

IDignity

Dear Fellow Citizens,

For the last 25 years, I have had the privilege of serving our community as a police officer. This has provided me with many unique experiences, yet what resonates the strongest is how well our community overcomes difficulties when we unite to address them. One example of this was the creation of IDignity, a grassroots organization with a simple mission to assist individuals in obtaining their legal identification, which restores dignity and empowers these members of our society to be more productive.


As Orlando's Chief of Police, I know how important it is for our officers to be able to identify who they are dealing with on the streets. For effectiveness and safety, it is essential that our officers know the identities of who might be victims of crime, witnesses, suspects or even wanted criminals. If any of these individuals do not have identification, it is very time-consuming for officers and detectives to try to verify their identities. That takes time away that could be used to prevent crimes from ever happening. IDignity has assisted over 17,000 of our neighbors in obtaining their legal identification. Each one is one less that our officers may have to spend crucial time verifying.

Personally, I also support IDignity because it's simply the right thing to do. It was jarring when I first became aware that there are members of our community who didn't, and for various reasons couldn't, possess something as simple, as essential, as an ID. Most everyone, including myself, has lost their wallet or purse. I still remember the helpless feeling of realizing that I couldn't prove who I was. To imagine that helplessness as an ongoing daily condition is tragic, yet it is a reality for many of our neighbors. It does not have to be.

IDignity is able to assist an individual in regaining all of their legal identification documents for only \$200 and four hours of volunteer time. The success of IDignity's mission depends on our community uniting around it. Everyone can do their part whether through advocating, volunteering or making a financial contribution.

During this holiday season, when so many of us enjoy the bounty of our lives – faith, family, friends, and yes, good food – I ask that you also reflect on the lives of our less fortunate neighbors. If you are able, please join me in investing in IDignity. I have witnessed how essential their mission is, not only for the individuals that they serve but for our whole community.

Thank you,


John Mina
Chief of Police, Orlando

