



Towards Employment

**MODERN
WARRIOR
EXPERIENCE**

For Immediate Release

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**Innovative Partnership Brings Challenges, Triumph and
Healing Moments to Cleveland stage on June 17 with Work & Reentry Experience**

June 2, 2023 - CLEVELAND – Dominick Farinacci, international jazz artist, Cleveland native and co-creator of Modern Warrior LIVE, is partnering with Towards Employment to create a live performance and multi-media work collaborating with five individuals with lived experience in the criminal justice system who faced barriers to finding jobs and careers. This world-premiere performance is made possible by a grant from the Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation and features stories of five Clevelanders, using Modern Warrior LIVE’s innovative and immersive model of storytelling, music, and multimedia. This is the first work-focused performance in a series of storytelling collaborations through Modern Warrior LIVE’s collaborative program called the Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE.

The performance will take place on Saturday June 17 at 4PM in the Greg L. Reese Performing Arts Center, located in the East Cleveland Library, 14101 Euclid Ave, East Cleveland, Ohio.

Recipient of the 2022 Cleveland Arts Prize, a TED Speaker, and headliner in the 2023 Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, Dominick Farinacci co-created the national touring production Modern Warrior LIVE, an immersive music and narrative experience that chronicles the story of US Army veteran Jaymes Poling and his journey through three deployments in Afghanistan and subsequent transition back home. As the production provides a catalyst for meaningful conversation about stigma, mental health, post-traumatic growth, and resiliency, Farinacci and Poling began to see through lines that connected veteran stories to those of returning citizens or people with involvement in the criminal justice system.

“Stigma often creates barriers to communication that leave so many of us feeling isolated and unable to share the struggles we face. In doing this, we risk further separating from the communities that can most help us heal,” says Poling.

“With the Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE, we strive to tear down those barriers to communication, allowing individuals to share the unfiltered reality of their journey, and in doing so carve a path for others hoping for a better tomorrow,” says Farinacci.

Farinacci and Poling reached out to Towards Employment and together both organizations found support for a pilot program through the Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation. The timing was serendipitous. “Based on alumni feedback, we were looking for a partnership to support TE graduates and lift up their personal narrative to drive community dialogue and change,” says Jill Rizika, CEO and President of Towards Employment.

Towards Employment is a Cleveland nonprofit with a history and tradition of helping Clevelanders connect to careers. Founded in 1976, Towards Employment has helped over 208,000 people find jobs, navigate employment obstacles and secure long-term careers. Since 2014, Towards Employment has received three multi-year, multi-million dollar grants from the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Justice Affairs. In 2014, Jill Rizika, who has been with Towards Employment for 20 years, was honored as a White House Champion of Change – recognizing ordinary people driving extraordinary change.

Register for the free public performance of the Work & Reentry Experience in music, narration, and video on Saturday June 17 at 4PM in East Cleveland Library's Greg Reese Performing Arts Center at <https://www.jotform.com/app/231495442694161>

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Note: See <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1465mS9Hns2hmIHb0xjHAMDyXtz8CRPs?usp=sharing> for art associated with this release

- *Includes Modern Warrior and Towards Employment Logos, pictures of community storytellers, Dominick Farinacci and Jaymes Poling*

Cutline: Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE and Towards Employment present the world premiere of a Work & Reentry Experience, featuring the stories of five Clevelanders who have pushed through adversity and pain to find healing and wisdom on Saturday June 17 at East Cleveland Library's Greg Reese Performing Arts Center. Register for free performance at <https://www.jotform.com/app/231495442694161>