

Widlen's Story:

Rising Above, Growing Beyond

Widlen Fleurelus, 26, has walked a journey filled with challenges, growth, and triumph. **Originally from Haiti and now living in the Dominican Republic, Widlen is a testament to the power of opportunity, resilience, and the impact of compassionate mentorship.** Today, he serves as the Sponsorship Coordinator for 2nd Mile Missions, but his story began long before he joined our team.



Growing up in a large family with his parents, sister, and two brothers, Widlen faced many hurdles. **As a child, his family struggled with the barriers to education that often accompany systemic poverty.** But through the grace of God and the generosity of sponsors at Warsaw Community Church, Widlen became part of the 2nd Mile Missions sponsorship program while attending our school. **That sponsorship changed the trajectory of Widlen's life. "It impacted me in extraordinary ways," he shares.** "It helped me set goals in life and become a better person." **Without the education and support provided through 2nd Mile Missions, Widlen believes his life could have taken a much darker path—one without dreams, direction, or hope.**

Widlen's gratitude extends to the many adults and teachers who invested in his life during his school years. **"There have been so many wonderful people who have helped me," he says.** These mentors offered him love, encouragement, and guidance, shaping him personally, professionally, and spiritually. Among them is Rod Wildman, who stood by Widlen during difficult times, particularly when classmates made hurtful racist comments because of his Haitian heritage. **Through their unwavering support, Widlen not only grew as a person but also developed a deep relationship with God.** He credits these influences with challenging him to become the best version of himself and preparing him for the future. **"They were there for me when I needed them most," he reflects.**

Widlen's journey hasn't been without continued hardships. As immigration tensions rise in the DR and his parents remain in Haiti, safety remains a constant concern. Yet, **through the love and support of the 2nd Mile Missions team, Widlen has found a community where he is valued, protected, and encouraged.**

Today, as Sponsorship Coordinator, Widlen uses his experiences to pour into the lives of others. He understands firsthand the life changing power of education, love, and mentorship. **His story is a powerful reminder of how lives can be changed when we invest in others and give them a chance to rise above their circumstances.**

Widlen's journey from a sponsored student to a leader in our organization embodies the heart of 2nd Mile Missions. Because someone saw his potential, believed in him, and gave him an opportunity, Widlen has grown into a role model for other students. And as he now helps shape the futures of other students, **his life serves as a living testimony to the incredible ripple effects of love and opportunity.**
