

Drama Presentation Drives Home a Dynamic Reentry Story



WILMINGTON, DE ----- On Friday, December 6, 2019, a drama performance called “Out of the Ashes: Where A Seed Finds Life” was performed at the Achievement Center in Wilmington, Delaware. The play is an artistic healing experience that is presented in the form of a dramatization of the reconciliation process between father and son.

Out of the Ashes is a play that is told from the perspective of a father, Coley Harris, and a son, Ahmarr Melton. The play is an authentic presentation on the struggle of rebuilding a parent/child relationship after a parent has been, or is, incarcerated.



Coley and Ahmarr were separated from one another for 14 years. In 2008, when Coley came home from prison, Ahmarr and Coley began their healing process.

The play clearly sparked interest and questions from the audience. Once the play ended, a question and answer session with both Coley and Ahmarr was held. Questions were asked about the process of rebuilding the relationship between father and son, the process of returning home and wanting to provide for one's family, and the outlook of their relationship when Coley first came home.



Coley described how the idea for the play began. It began when he and Ahmarr took walks together when Coley returned home and Ahmarr was 16. Coley said that during the walks, they realized that the individuals they knew didn't have the same type of positive relationship that he and Ahmarr have. He wanted to present something different so that those individuals could work on their relationships with their children.

Audience members asked Ahmarr about how he was able to avoid going down a similar path of incarceration as his father. Ahmarr stated that his grandfather was a key player in his life who helped him get into sports and Boy Scouts. He admitted that it was a challenge and he was unsure how to handle it. It was at that critical stage that Coley returned home and was able to push Ahmarr to remain on the path that he was on.

Coley stated that he wishes there had been a program such as Out of the Ashes available when Coley was incarcerated, and that it would have been useful as early as possible during his prison stay. He also spoke about how having Ahmarr kept his focus, because he knew he had someone to go home to who needed him.

The audience also asked about the process of forgiveness between father and son. Coley said that he thought he forgave himself, but when he came home and confronted the reality of what happened, he questioned if he deserved forgiveness. He said that his actions that led to incarceration weren't intended to hurt anyone, but fully coming to terms with the impact of his actions on his family allowed him to fully forgive himself. For Ahmarr, he said that the forgiveness will continue throughout the repairing of their relationship.

Coley is currently the Director of Community and Special Programs for an international human services program. In 2012, Ahmarr launched his own company, and he currently works as a manager at a major financial institution.

You can find more information on Out of the Ashes at their website, <http://www.outoftheashesllc.com/index.html>.