

I am writing this letter to share my experience, hope and inspiration with you. I am a 58-year-old woman who has ***been in recovery for eleven years. I went through the Sheehan Women's Program, and then lived at Saving Grace, a women's sober community for 8 years.*** Before, I completed the Sheehan's addiction program, I began looking for a place to live in sobriety. At this time, my son was 14 years old and lived locally with his father; I desperately wanted to find a living environment, we could both call home. I have struggled for many years with family trauma and alcohol addiction. I had successfully completed my addiction program at the Sheehan Women's Program; however, I did realize I needed added support as I entered back into the mainstream. I felt a great deal of pressure to support myself and my son, as well as keeping up my program to stay sober. Since entering recovery, I also have been an active AA member and active volunteer in sober communities, these two tools have been a large part of my recovery. I did not want to lose the support systems I had grown to trust and rely on for support.

My question was how do I balance life and sobriety? Something I have never done well in the past! After some thought, I decided to move to Saving Grace, a women's sober house run by the Lowell House. To begin, I rented an apartment on the 3rd floor; my son was able to visit during the day. I began working full time and began to re-establish my relationship with my son. Having a safe, secure place to live has been an important part of my recovery. Before entering into recovery and going into a detox, I always went back to an unsafe home and worked too much. I was always focused on financial insecurities and did not put my recovery first. This time, I knew something needed to be different. ***The difference was going to live at Saving Grace.***



While living at Saving Grace, I was able to first work on my recovery program, second, begin to balance self-care and nurturing my son and finally, be a reliable employee.

During my stay, the Lowell House began to look for a house manager. I decided to accept this position and I moved to the Carriage House, which was situated in the back of the main house. The Carriage House is a two-bedroom apartment, which my son was able to live with me without restrictions. Here I was able to put my sobriety first, provide love and support for my son and find a career I have become passionate about. I cannot say enough about my stay, first at the Sheehan Program and then Saving Grace. I believed both programs combined saved my life. I was able to receive

support from the other women in the house, have time to explore my patterns of relapse, as well as work on my history of trauma in a safe, supportive environment.

One last piece of support I received during my stay at Saving Grace were the sober friendships. Many I continue to have today. Loneliness was a big piece of my relapses and beginning recovery. At Saving Grace, I began to volunteer in the community. The women and I started a garden in the backyard, and I continued to work with new women coming into the house. I began to be part of the solution and learned how to live life in recovery. I was able to feed my spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing. Today, I am happy to say, I have tools which help me balance a busy life without sacrificing my sobriety. I have been able to buy a small condo for my son and have a rewarding career and continue to volunteer in the community.

In Alcoholic Anonymous, there is a saying that states- if a person in recovery planned out their future, they would sell themselves short. I believe this to be true for myself. If I had followed my original plan to find an apartment by myself, I am not sure where I would be today. Having the opportunity to live at Saving Grace has changed my life forever and I will always be grateful for the opportunities given to me. I hope communities like Saving Grace will continue to grow and provide safe, nurturing environments for people in recovery.

-K

#NationalRecoveryMonth #RecoveryMonthLHATR