Spring is a time of new beginnings. The earth renews itself as soft green plants push through the ground to sprout brightly-colored flowers.

This spring is also a new beginning for us.

Cameron arrived Monday afternoon at the Volunteers of America Community Treatment Center in Toledo.

What a difference an hour and a half car ride can make.

He is extremely nervous and anxious (He has coined the new word “nervanxious.” We are calling Websters!) to start the next chapter of his life — preparing to re-enter society, find a job and become a productive member.

The last 5 years and 5 months have seemed to take forever and yet we are all surprised the time is here. It has been a journey for all of us. We have learned a tremendous amount about ourselves and each other.

While Cameron is not “free,” he is enjoying many of the things we take for granted like civilian clothes, better food and new-found privileges. He can’t leave to look for a job for another week but is ready to rejoin the workforce and start earning some cold, hard cash.

We shipped several boxes to Toledo last week with clothes, shoes, toiletries, etc. Today, my mother and I will travel for our first visit. We are taking more shoes, hangers, books, etc.

For the first time in more than five years, we will forgo a metal detector, hand stamp and guards watching our every move. Nice.

Can I tell you what is in my “mother’s heart?” He has talked the talk and walked the walk for the last four years. (The first year he was still mad as hell at everyone and everything.) That may seem like a good thing when you first look at it but what else has he had to do?

My greatest fear is that the temptations of the “real” world will be too much. The recidivism rate for prisoners is extremely high. Society makes it difficult for them to find jobs and with today’s unemployment rates, there are dozens of non-offenders, perhaps more, for each offender looking for a job.

One of the directors at VOA said if Cameron wants to work, he will have a job. She says there are many companies who contract with them for the federal tax break they receive by hiring offenders. She said if she was staying there, she’d have two jobs and only sleep there. Hmmm.

The coming six months Cameron will spend in Toledo will not be easy. He has many classes and chores and will have a J-0-B. He’ll be busy but a lot more will be on his terms instead of someone else’s.

In many instances in our talks over the last several months, I have held my tongue. He’s 25 years old now and he needs to learn to make good, solid decisions on his own. He needs to develop a process whereby he examines things carefully before making choices. In the past, he wasn’t much on thinking about how his choices could affect his life tomorrow. He was just worried about today.

I’m just glad he asks for my opinion because I’m ready to give it. I just have to remember he doesn’t have to take it and I have to be OK with that.

Another thing in my “mother’s heart” is a big HURRAH!

I am so proud of him. We have come a long way and while our journey is not over, we are sure in a better vehicle.

Editor’s note: Peltier story is on hold. Jack Adams asked me to wait a few weeks.