

# REFLECTIONS ON THE *Journey*

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*Nothing here at Journey to New Life is possible without your generous support and advocacy for what we do. We want to share some of the stories you've impacted and thank you for everything you do to go on this journey with us and our clients.*

## AMY'S STORY: THE ROAD TO REUNIFICATION

Journey's clients face many challenges when they return to the community from prison. Probably one of the most difficult challenges for those that are parents is reunifying their families. Amy Demboski lost custody of her two younger children while she was serving her sentence. Her son, age 12, now lives with his foster family who have guardianship over him. She's finally able to have regular visits with him, but he hasn't seen his sister in about five years. Her daughter, age 10, lives with her father, Amy's ex-boyfriend. Amy sees her weekly through supervised visits, but she's hoping to work out a co-parenting arrangement with the girl's father. Amy says the separation has been hard on the kids.

"The first time I saw my daughter, she told me, 'I can't even remember what my brother looks like anymore.' They love each other so much," she said. "It's really miserable that they're not getting to see each other. It's been really hard on them, but I'm hoping that when I have her back I'm going to get to let her visit him more."

Between 2014 and 2019, Amy was in and out of prison on drug-related charges. She remembers her first time doing drugs when she was 15. She says she didn't even really know what it was. She got pregnant at 16 with her older

son, who is now 21, and was sober until she was 18. When she got back into drugs at 21, she was hooked. "I started when I was 21," she said. "I didn't quit until I went to county this last time and was sent to prison. I did drugs a good part of my life."

Everything changed during her last stint in prison. "When I was in county that's when I was just like, 'OK God, I know that I've done wrong in the past, but I'm not going to allow this in my life anymore. I just pray that you protect my kids through whatever it is that I'm going to go through,'" she said. "That's what I did. I started watching more church on TV in there and giving everything to God. When I started to worry or stress out then that's what I did. I would give it to God constantly."

***"I stayed [at Journey House] for nine months. With Covid it was tough trying to find somewhere that I could afford."***

- Amy Demboski

*Amy's story continues inside >*

# AMY'S STORY: THE ROAD TO REUNIFICATION

Continued

Amy was released in January 2020. This time, she went straight to Journey to New Life. She was accepted as a resident of the Peace House, and she credits this experience as giving her the opportunity to start the new life she wanted.

"I stayed there for nine months. I was there well longer than anybody else," she said. "With Covid, it was tough trying to find somewhere that I could afford. I didn't want to just jump into something and not make it again. So I ended up staying. I think I was scared to be on my own. When things didn't work out, I would just be afraid everything's going to fall apart. Journey worked with me until I got my own place. I'm just grateful for that."

Journey to New Life also helped her when she got COVID-19 and again when she was hurt at work. She says she's extremely thankful for all that Journey to New Life has done for her. She knows her chances of transforming her life would have been less likely if she had returned to the same environment she was in before her incarceration.

Now, Amy lives in a two-bedroom apartment and works a night job. She feels like she has a new beginning. She remains committed to reunifying her family. She's also planning for her future. "I want to finish getting my GED," she said. "I've been thinking about doing the school for drug counseling. I think I would be good at helping people and letting them know there is hope, and life is OK without drugs. You don't need drugs to make it through life. No matter what you've been through, there's something better out there." 🌱



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- Amy Demboski

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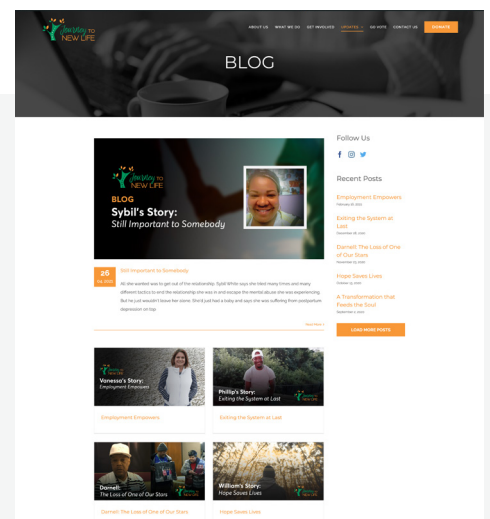
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# ANITA'S STORY: ADDICTED TO MONEY

Addiction comes in many forms. For Anita Mordue, her drug was money. "I never felt like I was enough," she said. "There are so many things I cared about before. It was about how people saw me. It was greed and insecurity. I wanted money to be able to rent a bigger house, have a better car, spend money on vacations, take friends out to dinner and drinks. Stuff that just never mattered."

It ended up costing her a lot. At 51, she was arrested and incarcerated for embezzlement. It was the second time she'd been caught. While she makes no excuses and takes full responsibility for her actions, she describes her state of mind leading up to those moments as feeling constant pressure to give her son the same kind of lifestyle that his wealthier father and stepmother could.

"I remember fixing lunch for him. I used to buy peaches and mandarin oranges at Aldi," she said. "I had bought some containers so I could put that food in his lunch. His dad and stepmom always bought prepackaged, and I remember him asking me why I did it the way I did it, and it's because we don't have the same food budget they have. I vividly remember that being a thing for me. I was embarrassed in front of my son that I couldn't buy his lunch food the same way his dad could."

It took her time in incarceration to realize that her son never cared about those things. "I thought I had to do the things for him that his father was able to do. It took all of this to learn that that's not what he cared about at all," she said. "He cared that I was his mom. He cared that I was kind to our neighbors."

Unfortunately for Anita, the events drove a wedge between her and her son, and he hasn't wanted to have a relationship with her since her arrest. It's evident that this and the impact of her actions on her victim deeply trouble her. "I'm going to be 56, and I feel like I just got started being the person God designed me to be," she said, struggling to hold back emotion. "My only regrets in all of this is the life I devastated with my employer and the relationship I don't have with my son."

Anita remains hopeful that she can mend some of the damage done by taking care of her restitution and remaining open to a relationship with her son if he's ever ready. She says she's learned so much from her incarceration experience, and particularly, from Journey to New Life afterward. She moved in to Journey House in September 2017, and she says she didn't want to leave.

***"[My time at Journey showed me] a kindness that I truly had never experienced in my life before."***

- Anita Mordue



She was scared of life on her own. Journey House made her feel safe and cared for.

"I didn't have a home plan because I didn't have any family or friends who either could, or would, take me in so I was literally at the mercy of any program that would take me," she said. "I vividly remember when the prison bus pulled up, and we got out the day we were released. We were standing there, and Sister Rose — God bless that woman, she's so sweet. I just adore her. — Sister Rose pulled up in her little blue car."

For Anita, the next 90 days at Journey House showed her what she recounts as "a kindness that I truly had never experienced in my life before. It was just almost indescribable. It's an unconditional love that I literally had never known before."

Today, Anita loves her job at a local produce company, and she gets excited about her 401K and planning for her future. She says something that was really transformative for her was when she read something a few years ago that suggested that, if you're not planning for your future, it's because you don't think you have one. "So what's so funny now is that the things that thrill me right now is when I'm offered overtime," she said. "I get excited about the money that's going into my 401K, not the money that I'm going to bring home and how I'm going to spend it on something."

Her dream is to one day be able to provide haircuts for women when they get out of prison so they have confidence to face the challenges ahead of them. 🌱



# KITS FOR CLIENTS

*We appreciate our supporters who donate items to help our clients.*

The pandemic has limited what we can accept, but our clients still have needs. So, in an effort to make it easier, we are offering an option to purchase kits for clients, either once or on a monthly giving program. The kits are designed to meet the basic needs of clients based on their individual journey. We will continue to accept the donations that we can. This is simply another option to meet the needs of our clients.



**\$10.00**

*Provide clients with the basic necessities.*



**\$25.00**

*Help our clients and their families by providing the kitchen supplies they need.*



**\$25.00**

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*Provide clients with the tools needed to clean their new home.*



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*Help clients moving from a shelter into their own home feel welcome.*



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**...and more!**

To help us provide these kits for our clients, we are looking for 50 donors to commit to our monthly giving program. Start your monthly giving today!

For more information about what is included with each of the kits, visit:

**KITS.JNTL.ORG**

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CELEBRATE

THE

*Journey*

2021 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

## Our annual fundraiser is back!

Join us for **Celebrate the Journey 2021**. We're excited to gather once again in person to connect, share news and celebrate the many client successes that your support helped achieve.

We look forward to seeing you again.

**Thursday, August 26, 2021**

**5:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**

Boulevard Brewing Company

Muehlebach Suite

2501 Southwest Blvd, Kansas City, MO

**For sponsorship information, please call (417) 551-3435.**



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[journeytonewlife.org](http://journeytonewlife.org)

Your help  
makes this  
possible.

**Join us for Celebrate the Journey 2021!**

Our annual celebration will take place on August 26th.  
See inside for more details.

## WAYS TO GIVE



### **MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS**

Does your company match charitable contributions? If so, make sure you submit the giving request.



### **PLANNED GIVING**

Remembering Journey to New Life in your will is a great way to create a lasting legacy that reflects your support of the organization's mission.



### **MONTHLY RECURRING GIVING**

If you're giving by credit card, simply check the box to make an ongoing monthly contribution.



### **VOLUNTEER OR DONATE ITEMS**

Journey to New Life is always in need of volunteer assistance and basic living and hygiene items.

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