

## **2020 Beacon of Hope Award Recipient**

### **Marvin Clark**

Marvin Clark, a former OAD client, is an employee of Caputo's Bake Shop in Carroll Gardens, where he's worked for more than a year. Six days a week, Mr. Clark uses Access-A-Ride to commute to Brooklyn from his apartment in the Bronx, a four-hour round trip. In presenting Mr. Clark with this year's Beacon of Hope Award, OAD recognizes his profound resilience. The path to his current life was littered with obstacles, but Mr. Clark kept walking.



The walk began on April 29, 1979, when Mr. Clark's biological mother left him at the hospital. Mr. Clark gradually developed a close bond with his adoptive parents, William and Ruby Clark, but William died from a heart attack when Mr. Clark was only four years old. Then Ruby was hospitalized for lung cancer, leaving Mr. Clark alone, with no parental supervision, for months.

As a young adult, Mr. Clark found a job at a laundromat, but a mugger shot him in both legs and stole his recently-cashed paycheck. The injuries put Mr. Clark in the hospital for months and in a wheelchair for longer. When he returned from the hospital, he survived by selling scarves on a Brooklyn sidewalk—until police arrested him for an assault he didn't commit. Mr. Clark was jailed on Rikers Island for 15 months before prosecutors finally dropped the charges. When he returned to Brooklyn, Mr. Clark became homeless and spiraled into a cycle of drug abuse.

In early 2015, police searched an apartment where Mr. Clark had been sleeping, finding drugs and a gun. Mr. Clark later pled guilty to possession of a weapon and possession of a controlled substance. The trial court sentenced him to four and a half years of prison and two and a half years of post-release supervision.

When the Office of the Appellate Defender argued Mr. Clark's appeal, he had already completed his prison sentence, but OAD persuaded the Appellate Division to reduce his post-release supervision by one year. Emphasizing the critical re-entry support Mr. Clark would have from OAD's Client Services Program, we successfully argued that Mr. Clark did not need an additional year of post-release supervision—with the looming threat of prison—to stay on the right track.

When New York's prison system refused to enforce the Appellate Division's order, reducing Mr. Clark's sentence by four months instead of a full year, OAD introduced Mr. Clark to Carine Williams, Esq., who is now suing the state prison system on his behalf. Mr. Clark is hoping for a good result. Once his post-release supervision ends, he will be able to visit out-of-state family members without waiting for approval from a parole officer.