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Governor Christie: AJ's Story Is Not An Uncommon Story; It Just Has An Uncommon Ending

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Governor Christie: AJ's Story Is Not An Uncommon Story; It Just Has An Un...



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Transcript:

Governor's Office. I was really proud to have a young man that I had known that long as a member of my team. But AJ had a problem and he had a secret. He dabbled with alcohol in high school and college and then he stumbled on to prescription pain killers. By the age of 19, painkillers and alcohol were a regular part of his life. By the time he came to work for me, he had become a full blown heroin addict. He told me he would travel to North Camden on his way to the State Capitol, to work for me, to buy his heroin for the day. Luckily, AJ got caught by a family friend buying drugs and he then went in to a 28-day program. But as often happens, AJ found his way around the system. He left the facility and he wound up living on the streets. AJ watched a close friend die from his addiction. AJ watched another friend go to jail. And he knew there were only two choices left for him—to die or to have the strength to get sober. After much hard work and now having a few years of sobriety, AJ called me and asked to come see me at the State House. He told me he was coming to make amends for the ways he felt he had disgraced the Office of the Governor by his conduct and how he felt he had betrayed our friendship. I asked AJ how he had done it and how I could use his experience to help others. AJ is the architect of the sober living reforms I just outlined based on his experience and the experience of others he watched. What's happening now, AJ is opening a substance abuse treatment center in February in New Jersey— the Victory Bay Recovery Center in Laurel Springs. This place is going to be just 15 minutes from where AJ grew up and where he fell victim to addiction. AJ's going to continue to change and save lives. Recently, he told me that people think that being an addict is a death sentence or an unbearable burden. He told me he disagrees. He says he is grateful, grateful to be in recovery and he believes that the fulfillment and the joy that helping others brings to his life will keep him from relapsing and using drugs again. So who is AJ? He is AJ Solomon,

the son of BPU Commissioner Dianne Solomon and New Jersey Supreme Court Associate Justice Lee Solomon. Two extraordinary citizens. Two incredible parents. You see, AJ's story is not an uncommon story; it just has an uncommon ending. AJ can't wait to see how the next chapters of his life unfold and neither can I and I'm confident neither can his Mom and Dad. We love you AJ—and I am thrilled about how you have chosen to spend the rest of your life.

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