of the spinal cord injury. Individuals with higher-level injuries, such as those affecting the cervical spine, may be at a greater risk due to the involvement of respiratory muscles. It's essential for individuals with SCI to take precautions to reduce their risk of COVID-19, such as getting vaccinated, wearing masks, practicing good hand hygiene, and maintaining physical distance.

Thank you, Dr. Castillo, for your insight and feedback!

MS. WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY 2024



"I take pride in being a wonderful and active mother, Nana, mentor, friend, motivator, and more"

Briana 'Breezy' Williams **Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky 2024**

Born and raised in Paducah, Kentucky, Briana "Breezy" Williams has called Louisville home since 2006. On July 5, 2020, her life changed when she sustained a C6-C7 incomplete spinal cord injury in a motor vehicle accident. Yet, even this life-altering diagnosis couldn't slow her down.

Since her injury, Breezy has continued her passion for

coaching, leading a youth league cheerleading team—where she has served as coach for nine years, including three years post-injury. In 2022, she achieved a major milestone by earning her bachelor's degree in accounting from Purdue Global.

Breezy is also a trailblazer and advocate in the disability community. She is the proud founder of Breezy's Closet Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing essential items for daily living to individuals with disabilities—items that are often not covered by insurance. In addition, she launched The Breezy Way podcast, a platform where she helps others navigate life with a spinal cord injury by discussing important topics and hosting experts from the SCI community.

Her determination, resilience, and dedication to making a difference exemplify the spirit of Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky 2024.

COMMUNITY HERO AWARD

Executive Director, **Kiara James** was awarded with the inaugural Community Hero Award by the Whitney Strong Organization at its 7th annual A Night for Life Gala. The award recognizes individuals who are dedicated to supporting survivors of gun violence and fostering community improvement.

The Whitney Strong Organization, a nonprofit committed to ending gun violence, focuses on education and policy advocacy to create safer communities. Kiara's **impactful** efforts in supporting survivors and advancing community well-being embody the mission of the organization and the spirit of the new award.



Adjusting to a New Life: SCI Survivor Stories

Sometimes, the best way to come to understand someone's life is to hear directly from them. Over the last two years, UofL Health has celebrated national Trauma Survivor Day in May at their Live Beyond event. This event is designed to highlight trauma survivors, their experiences, and their recovery. Several of the trauma survivors from the 2024 event were SCI victims.

Below are the stories of Terrence Towns Jr. and Blaine Williams, both of Louisville, KY. Terrence and Blaine both experienced life-altering spinal cord injuries, and both had to adjust to life in a wheelchair. While both are still on the road to recovery, it is important that we read and reflect on their stories. Every day around the country, people have to adapt to a new situation, and evaluate a whole new way of getting around their day-to-day life. Pushing Forward prides itself on working with patients who have stories just like Terrence and Blaine, and we will continue to serve clients like them for as long as we are able.

Take some time to read and reflect on their stories, and consider what lifestyle changes you would need to make if you suddenly found yourself bound to a wheelchair. Remember though, that their stories are also a celebration of the trials and tribulations they have overcome, and continue to push beyond every single day.





▶ **Terrence Towns Jr.** (26) of Louisville, KY enjoys time with his friends. He loved playing basketball, but spending time with friends and family is how he enjoys spending his time. He previously had two jobs, the first working with the Kroger Distribution Center, and the second as a Coca-Cola Merchandiser. "I would wake up at 4:50 in the morning, clock in by 5:45, and do my first job at the Kroger warehouse. I'd get off between 2:30 to 3:00 p.m., then go work for Coca-Cola until about 7...then come home. I'd be gone sometimes 15 hours a day. They were long days, but I was working towards some stuff." He only had Tuesdays and Wednesdays off, with an occasional Sunday off. "My schedule was weird, you wouldn't think that I ever slept. If there was an event or somewhere I needed to be, I was there." When he isn't working, Terrence enjoys spending time with his girl and his 11-year-old son.

In the early morning hours of December 31st, 2023, between 3 and 4:00 a.m., at the intersection of 7th and Central, Terrence was involved in a motor vehicle accident that would forever affect the course of his life. "I was celebrating my girl's birthday, me, her, and our son. We went to Malone's. We came back, and I think New Year's Eve (NYE) was on a weekend...we got back home. That night, I didn't drink, do drugs, or anything. I was sober. An extended family member invited me out to a music performance he was doing at a gentlemen's club that night. If you know me, I'm an introvert. I don't go out, it's not my thing. I stick to myself, I keep my select friends, I do the same things; I'm a pretty simple guy. He had been asking me, and I usually had an excuse not to go...but this time I said yes. I asked him to call when he was heading that way, but I didn't think he'd want me to call. As soon as I lay down to go to sleep, he calls and invites me out. After talking it over with my girl for a few minutes, despite me wanting to stay in, I decided to go see [the family friend] perform."

As soon as Terrence arrived at the club, he went to a quiet corner, away from the bar and where people were gathered. He didn't have any cash on him at the time, but one of the entertainers was trying to get his attention. As one does, Terrence went to the bar to get some cash. "I went to get some 1s, and I bought half a shot...I thought it was a full shot, but it was only half. They charged me \$15 for that. I went back to my table...I didn't even drink the full shot, I had half of a half shot. She was dancing, and I was minding my business, when I decided to get up and walk away. I didn't get far from the table - maybe four or five steps away. I was taking in the scene, and looking at the club as a whole. I go back to my chair, sit back down, and this same girl comes back over to me from behind where I was. At that point I had the rest of my shot. The girl didn't stay, which was weird, because I still had some money at the table; for a dancer, the goal is obviously to collect as much as you can. I set my money back down, stood up, and started tripping."

"My vision felt like I was fighting to not be on autopilot; sometimes I was there, other times I wasn't. I was staring into space, and started bumping into chairs and tables. There was a spiral staircase; I didn't go up it, I just walked up to it and stared. That's when I knew something was wrong. I didn't want to seem vulnerable, scared, or freak anyone out, so I tried to play it off. I was so far gone, I didn't even know how bad it was. I saw some people leaving, and I was so far gone that I thought it was the people I came in with who were leaving. The people I came with were still on the stage. I walk out of the club with a group of people, and remember walking to my car...and then it goes black. The car was an '07 Camry; it was my mom's car, who passed away in 2020 from breast cancer. I had to manually unlock the car...and I don't remember getting in the car. The next thing I knew, we wrecked." Terrence was in the car with four other passengers, none of whom he remembered or came with.

"Right before the wreck, I was still fighting. The car is moving, and I see flashes of lights through the windshield...I was basically asleep, like a drugged type of sleep, like sedated. At some point, I lunged toward the driver, and swerved the wheel. We went into oncoming traffic and had a head-on collision. Only my side of the car was wrecked, and I didn't have a seatbelt on. I flew headfirst into the windshield from the passenger side. The right side of my whole body and my face hit. I broke the right side of my neck, my spine got compressed, I broke my left scapula, and I fractured 18 ribs (out of 24). After we wrecked...I don't remember anyone calling 911, but I do remember people trying to pull me out of the car. Apparently the people who pulled me out were the ones who were in the car with me. I have no idea who they were or who was driving. It was my mom's old car too, it was one of the last things I had from her...that was devastating. I never let anyone drive my mom's car. I hardly let anyone besides my family in that car. But they were four deep, three in the back, and a driver, and I was the passenger."

"I live on the upper side of Dixie, so they were taking me toward 7th and Central...I think heading toward downtown, or the West End maybe...but they were taking me somewhere I don't know. I haven't lived that way in 10 years, I have absolutely nothing or no reason that I would be going toward that part of town. After we wrecked, they couldn't pull me out; I was dead weight. Someone said, 'I'm sorry Terrence, I'm so sorry.' That's when I realized it was somebody I know who did it. I felt them pulling me, then drop me when they said sorry."

"If I was drinking and driving, I'd accept this. Like, this is what I get, I did this to myself. But somebody else took something from me, that knows me. I'd appreciate it if they'd tell me where we were going, somewhere I knew or somewhere safe because I was out of it...but it feels like foul play. My blood alcohol level was 1.8 when I got to the hospital. Somebody definitely spiked my drink. I remember that half-shot, I didn't drink anything besides that. I grabbed my phone, my wallet, the money I came with, my bank cards...when we wrecked, nothing was missing...I don't trust people at all now."

"One of the first things I remember was seeing my grandmother, and I broke down crying. 'I told her that she wasn't supposed to know, I didn't want you to see me like this.' She told me, 'I'm your grannie, I'm supposed to know what's going on.' I didn't know what I looked like, but when that many people come to see you, that's when you know it's bad. Some people broke down and cried when they saw me, some people left because they couldn't handle it...I couldn't get up for 72 hours, and in a neck brace...it was bad. It was so bad. The brace was so uncomfortable, like pressed into my chest. All the time I couldn't drink water. They had a brace around my stomach to keep my ribs tight. My body hurt, but I couldn't feel my body. To this day, my mental state still isn't what it was. I have memory problems, I don't know if I've done something before until I do it, then sometimes I remember doing it. I used to think about my mom every day, a lot of the day. Sometimes now she feels like a stranger...I know I'm not the same. I did the speech learning at Frazier, where they test you for brain damage. I only got one thing wrong but...I know me, and something still isn't right. I've always been a little smarter than average." Terrence left UofL for Frazier on January 11th, 2024, and he left Frazier Rehabilitation Institute February 6th, 2024.

"In the hospital I was on morphine, oxycodone...a lot of medication. I was in so much pain that they gave me a pain button, where if it got too bad you could hit a button and medicine would be distributed. When I went to Frazier, I stopped taking oxycodone. I was mostly taking it for my face, because half my face was smashed. But I weaned off of it. I still have pain, but you learn to bear with the pain. If you take me off my nerve medication for muscle spasms, we might have a problem then, but besides that it wasn't hard for me to get off the medication. My scapula is broken, but I still go to the gym and do shoulder exercises. My ribs were broken, but I still sleep on them...you learn to go with the flow."

Terrence has made remarkable progress in the months since. He has limited use of and mobility of his limbs, and is continuing to make progress bit by bit. "My doctor told me there should be no reason I shouldn't walk again. There's no reason my whole body would cut back on except for my leg, just give it time and take things slow. And it is slow. At first, it felt like a miracle. Now, it feels like a job I need to get back to as soon as possible. I'm motivated to do the work and get after it."

"I want people to know, if anyone is on a liquid diet, please bring them the best milkshakes that you can. I think I did vanilla and fruit smoothies for about a month and a half when my jaw was wired shut...that might've been the worst part about the whole situation."

Terrence has a message for people who find themselves in a situation. "It's never over. It probably feels like that, but it's not. Some people get told they'll never walk or do anything for themselves again. I see people like this every day...I'm in rehab with someone who is a quadriplegic in a nursing home, and now he is in Frazier Rehab in physical therapy, and he's able to move his arms. I can stand up within three months of being a quadriplegic. It's never over. All you have to do is keep fighting. You'll be told things like it takes time, we can't give you the answers, everyone is different...don't listen to that. Listen, but know it's not the end. No one can ever end your story but you. Don't give up."

Terrence Towns.

Focused, Committed.

Trauma Survivor.





"After I got shot I fell back into the seat, and could barely talk. My friend was out of the car at the time, and the woman was ducking down, so I couldn't even tell him I was shot until they looked back at me. He jumped in the back seat, panicking more than I was. I told him to apply pressure to my neck, and she sped me to the hospital. I remember catching every single light on the way. It was crazy, and we made it there. I don't remember much else until I woke up in the hospital."

Once he was at UofL, the first few days were challenging. "I remember not being able to move, and not being able to breathe, because I'd been shot in my neck. I had a trach and all this other stuff hooked up to me. At first I couldn't move my arms at all, I was just paralyzed it seemed like. It was crazy."

In total, he had been shot twice, both in the neck. Blaine had fractured both his C6 and C5 from the gunshots. Blaine was taken into surgery, where among other treatments he had some pins installed.

"All I could think was, 'How did this happen, that my luck is so terrible?' I don't know how I'm going to live like this, if I'll be able to move, if I'll be able to breathe without a machine, if I'll be able to talk..." Things started to turn once Blaine saw how much support he had. "People really stood by me, no matter what. It was some dark, dark days for me for a long while in the hospital. I was in there for a while, because I couldn't get off the ventilator. I went from UofL to Kindred Hospital to get off the ventilator, then from Kindred to Frazier Rehabilitation Institute. I was in the hospital for three or four months. Through that time, the more that I saw how my people were there for me, it gave me an extra boost that allowed me to dig deep and see that I have something worth living for. Now I feel so different, like I have to take advantage of this, to use this to help at least one person through this. I have to keep on keeping on, just like my momma says."

Getting the trach out in August of 2023 was a turning point for Blaine. "I was elated, I was very happy to get it out. That was a serious milestone. Because it seemed like I was just suffering, I kept hearing 'you're doing good, you're making progress,' but then something would happen like I have fluid in my lungs; then I'd have to start the procedure all the way over, and it'd kill my progress. It was a lot. So for me to finally complete a treatment plan that they had me on at Kindred, and get through all the steps they had made for me. I got through it. It felt so good to eat, and to talk...I couldn't stop talking."

▶ **Blaine Williams** (33) of Louisville, KY has a positive outlook on life, despite being met with intense challenges over the last decade of his life. He was incarcerated in 2010, and was only released in May of 2023. Since getting out, he enjoys video games (Mortal Kombat and Sonic 2, among them) and being with his family. He also enjoys the Marvel Movies, and likes Wolverine of all the Marvel superheroes. He has ambitions to travel, but mostly just wants to spend as much time with his family as he can, especially after all that he has been through.

In the early morning hours of June 13th, 2023 around 2:00 a.m., just outside of No Haterz motorcycle club in Louisville, Blaine found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time, just weeks after he had been released. "I couldn't really tell you where it was, it's in the West End. It had been so long since I was out...I was only out for three weeks before I was shot, so I didn't even get to learn the city again."

"Most of that day I was with my girlfriend. I was coming from my mom's house, and I called a friend to get a ride back to my girlfriend's; I didn't have a car or transportation at the time. We stopped at the No Haterz for some reason, I don't really recall or reason why we were there. It was me, him, and his girlfriend. I was in the backseat, and had just gotten a new iPhone 14. I'm messing with the phone in the backseat and remember looking up, seeing a guy across the street, and a car trying to run the guy over. The guy pulled out a gun and started shooting at the car, and several others started shooting too. Somehow I ended up getting shot. Just the wrong place at the wrong time. I can't remember hearing the shot because it seemed like it was after the barrage of shots. I felt like I was safe, so I looked up, and then felt my whole body go into a trance because I had been shot in the neck, I was completely immobilized."

Blaine was taken to Frazier in early August, and the team had Blaine start with speech, physical, and occupational therapy. "It was a total 180 from where I was just laying in the bed all day. I see why, they were preparing me for actually functioning outside the hospital environment, getting me up at the same time every morning and going to meetings, and being punctual...things like that. My time at Frazier was good, it was informative and I learned a lot there. It was still a dark time, but the dark times came fewer and further in between. It was me talking more and more to people outside the hospital, and seeing that life is moving by for everyone else, but not with me...but it was eventually less of that, and more about how to move forward and keep going." Blaine emphasized how much his family and friends helped him to overcome this part of life.

Eventually, conversations started about Blaine returning home, "I was definitely nervous. But after being cooped up for months, I couldn't wait to get out, see the sights and smell the smells. I didn't even get to see anything in just three weeks when I got out so...I was excited to see what life was like, as much as I was nervous for what life is like." Blaine was discharged on September 7th, 2023, and is in the process of making plans with his family to go on a safari in either Tanzania or Botswana in the coming months.

Blaine wants to shout out his nurses, from the UofL ICU Trauma Center. "There were two nurses that helped me out in a major way, they were Kirsten and Sandra. I also want to shout out my support team, my mother Kimberly Williams, and my fiance Yuri Bell. Without them, I wouldn't even be sitting here talking. I honestly feel like I wouldn't be. They have been the most inspiring, uplifting people I could ask for in my life. I truly love them with all my heart. I would also want to tell anyone in my situation, don't let the darkness get you. Really find something, no matter what it is, to help you move forward, even if it's just an inch at a time. "

Blaine Williams.



Blaine Williams.

A Gentle Soul.

Trauma Survivor.

Special thanks to:

A special shout-out and message of gratitude to our partners and our sponsors, without whom none of this would be possible. It is through the generosity of these individuals and organizations that our efforts are able to have the **impact** that they do. We encourage you to reach out to these individuals and organizations if you are interested in working with them.

Thank you so much for your contributions and continued support. Together, we can continue to make a tangible difference in the lives of those most in need throughout our community!

- ▶ Paul Gividen
- ▶ Craig H. Neilsen Foundation
- ▶ Louisville Metro Government Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods
- ▶ UofL School of Public Health (Dr. Susan Buchino & Dr. Gaberiel Jones)
- ▶ Supplies Overseas International S.O.S
- ▶ Chanel Nicole
- ▶ Uneek Development & Design LLC
- ▶ Prestige Property Preservation
- ▶ Amramp
- ▶ Conner Mackowiak
- ▶ James Howell
- ▶ Creative Perspective
- ▶ Lauren Yates
- ▶ Sherri Jenkins
- ▶ MacKenzie Binkley
- ▶ Tiara Armstrong with Healing Essence Wellness
- ▶ Diversity Medical Transportation
- ▶ UofL Health Hospital
- ▶ UofL Frazier Rehabilitation
- ▶ Gathering Strength
- ▶ Kentucky Department of Public Health Office of Health Equity
- ▶ CookieLou
- ▶ YMCA Berrytown
- ▶ Metro Housing Coalition
- ▶ Old 502 Winery
- ▶ The Kentucky Colonels
- ▶ Inspired Nonprofit Consulting
- ▶ Katie Crosby



734 W Main St Suite 106,
Louisville, KY 40202



kiara@pushingforwardinc.org