

A step forward..

I, Casie Webster, have lived in Good News Shelter for two years and two months with my daughter, Taylor Sparrow. My time is coming to an end soon. I have learned so many things throughout this process while staying at the complex. I would like to share my journey to who would like to listen.

Taylor's father and I split up when Taylor was six months old and I had to move in with my parents. After being on your own for quite some time, I felt awkward living with my parents and having a child of my own living under their roof. When I heard about this program I was leery because I don't like having someone help me out in any way. To me it was a failure that I couldn't do this on my own. People can't be there the rest of my life to help me out.

I wouldn't say I was homeless when I moved in, but I had a one year old and didn't have a place to call home for either of us. I was determined to make the best out of the situation. To my understanding, this was a complex to get you back on your feet and feel better physically and emotionally. That took me a while to do so. My life consisted of working and taking care of my daughter. I really didn't talk much to our supervisor of our complex. I knew though I couldn't stay in my shadow any longer and had to get to know her and talk about anything that was on my mind whether it was good or bad or just giving her an update. The more I got know my neighbors the easier it was to do so. The majority of us ended up being like a big family. It was great. As for my daughter, Taylor, who is three now, well, she loves it here. I believe that her favorite thing while being here is that she can run next door and play with the kids and having a playground. After the drive got paved she had a blast with riding her bike and drawing with chalk. She doesn't ever want to come in. Especially during summertime we plant flowers to make it feel more like our place not just a shelter.

When I moved into this place, I had a ton of bills and didn't know where to start. I didn't want to pay them. I wanted to give up and let them be delinquent. But I was there to make a difference with my life. I started calling the bill collectors and had them take so much out of my check each pay period until they got paid off. I had to budget my money with one income while supporting my daughter. At times I would end up with just five or ten dollars but managed. I got by. It took me about a year to get caught up on the majority of bills and to this day, I still have one delinquent bill. I am working with credit advisors to help build my credit and make payment arrangements on this. This is one of the things that this program has done for us which was help us get into a credit building class. It made a major difference to me. Things that were on my credit got taken off because they were paid and so forth. I was always able to budget and pay my bills but when you are in a bind, I just did what I could.

Pam Craig has said repeatedly that she wished she could do more for me. But that is not true at all. If anything, she has made me a stronger person. Anything and everything is possible. It just takes time. I haven't asked for anything because I have a place to live thanks to this shelter program. I don't need to ask for things, Pam has been there when I needed to talk or if I had a problem. She wasn't the only one who was there for me, my parents and a really close friend were. You know it's not what people can do for you but its how they treat you that makes a big difference in your life. They have all treated me like I am worth something and I can do what I want to do with my life.

The more I have lived here, the more I want to accomplish a goal. And that is to be a counselor. I want to give people advice and listen. I want to do that for someone. I feel I have been blessed about myself, my life, being a single mother. Knowing I have been blessed by having the opportunity to stay and experience what I have throughout this whole process. It's not just a place to stay, it's more of a guidance to better your life and who you are. I think that people take advantage of certain things in life and it puts a hurting on others. That's why to me I call this another step forward not a shelter. I want to be able to pay it forward as it was to me.

I could go on and on about this housing complex all day. I don't know where or what I would be today if it weren't for this place. I went from nothing to someone. And, you don't need a partner to get you through the day or to help with the bills; you need strength, hope and faith. In time, all will come to be a happy ending. This shelter has done all of this and more.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to live and feel the way I do. I can't say it enough. Thank you and good bless.

Casie Webster and Taylor Sparrow