



## Aiden's Story

“Before I was accepted into the Transitional Living Program at Transition House, I was on a path of self-destruction, and I was using and had given up hope of ever getting clean and honestly I didn't want to. I didn't start using drugs at a young age. I started using drugs as a way to cope with my trauma's. I didn't want to deal with all the feelings so staying high seemed to be a better choice. Through the continuous support and encouragement from a friend, I applied to Transition House and after a couple of months of waiting, I was accepted. I was so lonely I would do drugs just to have

people come over. During that time, I relapsed many times causing my move in date to be pushed out. When I came into the Program, I was broken, and I honestly hated myself and my life. Transition House gave me a safe environment in which I could start my path to recovery from my mental illness and addiction. Through the endless support and encouragement of the staff, I have begun to change my life for the better.

So let's get real. This transformation didn't happen overnight. The first few months of my program were no walk in the park. I relapsed many times and struggled with severe depression, PTSD, and anxiety. I didn't really like the staff at first. Looking back now it's funny, but at the time, it wasn't. My doctors told me if I took my psych med's and did meth I'd have a heart attack, so what did I do... I stopped taking my psych meds. The meth didn't ever truly make me happy, it didn't make me happy at all. All that it did was mask the pain, but when I came down, it would all come flooding back... so my reaction, I'd stay high.

Seeing others in the group I was using with struggle and self-destruct so quickly, it scared me half to death and I began thinking of giving up drugs because I no longer wanted a chemical to control my life. I wanted to be in control. I also saw the damage it was doing to me. It caused my depression to run out of control, my anxiety to rule my life. I didn't want to leave my apartment... I didn't even leave my room for long periods of time. I wasn't eating... maybe once a week. I lost a lot of weight and didn't even notice. I wasn't taking care of myself at all. I let myself go and it was messy. Even during my darkest times, I was able to create wood carvings that I was proud of. Thanks to my healthy support group who truly believed in me, believed I could change and had faith in me, I was able to take the next step in my process of change.

I had given some of my carvings to the staff. Each of the staff expressed great interest in my work and it helped me become more confident in myself and proud of myself. It helped me to start with the self-love. Through the help of the staff, I started to take my med's more routinely and they finally started working. I was finally able to get a feeling of control of my mind and my addiction. I fought against the system they had in place but the moment I started to put effort into my recovery, I saw a whole new world open up in front of my eyes. Once again, I found my hope. A hope of a life where I will be healthy and thrive. And now that I am sober, my lifestyle has changed completely. **Now I walk with my head held high because I am worthy.**

But, I'm not done yet... I now have hope for a brighter future.”

# Aiden's Story updates...

(Aiden is working with the staff to add updates to his story.)

## UPDATE 1:

Taking courageous steps is part of recovery. Some steps appear small, others huge – each step is significant and worthy of acknowledgement.

Before Aiden ever shared his story, he made the decision to attend a Transition House Board meeting. This was a big step! Terrified, but proud that he took on this challenge.

Next was sharing his story... a huge step.

Then was the decision to change his hair. Through a kind gift, the hair that carried memories of the past was transformed.

The following day, another huge step... representing himself, Transition House and all of the partner agencies by sharing a message of Thanks at the 2021 United Way of Norman Pacesetter Kickoff celebration. Yes, it was terrifying, but growth means taking on the challenges.



We are all so Proud!