



Jahnice Strange Shares Her Story

The disease of addiction and alcoholism remained silent in my early years, but due to unresolved issues and trauma.. Unknown to me at the time, alcoholism would take me on a journey that would ultimately take me to a place of chaos, confusion and confinement.

I was raised with a solid Christian foundation, and strong morals/ values were my family's norm. My step-father was Rev. Louis Thomas he was a pastor at St. David AME Zion Church in Sag Harbor, NY. In 1970's my childhood years were enjoyable, I excelled in school and was involved in community and church activities. However, my college years began with experimenting with drinking and drug use which latter led to a cycle of substance abuse /addiction and finally incarceration.

In January 2011, I was arrested for DWI, which wasn't my first offence. I was sentenced to nine months in the Suffolk County Correctional Facility in Riverhead, NY and this time while confined behind the walls I humbly cried out for help! I had the privilege of meeting Ms. Michelle Raysor who at that time mentored inmates through Safe Harbor Mentoring Program. She helped me identify some of the underlining issues I wasn't addressing that kept me in the cycle of addiction. She gave me hope that recovery was possible and offered to mentor me when I was discharged.

Ms. Raysor started another mentoring program "Connecting for Purpose". It was "Connecting for Purpose", Ms. Michelle Raysor's reentry mentoring program that helped to changed my life. I received the support that I needed to rebuild my life. She and her staff helped me evaluate my vocational goals, reconnect with my daughter who was not in my custody, and guided me through the many pathways of recovery. My concept of spirituality was reignited, and for once in my life I felt empowered.

Looking back now I am proud to say that I am a woman with sustained recovery, I have my daughter in my life today and I am proud to say that she is going off to college this year. I completed my 350 core hours for CASAC credentialing and am in the initial process through OASAS. My LPN license was suspended due my past legal issues; however they have since been reinstated. I am also a Recovery Coach/ Peer Specialist. The latter being the thing I am most proud of.

The things I have accomplished would not have been possible, if the services/ resources I needed weren't there. Connecting for Purpose, gives the person trying to get there life on track the motivation and support they need to be successful. I am now a mentor/ community liaison for "Connecting for Purpose". Enjoying the work I do, knowing that I am giving back what was so freely given to me.

No greater work is as satisfying as working in your PURPOSE and PASSION!!