

From the Sanction List to the President's List

My name is Colin M. and I'm a 23 year-old recovering heroin addict. I grew up in a stable home with a good family. In my teenage years I made some less than reputable friends and made some bad choices that led me on the path of addiction. By the time I was 20 years old, I was a full-blown heroin addict. In November of 2009 I was arrested for possession and was sentenced to the drug court program in St. Tammany Parish the following September. My experience in that program was short lived. I wasn't ready to quit. After a few short visits to jail and a 28 day program, I still wasn't ready or taking the program seriously. Finally, on my fifth failed drug test, they sent me to jail and told me that I was going to a place called the Assisi Bridge House. I had no idea what I was in for.

I showed up to Assisi Bridge House on August 31, 2011. It really wasn't what I expected. I remember thinking that it was a very small place for a treatment facility but I soon found out that the size was a big advantage and I also came to not think of it as a treatment facility. There was a sense of community and freedom there and, coming right out of jail, the environment was very welcoming. At first, I was a newbie trying to get the hang of things. Then, as time went on and more new guys came in, I gained more responsibility in the house. I had lived on my own before for a short time when I attended LSU and my place was always a wreck. One of the things I learned at the Bridge House was how to take care of myself physically by cooking and cleaning. I learned how to live a normal, sober life.

Back in St. Tammany, I had been introduced to the A.A. program but was very resistant and close-minded. The recovery community I found at the meetings from the Bridge House got me rooted in a positive community in Houma. I got a sponsor and started working steps and started the miracle that occurs thru recovery.

The best aspect of the Bridge House that I experienced was the community and counseling. I learned that it really doesn't matter what drugs I did but why I did them. If I could change the things that made me make those choices in the first place, I'd have no reason to go back. That's where the counseling came in. Through working the treatment plans and one-on-one sessions with the counselors, I noticed and began to change behaviors that came from lack of self-esteem, fears, selfishness, and many other of my defects. The six months I spent there changed my whole personality.

Before I went to the Bridge House, I made poor grades in school, was unreliable in jobs, and lost all trust from my supportive family. Now, I'm living in Houma, still involved in the recovery community and am an employee at the Bridge House. I can hold a full time job, have repaired relationships with my family, chair A.A. meetings, and returned to school. I went from being on the Sanction List in Drug Court to being on the President's List at Southeastern Louisiana University. For me, that is a miracle and I can honestly say that I would not be nearly this successful without receiving the help and tools that I learned at the Assisi Bridge House.