



Towards Employment

**MODERN
WARRIOR**
EXPERIENCE

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Adaora Schmiedl, 216-401-6883, aschmiedl@towardsemployment.org

Amazing CLE Experience - World Class Jazz Meets Real Life Stories

June 4, 2024 - CLEVELAND – Dominick Farinacci, international jazz artist, Cleveland native and co-creator of Modern Warrior LIVE, is no stranger to the world jazz stage. Towards Employment, founded in 1976 to support Clevelanders in their efforts to keep a job, and evolving over the years into an organization committed to partnering with Clevelanders to build careers and wealth, has long championed people who choose to share personal stories of the power of a career and advancement. On June 14, Farinacci and the artists of Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE program will partner with 3 Clevelanders, who are also Towards Employment alumni, to share uplifting stories of personal transformation.

Ronnie Cannon, LaTonya Cliff and Tracy Patton are all leaders in our community. They are parents, taxpayers, entrepreneurs and models of the amazing tenacity, resourcefulness, and skills that Cleveland’s workforce offers. They also went through experiences that would daunt anyone, and still found the fortitude to keep going. Through a partnership with Towards Employment and Farinacci’s Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE program, an innovative platform of storytelling, music and visual multimedia, these 3 individuals share their words of pain, triumph and inspiration of their work and reentry experiences. 5 musicians, a tech crew, and director build a compelling musical and visual underscore supporting these precious stories of real life in Cleveland.

The Work & Reentry performance is on Friday June 14 in the Maltz Performing Arts Center as part of Towards Employment’s Chance to Advance event. Festivities begin at 4:00PM with a Career Champion Festival on the grounds of the Maltz before and after the performance.

This is the second year Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE has partnered with Towards Employment to create a live performance in collaboration with people with lived experience in the criminal justice system who faced barriers to finding jobs and careers. Last year’s 4 storytellers mentored this year’s performers. Storytellers featured in this performance are part of an ongoing Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE residency made possible with support from The George Gund Foundation and The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation.

Jill Rizika, President and CEO of Towards Employment, says: “Over the past 48 years of connecting people to careers, we have learned people’s experiences and words have truly amazing power to inspire and convince others of the transformation a career can bring. When Dominick shared the thoughtful process behind the Modern Warrior Experience and the emphasis on the storyteller, we wanted to be the first reentry partner. Then after last year, seeing and hearing back from the storytellers about the

healing and triumph they felt during the process, we knew we had to bring these powerful alumni stories to a wider audience.”

Recipient of the 2022 Cleveland Arts Prize, a TED Speaker, and headliner in the 2024 Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, Dominick Farinacci co-created the national touring production Modern Warrior LIVE, a production that provides a catalyst for meaningful conversation about stigma, mental health, post-traumatic growth, and resiliency. Using Modern Warrior LIVE’s innovative, integrated and immersive model of storytelling, music, and visual multimedia, the Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE is part of a series of storytelling collaborations that lift community stories of resonance and healing.

“With the Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE, we give individuals a platform to share their stories of trauma and their resilient paths forward, working to tear down barriers to stigma and communication, and in doing so carve a path for others hoping for a better tomorrow,” says Farinacci.

Tickets are on sale now at <https://www.towardsemployment.org/annual-event-2024/> for the Work & Reentry performance and Career Champion Festival on Friday June 14 at the Maltz Performing Arts Center. Dinner and parking are included in the price of the ticket.

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Note:

- **Video:** Storytellers from 2023 (currently mentoring storytellers in 2024) share their Work & Reentry Experience at <https://youtu.be/iH-6D5cgmil?si=hVy4aNUvp6aJXILu>
- **Artwork:** Includes Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE and Towards Employment Logos, portraits of the three 2024 storytellers, and Dominick Farinacci. See Chance to Advance media kit at <https://www.towardsemployment.org/resources-links/#media>
- **Cutline:** Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE and Towards Employment present a Work & Reentry Experience, featuring stories of three Clevelanders who have pushed through adversity and pain to find healing and wisdom on Friday June 14 at the Maltz Performing Arts Center in Cleveland Ohio. Tickets for performance at <https://www.towardsemployment.org/annual-event-2024/#home>

Towards Employment

Towards Employment’s mission is to champion the potential of every person to succeed in a rewarding career today, while working to create an equitable and inclusive workforce for tomorrow. Using the WorkAdvance model as a solution, every year Towards Employment increases opportunities for 1800 of Cleveland’s workers providing skill development for in-demand jobs, comprehensive supports to address [social determinants of work](#), direct connections to employers and extended career coaching to support advancement, while meeting the talent needs of more than 300 local business. Learn more about our work at www.towardsemployment.org.

Modern Warrior EXPERIENCE

Modern Warrior LIVE is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides individuals an innovative platform to share their story of trauma and their resilient path forward. Through a seamless integration of storytelling, music and visual multimedia, our programs engage through entertainment to EMPOWER, INFORM and CONNECT individuals and communities, and to ACTIVATE those in need to seek mental health resources.