



Bridgehaven Success Story –Lon’s Story

Why Health?

Metro United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life—a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

Metro United Way works to ensure everyone in our community enjoys lifelong health and independence by:

- Increasing the availability of quality health care information.
- Providing health support services through agency programs.
- Helping seniors and people with disabilities envision and achieve maximum independence and a high quality of life.

Measuring results...2018 Goals and Indicators:

MUW Goals

People get needed physical and mental health care.
People are practicing healthier living.

Indicators (Why this is important.)

- Mental illness affects 1 in 5 Americans, meaning that 20% will experience a mental illness or behavioral health problem in this lifetime.
- 11% of Americans have severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder and severe recurring depression.
- In the Louisville Metro Area, as many as 75,000 people are living with a severe mental illness. Of those 75,000, at least 30,000 are not eligible for Medical Assistance and have no health insurance to pay for the services they need.

When people in our community are safe, practice healthy living, and get needed physical and mental health care, they will live longer with a higher quality of life.

Bridgehaven Success Story –Lon’s Story

My name is Lon Moore and I'm a member at Bridgehaven. I was born in 1959 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. I lived with my mother and two sisters. There was never any known father in the picture-our situation was highly dysfunctional and mentally confusing my entire childhood. For me, this translated to a very lonely adolescence, trouble, aggression, and anger... all of which lead to over five hospitalizations as a teenager because of my mental illness.

I dropped out of school at 16, stopped taking my prescribed medications, and joined the Job Corps. This in turn led me to job training in Lexington KY where I liked the slower pace and nicer people. Unfortunately though, my job placement after this training sent me to Baltimore. In less than one year I had lost my job and was completely homeless, because I wasn't able to have control over my own thoughts and mind, and the explosive, irritated personality my mental illness produced because of it

I was taken in by a local church family where I met a woman and her daughter, married, and then moved them back to Lexington KY where I liked the lifestyle and wanted to make a new start. Moving to another city was not necessarily the answer to my problems. After having another child, the pressure of providing for a family of four sent my mental illness out of control. I went from job to job. I was violent, I was jailed, I was hospitalized. But nothing worked. The right medications were never explored to the fullest, even though I was diagnosed with several mental disorders.

After years of in and out of the hospital time after time, a divorce, no friends or support and much loneliness, I took off for Louisville for a change of scenery with no real plans. My homelessness here, lead to several hospitalizations at UL, which in turn led to living at Haywood House. At this point I was back on medications, but they weren't the right ones. All I did was sleep and eat all the time. Boredom surrounded me.

The next time I was hospitalized I met the intake coordinator from Bridgehaven... it was a day I will never forget. For the first time ever, it sounded like there was a place that would help me deal with my mental illness when I wasn't actually in a hospital AND it would give me something to DO. .a purpose to get dressed, up and out each day! To say the least, I was really-excited at the idea of going to Bridgehaven!

At first I was a little uneasy, I didn't know if I would fit in, because I hadn't in so many other places in my life. But that uneasiness was short lived. Almost right away I found something I had never had before... support and understanding. This came from both the staff as well as the other members I met.

It was 2001 and my life was about to take a dramatic turn. They say knowledge is power- in the past six years I've become very powerful over my own life. I've learned warning signs and coping skills, and have built and maintained the most meaningful relationships in my life. I've discovered the world of the internet, I've discovered confidence in myself, and I learned what it is like to feel safe. I've learned independent living skills and now have my own apartment on Bardstown Road. I've had job skills training, and I learned that I'm an artist. Perhaps best of all, I've gained an enormous circle of friends and a healthy social life, which have collectively, kept me out of the hospital over the past six years!!

Currently, I'm in my second year of a two year fulltime degree program at JCC for heating and air conditioning making all A's and B's. My hopes for the future are of working fulltime for a heating and air conditioning company, and pursuing and marketing my art even further. It feels good to be on the road of hopes, goals and dreams.... things I thought I'd never have. These are the precious gifts that only Bridgehaven could have given me and I'm forever grateful.

Here's how you can help:

- Become an advocate. For more information, please call (502) 292-6142.
- Give. A donation of \$200.00 per week provides a year of services to a person with severe mental illness at *Bridgehaven*, reducing hospitalizations and allowing them to live independently.

To live united is to understand that we are all interconnected. Metro United Way is working to advance the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. For more information, volunteer opportunities or to make a donation, please visit us at metrounitedway.org or call 502.583.2821.