

## Governor Chris Christie Pardons Piscataway Woman Who Lifted Herself Out of Life of Addiction and Crime

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### Joyce Holman Turns Her Life Around to be a Role Model of Perseverance in Overcoming Substance Abuse

**Trenton, NJ** – Reaffirming his commitment to helping people reclaim their lives from substance abuse and criminal activity, Governor Chris Christie today granted a pardon to Piscataway resident Joyce Holman who, after nearly half a life of living on a treadmill of drug abuse and non-violent crime to feed her addiction, has remained drug-free and law abiding for nearly two decades. In that time, all while educating herself for a career in radiology, Joyce has dedicated herself to helping others who suffer from addiction, turned her life around, remained continuously employed and become a role model to others.

“Joyce is someone who not only deserves the help I can give her today, but someone who has truly earned it through her steadfast determination to beat her addiction, make more of her own life and to help others to lift themselves out of the destructive cycle of drug addiction and crime. Joyce embodies the spirit of my belief that no life is disposable and that the most vulnerable, including those suffering from addiction who are willing to seek help and help themselves out of a pattern of destructive behavior, deserve our support and encouragement.”

Joyce, who is 59 years old and has two adult children, has been candid about her more than 25 years of drug abuse and criminal activity – from shoplifting to passing bad checks and drug possession convictions. She was in and out of jail, never for violent acts, but always returning to low-level and persistent acts of criminality that held her back from her full potential and the life she wanted for herself. In the early 1990s, Joyce was sentenced to four years in prison for violations of probation.

During her last time in jail, in the early 1990s, Joyce recalls that she said to herself, “How did you get back here again? You have grandkids.”

Today, Holman is heavily involved with her church community at Calvary Baptist Church in Plainfield, New Jersey. She is involved with the Youth Ministry and Music Ministry and is chair of the “Overcomers Ministry, which she helped to establish two years ago to assist in confronting any type of life struggle.

Ms. Holman obtained her high school diploma in 1995 and an Associate in Science degree from Union County College in 2004. During college, she began her career as a student radiographer at Muhlenberg Hospital School of Radiology and has worked since 2004 as an x-ray technologist.

Ms. Holman said she sought the Governor’s action because she would like eventually to return to her native Virginia to retire, and believes a pardon would make that process, along with securing part-time employment, far easier without the stigma of a criminal record.

The Governor announced the clemency at Liberating Word Ministries in Newark during a roundtable discussion with members of the Essex County re-entry task force, where volunteers, non-profits, charitable organizations and local social service organizations meet to discuss the availability of resources for returning offenders and their families. The meeting was hosted by Pastor Pamela Jones.

Governor Christie’s clemency is in the spirit of his reform to expand the state’s drug courts program for non-violent offenders to be mandatory in all 21 counties. He outlined that plan in last year’s State of the State Address and signed it into law in July.

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**Press Contact:**  
Michael Dzewniak  
Kevin Roberts  
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000