

Reuniting Families

On July 18th, 2008, I was arrested and taken into custody for a failure to appear to court. While being arrested, I got a new felony charge, possession of a controlled substance. I remember my first time appearing in court the next morning. When I walked into the court room my Mother and my oldest daughter, Desirae, were sitting in the court room and Desirae was in tears. My daughter had never seen me in shackles and handcuffs which I had to keep on the whole time because I was a flight risk. I hadn't seen neither of my children or my mother in months, nor had any contact with them. When I stood in front of Judge Melnick, I told him I needed help and that I was willing to do whatever it took in order to get the help I needed.

When I went back to my cell I had a letter from my youngest daughter stating she would rather me not love her than me do drugs. Another reason that I knew this time I was done. I recall hitting my knees and praying, which is something I had never done before. But it felt so good.

I was very fortunate to be able to stay involved with SAC court and get a bed in Lifeline connections. When I arrived at inpatient treatment, I really had no idea what I was getting myself into. I just knew that I wanted something different. I knew that I had to change everything! I told my SAC court advocate that I wanted to move into an Oxford house, didn't know what they were just knew the name. I went through inpatient treatment focused on me and what I wanted with my life. This time was different for me. I never tried to stay clean. It never once



crossed my mind. I thought I was going to die using. I had contact with my mother and my oldest daughter while in treatment. They even came to see me. That gave me so much hope.

When I graduated and walked out the doors of Lifeline, the entire world hit me all at once. I had feelings that I hadn't felt in 10 years. I was afraid and I knew I was going to have to focus on not getting loaded and do what the court asked of me.

I moved into the Oxford house and got busy on meetings, court dates, UA's, and all that was required of me to start my new life. Things were great on the outside. I had my children back in my life on the weekends and I wasn't putting drugs and alcohol in my body. Something was missing-RECOVERY-I walked around for 14 months doing everything I was required to do for the courts, wasn't drinking and using, had my girls in my life, and my oldest daughter had already moved in with me at the Oxford house. But, I was still broken and dying on the inside.

I went to a meeting and heard a message like I never heard before and knew that woman speaking needed to be my sponsor. I began working with her on a daily basis. I had been working with her for about a month, and I was already loving how I was feeling on the inside. My sponsor had me fill out an application for 2nd step housing. By the end of the week, I was moving into my new home with my oldest daughter, Desirae. Destiny still was cautious on moving in with me. It took about 3 months before Destiny decided she was ready to come home and live with me.

I will never forget the first night and the next morning waking up with both my girls home after 10 years of not having them with me. My little family was finally together again. I know without a doubt, that had it not been for Second Step Housing, my family and my life would not be what it is today. Second Step brought us together again. They have helped me to be grateful for the little things in life. After living in a home where I had roommates, we got the opportunity to move into our own place through Second Step, and without any roommates. And I remember the day I moved in. It was just before Christmas of 2010. I walked inside our home, hit my knees and prayed and thanked God for my life.

I have no doubt in my mind that had it not been for Second Step Housing taking a chance on me and letting me move in, my life and the bond I have with my children wouldn't be what it is today. My recovery wouldn't be as strong as it is either. Prior to moving into Second Step, I had no hope that my youngest daughter, Destiny, would ever want to come home and live with me. I knew in her heart that all she wanted was our family back without anyone else to share a home with. All she wanted was her mommy. Both girls have their Mom back now. I am now able to provide for myself and my girls, have a happy life, my recovery, God, and my children are the center of my life today. I owe so much to Second Step for giving me my family back and supporting me every step of the way. I am truly grateful for all that I have accomplished with the help of my support group.

I will continue on this journey called life and never look back. Yet, I will always remember who I was, where I came from, and how far I have come with the help of my amazing family and friends. I would not have done this without you! WE DO THIS TOGETHER!

Thanks,
Shannon Caseri