

A Better Future for Others:

Meet Sara Williams of JOSHUA

Jim Golembeski, Upward Mobility Signals Team

Everyone faces obstacles going through life. Some things just happen, and others are self-inflicted. Many of us deal with those obstacles and just move on. Others fall and never get up. Sara Williams has used her challenges as a foundation to build an even better life.

Sara Williams is the Community Organizer and spokesperson for [JOSHUA](#), an organization of faith-based communities that promotes the worth and dignity of every human person by building collaborative relationships to address social justice issues. JOSHUA is one of 13 statewide affiliates of [WISDOM](#). Sara also works as Housing Retention Specialist at the Green Bay Salvation Army.

It is the obstacles in her life that have guided Sara toward a life of advocacy for social, racial, and economic justice. Bad relationship choices, domestic violence, a nursing career cut short by drug addiction, and time in a Wisconsin prison, much of it in solitary confinement, have shaped the person she is today.

Those experiences have made Sara a compassionate and tenacious advocate for those who live on the fringe of our community, who have little support and no social capital. Her role at JOSHUA is to bring people together, teach change, and promote transformational justice. She actively works to bring those without a voice and influence into policy discussions. Not surprisingly, a key focus is on reform in the state prison system and advocating for policies that promote successful reentry, especially ending lockdown and solitary confinement in state facilities.

Housing is also an important focus in her life and work both with JOSHUA and at Salvation Army. Sara has created wraparound services that go beyond immediate crisis intervention to promote long term stable housing. Working directly with landlords to mitigate problem situations is an important part of that mission. She has worked closely with veterans' housing challenges as well.

JOSHUA has also addressed environmental justice and immigration issues in Brown County with recent initiatives.

Sara's future goals are to establish her own nonprofit agency focused on social justice. She wants to take her commitment to the marginalized members of the community to another level, whether that be with victims of domestic violence, justice-impacted individuals, or others who struggle to speak for themselves. It is ultimately about community transformation.

As she has come through the obstacles in her life, one important task in the present is to work on self-care to maintain her own vision and strength to support others in their challenges.