

## **Saconia Guidry, Founder/ Executive Director**



### **Background**

I was born in Tacoma, WA Hilltop area in 1972 to a young mother Ruby Jean Guidry who had no support from her biological blood relatives. As she only had an older brother Louis Guidry in the State of Washington as he was married to an uncaring woman and her abusive family who made a relationship between the two brother and sister non existing. Having been denied by my biological father Walter White until March 4th 1990 when I gave birth to my only child Onteryo Guidry,

there was also no support from my biological father and his family.

My mother and I were left to the concrete jungle of the Hilltop to fend for herself with a child at the age of 15 yr of age, my mother and I lived a life of hardship and much difficulties surviving on public assistance. Shelter was provided by Juanita Butler (aka grandmother), Dale Moore (aka Aunt) and Willie Bryant (aka step father).

Due to my tough circumstances, I myself was not afforded the simpler things in life as a child, such as shelter and clothing. This included shirts, pants, shoes and socks. I relied on handouts and hand me downs. I attended Bryant Elementary, Jason Lee Jr High and Lincoln High school. Despite having worn out shoes, I still ran track for all three schools.

This brings me to why I am so passionate about my charity called Hilltops Ten Toes Down. I myself understand the hardship of not having your own anything. Shelter, food, clothing and family are not to be taken for granted. I learned early in life the importance of compassion and empathy and the support of others.

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## Giving back and helping others

I always wanted to help others, as I became a CNA in 1991. It provided me with a meaningful purpose in life. Later I moved away from Washington and married my wonderful husband Coray Harper. As a family, we lived in two other states: Virginia and Louisiana.

After twenty two years, I returned to Washington state and was alarmed at the large number of homelessness. As the Tacoma area has gone through many different hardships, I have never seen so many without hope.

These are not strangers. They are fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, friends, classmates and co-workers. An individual cannot gain self esteem and self worth if life's circumstances are full of hardships such as homelessness. I myself cannot lower the cost of living or make everyone's life perfect, but I can help

I noticed that there were many with damaged or no shoes. I

thought "How can people take a step forward if they have beaten

up feet and no decent footwear?" Shoes and foot accessories provide protection from the elements, comfort, self-esteem and dignity.

At that moment, I thought "Maybe I can make a difference." and the idea for the business of Hilltops Ten Toes Down was born. Why the name!

**Hilltop**- the struggle to get the top of the hill or meet the goal.

**Ten Toes Down**- 100% devotion or commitment to a cause, person or thing.