



MEDIA ADVISORY

for immediate release

Miami-Dade College April Graduate Overcomes Odds with Support of Touching Miami with Love Programs

Miami, FL, April 2016

Determined not to be another gun violence statistic, Isaac Williams, overcame amazing adversity growing up in Overtown including dealing with the traumatic death of his three older brothers. Isaac found his way to Touching Miami with Love's programs in grade school. He wouldn't learn until later the impact of such support. When he was in 9th grade, his older brother was shot and killed on the streets of Overtown at just 17 years old. An active participant in Touching Miami with Love's high school program in Overtown, Isaac leaned on the staff as he processed the tragedy. A few short years later as Isaac entered 12th grader, another of his older half-brothers was killed in much the same way at age 20. Following the death of his second brother, the trauma was almost too much for Isaac to bear. He found it difficult to cope and his thoughts spiraled dangerously downward. He recalls thinking to himself during that dark time, "there's no point, just give up, you're never going to make it out of Overtown."

Isaac credits his involvement in the programs of Touching Miami with Love and the love of the staff in helping him find the resolve to commit to living his life differently. He didn't want to end up like his brothers. He pushed to do better in school, took on a leadership position at TML, and was there every time the doors were open. Beating the statistics, he became part of the barely 30% of adults in Overtown to graduate with a high school diploma. TML staff urged him to explore taking classes at Miami-Dade and Isaac became the first in his family to enroll in college.

While Isaac was enjoying his classes, he missed the daily connection to TML and found himself stopping in nearly every day after his college classes to volunteer with in their children's program. Soon a paid position opened up and Site Director, Trina Harris, knew Isaac was the perfect person. Isaac served as a coach, co-instructor, and this fall added Instructional Advocate to his staff role. Several times a week Isaac is in the classrooms of the students served in Touching Miami with Love's children's program encouraging them, quizzing them as tests approach, and making sure they know they have a supporter in their corner. It's part of their case management program, Bridges.

As graduation draws near, Isaac is determined not to let life's tragedies define him and his eyes are on the future, his own and the future of the next generation he continues to pour into daily as TML Staff. On Saturday, April 30th Isaac Williams will walk across the stage in Miami-Dade Wolfson Campus' graduation ceremony. His parents and remaining siblings, along with several from Touching Miami with Love, will be there to cheer him on as he receives his Associate of Science in Paralegal Studies and his Associates of Arts in Pre-Law. Celebrate Isaac and the many others like him who have found a home and their purpose at Touching Miami with Love.

WHAT: Touching Miami with Love Impact Tour

WHEN: Wednesday, May 4th at 12pm

WHERE: TML: Overtown Site, 711 NW 6th Avenue, Miami, FL 33136

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Touching Miami with Love inspires, educates and empowers over 300 children and youth in Overtown and West Homestead with year-long programs and services. The children and youth of these communities need a safe haven from negative influences and a place to develop essential life skills. We are that place.

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