

# RETURNING CITIZENS THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

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# EMPLOYMENT AND THE RETURNING CITIZEN

- Returning citizen: an individual who is re-entering their community following incarceration
- 50-58% return to prison after three years
- What factors influence recidivism?

# RISKS FOR RECIDIVISM

## RNR Central 8 Major Risks

- Antisocial personality pattern
- Criminal attitudes
- Criminal associates
- Substance abuse
- Family/marital relationships
- School/work**
- Leisure time
- Criminal history

# WHO IS THE “TYPICAL” GATEWAY STUDENT?



“It is an uphill battle for employment and residence. I am scarred for life because of bad decisions as a youth.”

“I have had the interview 3/4 of the way in the bag until they did the background check.”

“I have experienced many types of discrimination, but felony discrimination is the worst. Almost no one wants to rent to a felon, or hire one. Gateway hired me as a work study and provided personal references that led me to getting an apartment.”

# THE COLLEGE GATEWAY PROGRAM

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**get**  
started



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## The College Gateway Program Works!!

### 🏠 Home

- Gateway starts with the toughest population.
- We instill hope through support.
- We retain and graduate students.
- We prepare students for schools and jobs.
- We reduce recidivism and substance abuse.
- We improve quality of life.

*[\(Click here to see results from our most recent survey.\)](#)*

### A Gateway Perspective

"...a curriculum and support system that encourages you to use your skills and abilities in new ways, so you become a successful contributor to your family and community.

<https://www.rrcc.edu/gateway/program-information>

# COLLEGE GATEWAY OUTCOMES

- **8% to 10% recidivism at Gateway** compared with CO average of 50% to 58%
- Significant reductions in all Central 8 factors
- 66% of graduates are employed



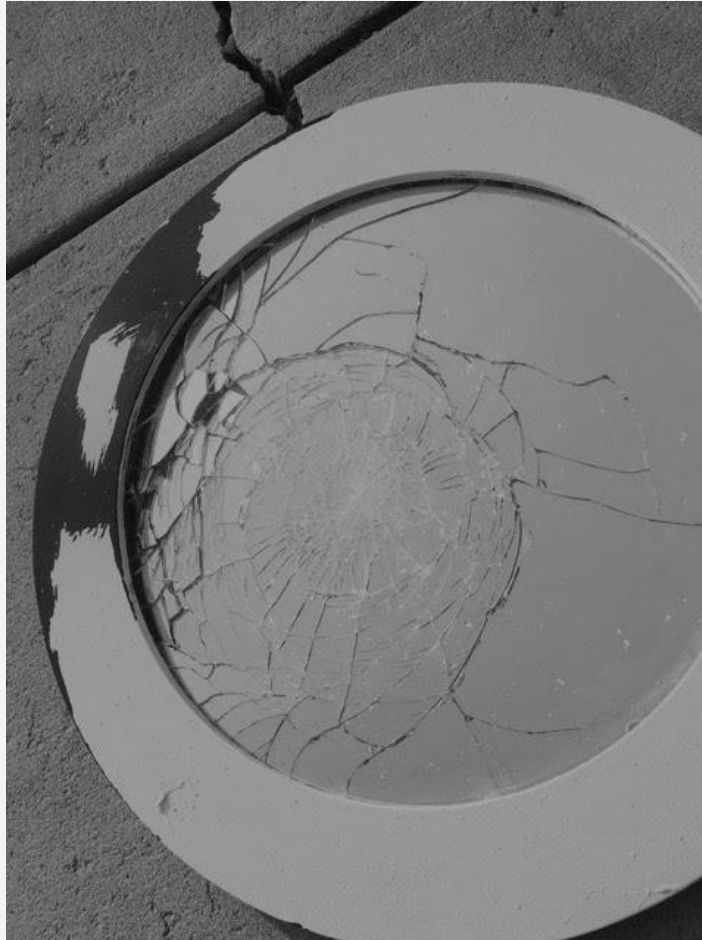
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# WHAT IS PHOTOVOICE?

- Participant photographs, narratives, discussions
- Informed by feminist theory and Paulo Freire's concept of critical consciousness



“I have always felt so broken and unwanted. Who would ever love someone so broken and with so many demons?”  
-- Angela

# PHOTO SUBMISSION



"CHOICE"

You will not know the answer until you walk through the gate.

My journey in Gateway has inspired me to embrace my struggles. To me, taking the high road means walking through the gate instead of strolling around it.





# PHOTO SUBMISSION



– Carlos

I was thinking about how I was locked up and what it was like going through it all. I did 15 years. Back then I was stranded – no one really there. But now, you see that my brother-in-law has his hand in the picture. He has been helping me, giving me a helping hand. That moment on the boat was an epiphany – I used to be lonely and miserable, but look at me now: three kids, married, and I just took a vacation for the first time ever. Now I look back and think how dumb I was getting locked up.

The green light in the photo was a sign that I could do something – I have a reason to live. I can be something better than just the family screw up.

And the bridge connects everything. There's always a way if you want to take it.



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# PHOTO + NARRATIVE



Weighed down like being drenched in rain, yeah it's just water, but  
what about the hail storm pains, dreading the freezing cold days  
Through many storms in life and yet here I still remain.

Like the land, the cloudy sky, and the sun and its rays  
The power I have today is from going through the storm  
Through that storm my light can shine now.

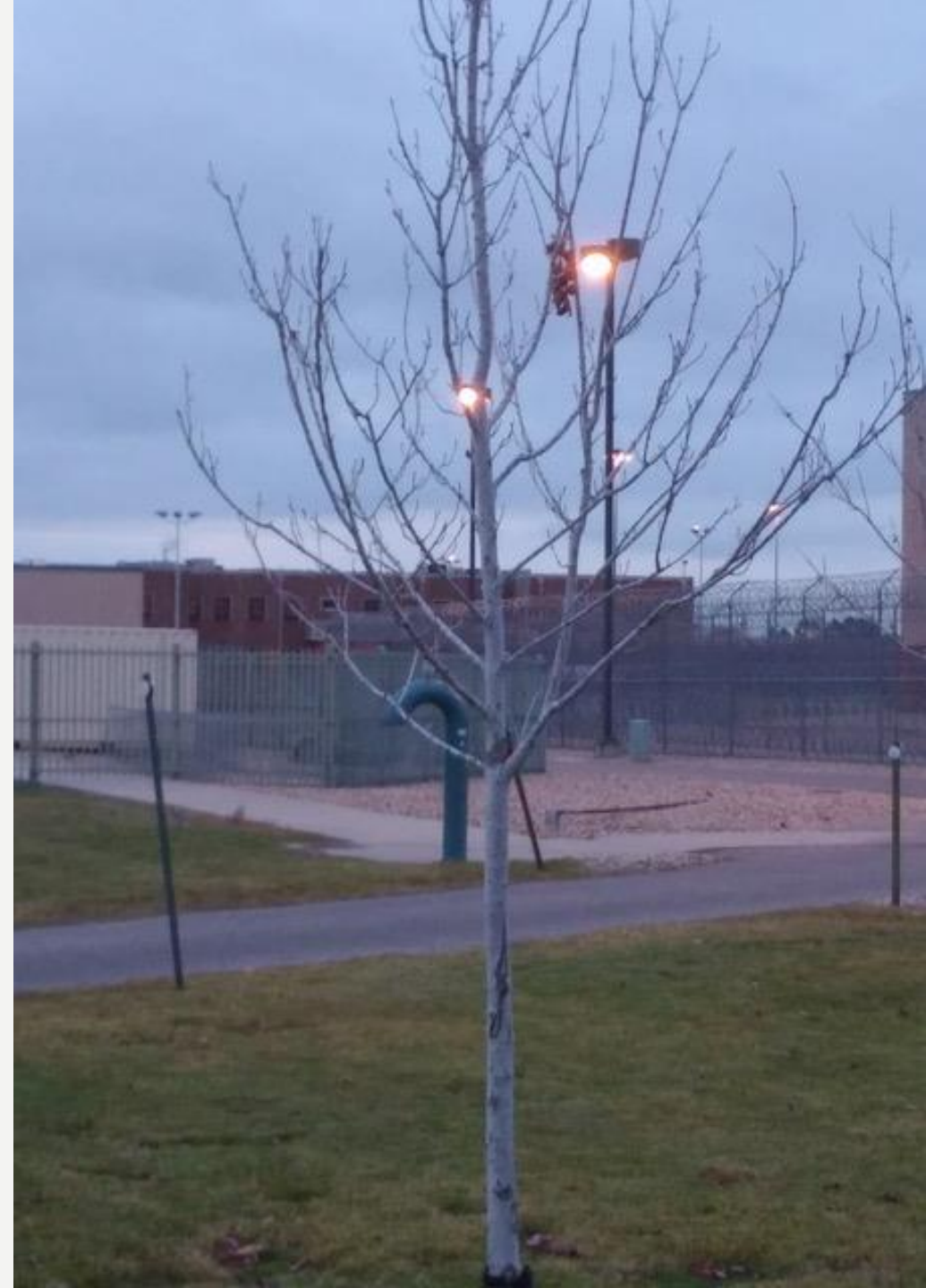
-Jarell

# PHOTO + NARRATIVE

“This photo was taken at the Denver Women’s Correctional Facility (DWCF). As a graduate of the College Gateway program, I have the divine privilege of giving presentations to other inmates at my former prison. When I was an inmate at DWCF, I worked on the labor crew and planted the very tree in this picture five years earlier. This area does not get very much sunlight, and I never thought it would grow when we planted it...but it did.

The night I took this photo of the tree I planted, I discovered that it was also the four-year anniversary of my prison release date – to the day. Ironically, exactly four years my release, I was back at the same prison **planting seeds of hope and change through Gateway. This photo symbolizes the importance of ‘planting seeds’ even in the darkest of places.”**

-- Jennifer



# PHOTO + NARRATIVE

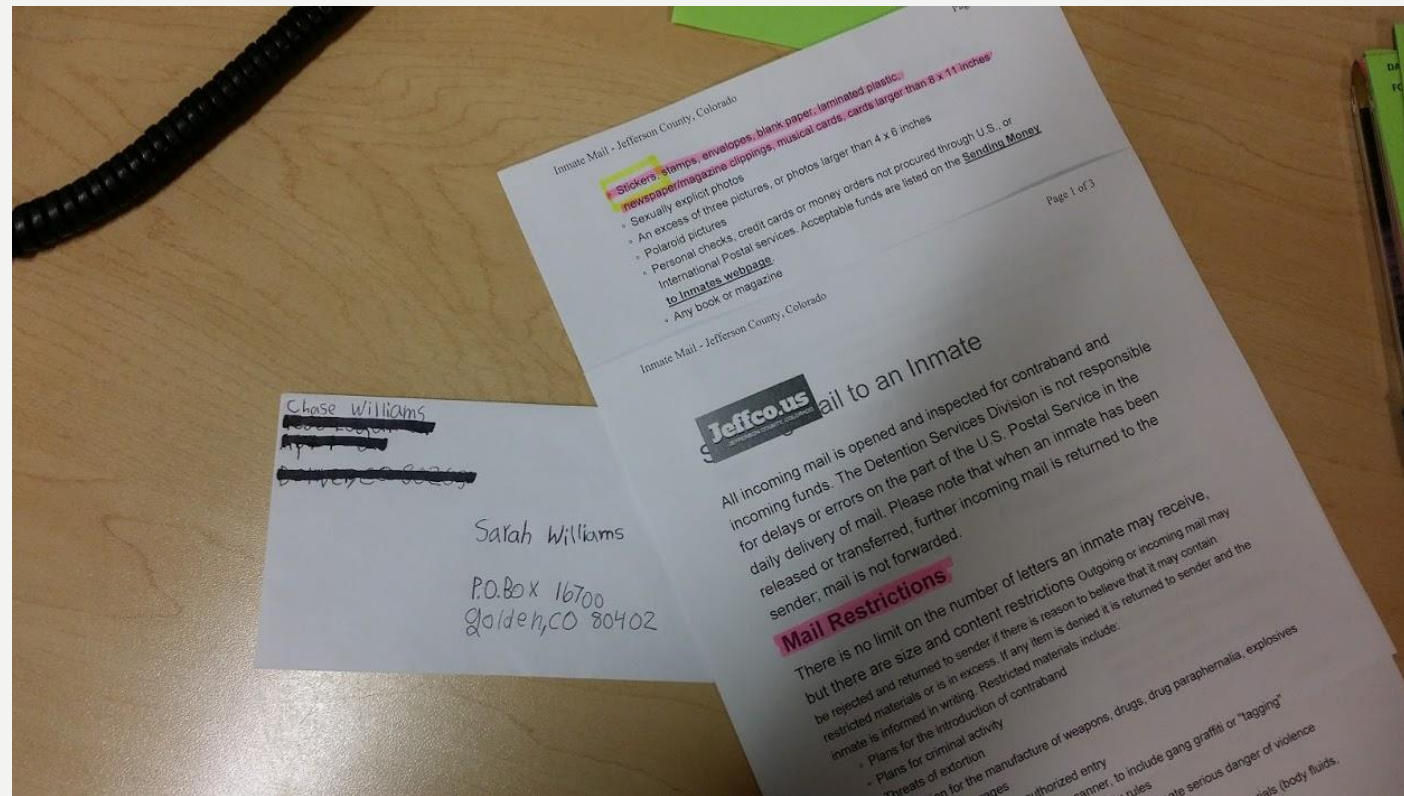


Coming to Gateway has opened more avenues. It's given me self-confidence and a family and support. We are not forgotten and left behind. We are important to the people here, to Cathy, to everyone in the office, to all the teachers who are involved with the Gateway program and classes. Gateway changes your whole mindset, from self-discipline to time management to responsibility to accountability to trustworthiness.

This is a picture of the chair in my garden. To me, it is an invitation for someone to come and share with me. It is a much-needed break.

-Theresa

# PHOTO + NARRATIVE



“I was facing up to 12 years in prison and believe it when I say that the District Attorney was going for the maximum penalty. When I received a memo stating that my letter has been rejected because of contraband reasons – my son had included stickers with his drawing, which were not allowed by the jail – my mind awoke. Everything changed. I was aware of how my impact affected more than just me.”

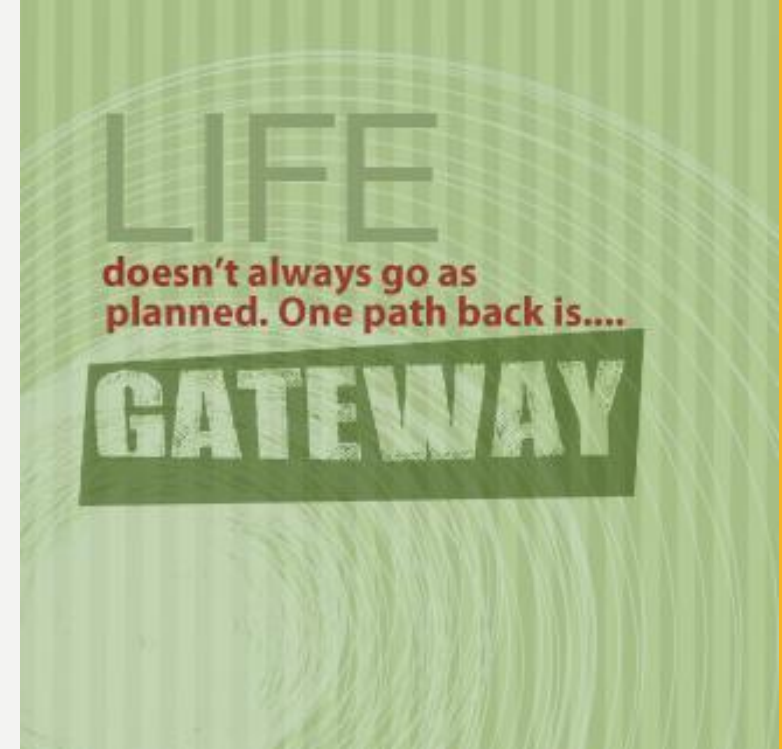
-- Sarah T

# GATEWAY'S APPROACH TO RNR

- Maintaining a job reduces a returning citizen's chance of recidivism
- However, Gateway took this a step further and applied a holistic approach to preventing recidivism
- Instead of pushing returning citizens into any job, they help them discover purpose and meaning

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- For more information about Gateway, please visit <https://www.rrcc.edu/gateway>



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# THANK YOU!

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