

Community of the Streets Outreach

presents

Gayle

A Success Story

Twenty-five years ago, when Gayle was merely 37 years old, she was living her American dream. She made 'good money' (as she described it) working at a local machine shop, owned a home with all of the modern amenities, and drove a nice car. She didn't foresee what was about happen that would forever change her life. She lost her job ~ not because of poor performance or any fault of her own -- the machine shop went out of business. Needless to say, Gayle was devastated. And she certainly was not financially prepared for such a loss.

With no promising prospects for another job and unemployment coming to an end, Gayle felt backed into a corner with nowhere to go. She lost her home and began living in her car. She further declined into a life of drugs and alcohol abuse to cope with her losses. As things became worse, she lost her car, too.

Homeless, hungry, and addicted to drugs and alcohol, Gayle's life spiraled out of control leading to drug related arrests. As the years went by, Gayle developed chronic health problems, spending much of her life in and out of jail. Then she learned about Lord of the Streets Episcopal Church and Community of the Streets Outreach (LOTS/COTS).

At LOTS/COTS, she was able to manage her physical ailments through the Caritas Health Clinic, where she received physicals, treatment, and referrals for her addictions. She received identity services to obtain state identification and became a member of Sisters@Heart, a LOTS/COTS program that helps women gain self-sufficiency through group training, prayer, sharing and activities.

As Gayle fellowshipped with other women, she shared her story and her journey toward sobriety and housing. Over the years, Gayle would visit LOTS/COTS for periods of time then disappear for longer periods. But she always came back.

About a year ago, now 62 years old, Gayle came back to LOTS/COTS just to visit the staff and friends at Sisters@Heart. She looked great. Her hair, skin complexion and healthy weight made her look like a new person who was vibrant and full of life. She was residing at a local transitional living facility.

Today, Gayle is reunited with her two adult sons and extended family members, has three years of sobriety and recently got awarded disability benefits. She gave lots of credit to LOTS/COTS for "never giving up" on her.

*Submitted by Myra Mitchell,
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