

around Focus:HOPE near Oakman Boulevard. His own sister died of a heroin overdose.

"Some of my friends ended up in prison, some are on the police force, some of them became doctors," Kerwin said.

He said Motts' story was special, but not unique.

LEARNING DISCIPLINE

Wednesday, Kerwin and Motts were reunited for the first time since Kerwin gave Motts his opportunity. Focus:HOPE let Motts make the most of that opportunity.

"It taught me a lot about discipline. Being here, not a minute late, being here on time, looking professional, acting professional," he said. "I couldn't say enough about this program."

In addition to hands-on training, Motts was able to interact with the many retired GM, Ford and Chrysler plant managers who have donated their time to working with Focus:HOPE. He was inspired by their example.

Now that Motts is successful, he wants to tell others what he's found.

"There is somewhere in this city where you can get educated, you can change and break the cycle, change the history you're born into," he said.

He now brings his oldest daughter down to Focus:HOPE to help package food for the elderly and tell her what a difference it made in their lives.

Josaitis has met many success stories in the 40 years that Focus:HOPE has been offering a hand to those who want a way out.

"It makes me realize we are really making a difference in a lot of lives," she said. "That's all I want to do. And when William comes back and tells the story, other young people might say I didn't think I had a chance, but now I've got a chance. There is nothing greater that you can do than that. I am so proud of William because he told me, 'I'd be dead on the street if you hadn't helped me.'"

grades were so high he was encouraged to pursue a college degree through the Center for Advanced Technologies.

"This is the best-kept secret in Detroit," Motts said.

He had strong support from his wife, Paula. They made a pact to take turns getting their education. He earned

his associate's degree and she earned her dental hygienist degree and a bachelor's degree from the University of Detroit Mercy. Motts also earned a master's degree in engineering management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and is finishing a master of business administration degree from Indiana University.

When his father was released from prison, Motts supported him through the Machinist Training Institute and he is also employed.

Motts calls his wife "the backbone of the family," which now includes three daughters, Mercedes, 16, Helaina, 6, and Trisha, 3.

"I sensed that in his heart he was a good person and he was going to make it out," Paula said. "When he sets his mind to something, he's going to achieve it. He got into Focus:HOPE and they helped him in every sense and direction."

Kerwin, a retired judge from West Bloomfield, also sensed Motts' potential. Kerwin grew up in the tough neighborhood

GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY

Attorney Robert Elsey had taken an English class with the Rev. Cunningham and knew about the program. Judge David Kerwin agreed that Motts should go to Focus:HOPE instead of back to jail.

"I didn't graduate from high school. I didn't know how to write a paper at the time. I didn't know about algebra," Motts said. "It really struck a fear in me. It really scared the death out of me. I did not want to be my father. I did not want to be an idiot. I did not want to force my kids into something they did not want to do."

Motts got his GED, enrolled in Focus:HOPE's Fast Track program to bring up his reading and math skills and graduated from the Machinist Training Institute. His group started with 50 people and ended up with seven. His