

Pathways to Independence
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www.pathwaystoIndependence.org
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Since its inception in 1991, over 300 young women have participated in the Pathways to Independence program. Pathways is appreciative of its personal, corporate and service organization sponsors, as well as the health care providers who donate their services without charge to improve the quality of life of Pathways clients. For more information about Pathways to Independence, please call 562.493.9048



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Pathways to Independence Celebrates Six Graduates
Contributing to this article - Pathways Client, Desiree

The evening started with the welcoming of seventeen new girls, bringing our total number of clients to fifty. Richard Waide, owner of Easy Does It gift shop, presented each girl with a gift certificate to his shop. Thirteen of our clients received recognition for a 3.5 GPA or higher and numerous clients received character recognition awards.

An "Unsung Hero Award" was presented to Carlida Moss for her outstanding customer service to all of our clients seeking Automobile Club memberships. Dave described Carlida as "an angel." She accepted her award explaining that she feels blessed to be a part of something that involves such fantastic people. Pathways president, Dave Bishop, reminded the attendees that there are 300 volunteers behind the Pathways to Independence program, and

Pathways clients will never have the opportunity meet 90% of them, but that they are always there for them. Prompted by a Pathways graduate, Dave shared thoughts on the "un-negotiables," (characteristics of potential life-partners and the importance of personally demonstrating those same qualities in ourselves). According to Dave, many of the girls enter the program unprepared to choose a suitable partner. As a result of their therapy and mentoring, our clients leave with a better understanding of what they want and need in a companion.

Dave cited a commencement speech delivered by a Navy Seal admiral at the 2014 University of Texas graduation. Contained in this speech was a quotation of the

university's motto: "What starts here changes the world." This concept reminded Dave of the young women in Pathways. He reminded them that when they entered Pathways, they were told it is a gift. The only requirement is that it be paid forward. Dave continued, "But you know you can't give away what you don't have. You cannot change the world unless you have been empowered to do so. In order to be empowered, you have to be transformed. Did you know that every Pathways graduate to some degree is transformed?" He explained that changing the world is a huge undertaking, but if each of the clients were to touch just a few lives, they could in fact "change the world!"

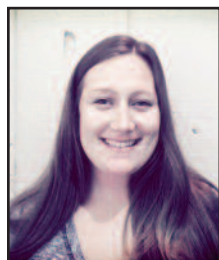
The Graduation Honorees

"Josie" came from a background of abuse and chemical dependency. This abuse involved bruises, blood and broken fingers and a broken nose. She turned to heavy drinking and started missing school. At 18 she ran away from home. After joining a twelve-step program, she was accepted into Pathways, where she earned a BA in Women's Studies. She graduated this past fall with a 3.8 GPA, stating that "school is my love." Josie's future plans include attending graduate school to earn a Ph.D. She challenged others to go against the grain and not just "have passion but BE passion."

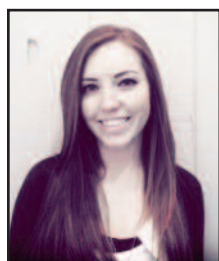


Janna's father suffered from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and administered daily beatings with a wooden spoon. She and her siblings were taken away and placed into foster care. Forty three percent of Orange County foster children do not graduate from high school. Only 15% go enter college and of those, only two percent earn a degree. Janna was 19 when she entered Pathways. Taking advantage of a scholarship to study abroad, she visited 10 countries, became a minimalist, and learned to appreciate the kindness of strangers. Laughing at her skepticism upon entering Pathways, she assured the new clients that it is genuine. Janna talents include a comedic nature and a flair for the dramatic, which she demonstrated by sharing an interpretive dance. Janna exemplifies the potential that every Pathways client

realizes with the benefit of therapy and support. Breaking new ground among Pathways graduates, Janna graduated Summa Cum Laude with a grade point average of 3.96!! She has joined AmeriCorps and plans to return to Europe, where she will volunteer for 11 months.



Tricia idealized an absent father. Her constant search for a loving family left her with an abundant amount of pain and fear that she was not good enough. Dave explained it as a “hole in her soul in the shape of her dad.” Because of this, she suffered from abandonment issues. She dated inappropriate individuals and never acknowledged her own worthiness. She leaves Pathways as an accomplished and proud woman. She earned an Associate’s degree with an emphasis in science. Returning to Orange Coast College in August for the medical assistant program, she hopes to begin a career in the OB-GYN field. She is most grateful for her therapy, which enabled her to abandon a drug-addicted boyfriend. Tricia thanked Pathways for providing her a place to live. As she greeted the new girls in the program, she encouraged them to stay committed because one day they could become college graduates.



When Eyres was two years old, her drug-addicted mother abandoned her. She lived with her father who eventually remarried. By age six she was living a modern-day Cinderella story. Her step-mother and step-sister were gone during the day while her father worked. Eyres was left with a list of chores. When her father returned home, he would yell at her if the chores were not done. She became “fearful of him and fearful of failure.” Eyres ended up in the care of an aunt who was herself a Pathways graduate with 14 years of sobriety. Eyres graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a BS in Aerospace Engineering and just accepted a mechanical engineering position with a local manufacturing company. She told the new girls to “take one day at a time,” and assured them all that it is worth it.



There were five children in Jazmin’s family, four girls and one boy. When Jazmin was only a year old, her father was sentenced to 25 years in prison. In his absence, he signed off on all family decisions, including a directive that only the girls would work to support their mother. Her Pathways therapist was instrumental in helping Jazmin to assert her

independence. In December she earned her bachelor’s degree in Liberal Studies from Cal Poly Pomona with a 3.6 GPA. She has also earned a secondary teaching credential in Mathematics. She thanked Pathways for everything, reminding the attendees that Pathways to Independence taught her, “Unconditional love DOES exist.”

“Janice” came from a household filled with domestic violence. Most of her childhood memories involved her parents’ fighting. Often “buzzed” or high, her dad would become angry and volatile. As time progressed, her mom started working more and her dad less, leaving her at home with dad more often. Little annoyances would set him off, and she was very fearful of him. She learned in therapy that low self-esteem can be directly related to an alcoholic parent, in particular a father. Her self-esteem was her toughest battle. She began to cut herself and pulled out her hair subconsciously. She was diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, depression and trichotillomania, which is a hair pulling disorder. Today she has 4 years of sobriety. Janice believes we discover our truest self in love, and she can honestly say she loves herself.

Dave closed our ceremony with a simple “Try your best and this could be you!”

Congratulations to all of our amazing graduates!



Save the Date for the 19th Annual Friends of Pathways Fundraiser
Saturday, October 3, 2015

No More Safe Havens PepperFanne’s Story

“My mother said I should have been one of her six abortions.”

—PepperFanne 

Her Story THEN:

Like many girls in Pathways, PepperFanne suffered physical and psychological abuse during childhood. She was called “ugly,” “stupid,” and “dumb” by her mother, and with the insults came constant beatings.

I was in about the fourth grade when I started to run away from home...With my mother doing drugs, my father’s alcoholism, and all the rest, I wound up staying at my grandparents’ house for weeks or months at a time.

Until her sixteen-year-old cousin took away her last safe haven by molesting her repeatedly at age nine. At age thirteen, PepperFanne began using drugs. At sixteen, she tried to kill herself.

She finally sought refuge with a street gang. She’d hoped for the protection she so desperately needed, but it didn’t take long for her life to spiral out of control.

Things were happening fast. I got pregnant not long after I tried to commit suicide.

One day my boyfriend got jumped in front of our apartment. He told me to run. I’m nine months pregnant; how am going to run?

But I ran. My friend pushed me up the stairs as rival gang members were pulling out pipes and wrenches to hit my baby’s daddy and his friends.

This was far from a safe haven:

I was basically leaving in a crack house, in a neighborhood where we had “walk-bys”—shootings that take place on foot rather than “drive-bys” from a car.

One time we shot up some people on our way to the liquor store. The helicopters came quickly, so we ran back to the house. Cops were everywhere, and we were told to come out. I had my daughter wrap her arms around me as I walked out with my hands up...

Finally PepperFanne’s father, in his own recovery, asked her if she wanted to get sober.

I didn’t know what sober was. But I didn’t know what I wanted, so I said yes.

Her sponsor referred her to Pathways.

Dave interviewed me for the program, but he said no...

Her Story NOW:

Pepperfanne obviously changed Dave’s mind (read her full story to find out how!) and entered Pathways...she graduated with a B.S. in Human Services and works in the adult mental health field.

I want to be able to give back completely. Helping others is what I’m best at.

It’s especially important for me to help young women. I’m now mentoring a girl in Pathways—and she just happens to be my niece. She comes from a pretty bad place.

We are thrilled to report that PepperFanne’s niece has also just graduated from Pathways, with a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering!

PepperFanne has continued her own successful journey. Now a supervisor at work, she will be receiving her Master’s in Social Work this May.

We congratulate both of these remarkable women for fighting so hard to heal from their past traumas and turning their lives around.

I went through all that crap to get here—to where I am and where I want to be.

If I can do it, anyone can do it.

Read **PepperFanne’s full story** and help more women like her and her niece!



Buy the book **TODAY** at **ButterflyTears.net**

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