

# Beating the Odds for Business Start

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both parents were addicts, she said, now recovered, but a close relative raised her. She still had troubles and was running with the wrong crowd as a teenager when she met Billy, a boyfriend who helped her turn her life around. Then tragedy struck and she went off the deep end.

“He was an amazing guy, he was 17 and really changed my life,” she said. “I stopped running around, got back in school, and we were going to go to college in Arizona.”

Then the worst happened. Billy was diagnosed with leukemia and died.

Williams didn’t deal well with the trauma, “completely went on a rampage” which led to more tragedy, and her world fell in completely by the time she was 23 years old.

“About 15 years ago I was in a horrible car accident, I was drinking and driving, and almost took a life,” she said.

As a result, she was sentenced to three years in prison but was released after two years. But during that time, she went to college and found solace in the prison chapel.

“My first week in there, I went to church, but it was literally just to get out of my cell,” she said. “I didn’t know anything about spirituality, or anything like that, ever.”

But she kept going back, and eventually ended up every night sitting on her bunk with a cup of coffee, reading her Bible.

“I did that for two years,” she said. “And I fell in love with who I was and fell in love with Jesus and spirituality. I like all religions in a way, like Buddhism, and I love to meditate.”

But readjusting to society was difficult after prison, and Williams struggled to find a job.

“They would pull my record up but they were not seeing a person, they were not seeing me,” she said. “I explained that I’m a real person, I’ve made a lot of mistakes, but I’m very educated, and then it was just like, no, no, decline, denied.”

But she said she got a lot of nurturing help from an esteemed couple from Portland’s African American community, Pastor Herman Greene and his wife Nike, who provided clothes and a place to stay to get her started and helped her persevere.

She eventually found work, but after her son Jason was born 11 years ago, she doubled down and worked two full-time jobs to support him and provide a home.

For the past couple of years, Williams has primarily worked as a human resources specialist, but it was still hard to make ends meet, even with two jobs, because prices



‘Y’Nique Touch Salon is so much more than getting a blowout or protective hair style, it’s about the vibe, esthetics and overall experience’, says owner Y’Nique McAllister Wright.

kept going up, and she made too much money for public assistance.

“Jason gets straight As and he’s a good kid,” she said. “But I reached a point where I said, ‘This cannot be my life. I’d watched a lot of protests and knew he was watching, and I knew I had to do something bigger.’”

And thanks to a little push, she decided to do just that.

“So I was getting my hair done — and you know the hair ladies are our therapists — and I said, ‘I’m supposed to do something. I don’t know what it is, but I’m uncomfortable in my spirit,’” she said.

When her hairdresser asked  
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**The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is now fully approved by the FDA. If you haven’t gotten your COVID-19 shot, get it at the same time you get your flu shot. Both shots are safe, effective and free.**



**Call your provider or visit your local pharmacy to get the COVID-19 vaccine:**

- ▶ According to the CDC, the Delta variant of COVID-19 is over two times more contagious than earlier strains.
- ▶ Even people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine can pass the Delta variant to others.
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- ▶ Keep getting the checkups and screenings you need. Physical, dental and mental health care providers are taking precautions to keep you safe.

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