

# TURNING POINT

Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities

Presiding Judge Joy Malek Oldfield

## Turning Point Times

December 2025



December 2025 Turning Point graduates. Pictured from left to right, Jennifer Calton, James Castelucci, Judge Oldfield, Chela Donnelly, Ricardo Stokes, Brigitte Thompson.

On December 2, 2025, we proudly celebrated five graduates of the Turning Point program—each demonstrating remarkable dedication, perseverance, and personal growth. As part of their graduation, participants completed a Mission Statement and Community Plan, reflecting on the progress they have made and the goals they will carry forward. The following quotes highlight their inspiring journeys:

Jennifer Calton: "I finally have faith in myself; a confidence I wanted so badly! Today I have so many goals for my future!"

James Castelucci: "I've learned a lot about staying in the moment, and thinking things through. I am eternally grateful for my family and sober support whom I call friends!"

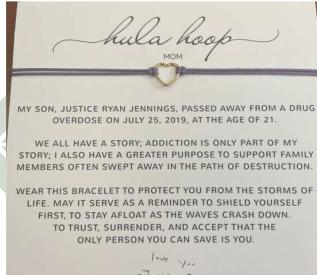
Chela Donnelly: "The stability this program has given me has changed my life! I have full custody of my son and I am a manager at my job!"

Ricardo Stokes: "All of this has made me the person I am today—responsible, employable, a better father, son, uncle, brother, friend, and role model to other fellow addicts."

Brigitte Thompson: "I am stronger than I ever could be! I know that if I keep working on myself, I can be a good mom and the best grandma ever!"

We congratulate each of these graduates for their courage, commitment, and determination. Their accomplishments serve as a powerful reminder of what is possible when hope is restored and support is strong.

### Holiday Give Back



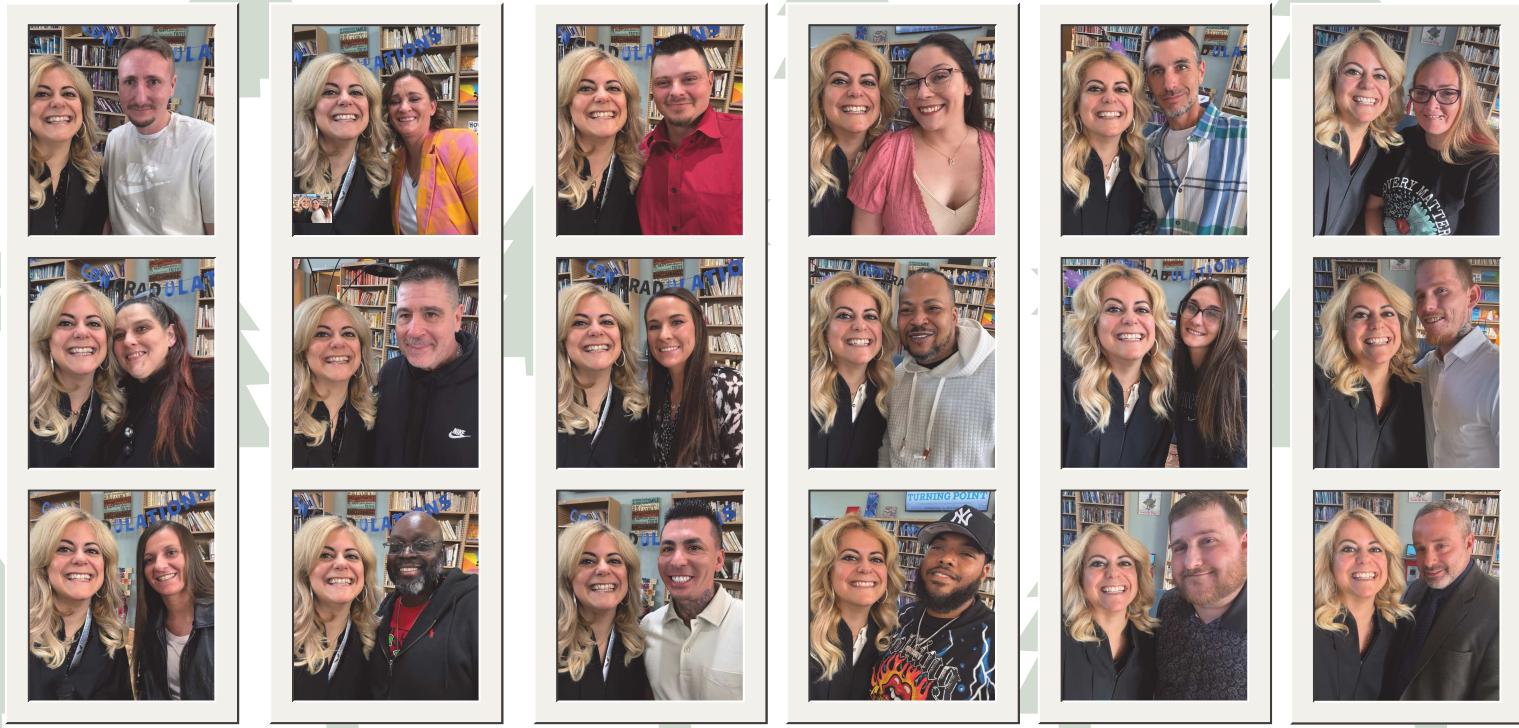
This year, we celebrated our Fourth Annual Holiday Give Back with our Turning Point Alumni. Together, we highlighted the inspiring work of Hula Hoop Mom, a nonprofit whose mission is to support families and friends grieving the loss of a loved one to an overdose. Born from personal loss, Erika Sommers created Hula Hoop Mom to provide a space where grief is acknowledged, honored, and shared through symbolic jewelry. Together, staff, alumni, and active participants crafted and packaged bracelets to support those navigating loss.

"The jewelry I once bought to survive my grief became the gift I now share to help others heal."  
— Erika Sommers, Founder



# A Graduation Tradition

A Turning Point tradition: the famous graduation selfie with Judge Joy Malek Oldfield. In 2025, we celebrated 29 incredible graduates from the Turning Point Program. Their dedication and hard work remind us what hope, healing, and perseverance look like. Congratulations to each of you. We can't wait to see you thrive in 2026!



*Congratulations*  
Dustin Balthis, Kimberly Cassidy,  
Ashley Mears, Melissa Sipe, Sean  
Ahern, Neil Keyes, Michael Farmer,  
Tracy Affolter, Sone Rassavong,  
Marissa Cartwright, Lawerence  
Munford, Jaden Gisentaner, Brett  
Kelly, Tara Lock, Jeffrey Stine,  
Brittany English, Ryan Knapp,  
William Taylor, James Castelucci,  
Chela Donnelly, Ricardo Stokes,  
Frank Goch, David Barber, Jacqueline  
Semuga, Brigitte Thompson,  
Jennifer Calton, Joshua Kessler,  
Harrison Meek, Timothy Henry



## Turning Point Alumni News

The Turning Point Alumni Group hosted their First Annual Pajama and Ugly Sweater Party on December 10, 2025, at Tyler's Redemption Place. The celebration featured festive food, ornament decorating, and prizes awarded for the most creative ornament and the best holiday outfit. It was a warm, joyful evening filled with laughter, connection, and holiday spirit.



## Congratulations Carley Mayes



Congratulations to our very own Carley Mayes on her acceptance into the University of Akron School of Law.

Carley, your dedication, determination, and compassion have always set you apart. While we are beyond proud of you, we already know how much we're going to miss your presence, your kindness, and the light you bring to those around you. This next chapter is going to be extraordinary, and we're grateful to have been part of your journey. You'll always have a family here cheering you on.



## 2025 in Review

2025 was a landmark year for Turning Point. We welcomed 39 individuals into the program and celebrated 29 successful completions. Throughout the year, participants engaged in several group service projects, contributing their time and effort to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Summit Recovery Hub, Keep Akron Beautiful, and Hula Hoop Mom.

A major milestone in 2025 was the creation of our alumni group—an achievement that has long been a program goal. We also continued to strengthen and expand our initiatives by sustaining the Y-Strong program, launching the Turning Point Times, adding a full-time dedicated defense counsel and prosecutor, welcoming two new SNUD officers, and hosting our third annual resource fair, which was our largest yet. In addition, we held the inaugural Clash of the Courts event and established our social media presence, further expanding our reach and community engagement.

## The Daily Dose of Joy-



As the year comes to a close, take a moment to reflect on your journey. Acknowledge how every challenge has shaped your growth and remember that each small win truly matters. Every obstacle faced and lesson learned has contributed to who you are today. Set your intentions for the coming year with enthusiasm, welcoming new beginnings and meaningful turning points. Celebrate your resilience, stay hopeful and let gratitude fill your heart. May the New Year wrap us in warmth and bring even more joy, connection, and cherished memories. Here's to growth and love in 2026. *Judge Joy Malek Oldfield*

Let's Connect on Socials



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