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UNITE INDY IS NOW 2ND CHANCE INDIANA

After six years of working in Central Indiana, UNITE INDY has outgrown its name. The effort to unite business, government, and individuals of good will to help reduce poverty has been extremely successful. But, founders Jim and Nancy Cotterill quickly realized that a primary producer of generational poverty is the constant flow of unemployable individuals due to a criminal history that are concentrated in our poorest neighborhoods. Since then, the organization has directed all efforts to provide jobs that pay a living wage to this under-utilized workforce, reducing poverty, hopelessness, crime and recidivism. By providing a second chance at good jobs, lives are being changed, and the children of working reentrants are developing a map of employment, as families are lifted out of poverty.

2nd Chance Indiana is therefore a more accurate description of our work, which now reaches across seven Indiana counties with programs and services that support successful reentrants and healthy families. **2nd Chance Indiana** has secured 45 employer partners, which regularly post jobs that pay a living wage on the organization's 2ndChanceIN.com site. It is the only second-chance jobs website in Indiana and is full of opportunities never before available to those with a criminal record. Our employer partners agree to comply with court-mandated reporting requirements and in return they are able to fill job openings and become primary actors in helping good people who have made a mistake to become good employees.

2nd Chance Indiana has also addressed the No. 1 reason that reentrants lose their jobs—the lack of affordable, reliable transportation. The organization works with employer partners to provide, at no charge, van pool transportation to and from work daily. Also key is the job preparation training, offered both inside and outside of correctional facilities, with mentors who help smooth the transition from a prison environment to a workplace culture of teamwork. The organization's one of a kind web portal, 2ndChanceIN.com provides direct access to available jobs and support agencies that work with addiction recovery, housing, mental health issues, and more.

Here are some stats:

- 89% of those re-arrested and incarcerated are unemployed
- A good job found quickly after release drives down recidivism to between 3% and 8%
- Recidivism in Indiana and around the country is approximately 67%
- The children of an incarcerated parent are five times more likely to be incarcerated

2nd Chance Indiana, formerly UNITE INDY, does not work in a silo. True to the founders' intentions, the organization has developed alliances with 45 employer partners, and more than 40 other stake holders that include government agencies such as the City of Indianapolis, Indiana FSSA's Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Indiana Department of Corrections and related county community corrections agencies, and county economic development corporations. Educational institutions such as Butler University's Lacy School of Business and Indiana Wesleyan's Criminal Justice Department have assisted in development of **2nd Chance Indiana**'s programs, while relationships with multiple county drug courts, whose judges offer second-chance employment in place of sentences for low-level, first-time offenders, has changed lives. Other stake holders include mentoring organizations, work release facilities, and parole and probation officials.

The multi-faceted problem of recidivism requires a multifaceted and caring response, and the dedicated **2nd Chance Indiana** staff is constantly encouraged by the results of their work. Go to 2ndChanceIN.com and check out the videos, the blog posts, newsletters, and the reentrant job fairs. Or, volunteer to be a mentor, an inmate correspondent, or a prayer warrior.

The mission of **2nd Chance Indiana** is to *"Reduce recidivism and rebuild lives through the dignity of work."* We believe we are undercutting the growth of poverty and crime with every good-paying job and every successful reentry, as we reduce the \$1billion annual cost of incarceration in Indiana.