



I came to St. Anne's lost, helpless, full of guilt and shame. I felt like a failure and full of self hate. Another relapse. Another lost job and possibly my nursing career. A 23 year marriage destroyed and three precious boys heartbroken because of this disease. I thought I was one of those unfortunate, constitutionally incapable women that just couldn't get this simple program. I've been in and out of treatment for over 20 years.

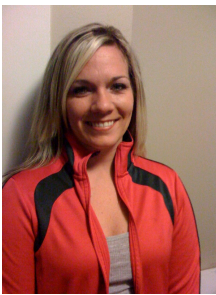
I experienced an overdose over a year ago that terrified me but I still couldn't stop using. I really was at that jumping off place. I couldn't live with the drugs and alcohol and I couldn't live without them. Substances quit working for me. I hadn't gone to an AA meeting in months, and wasn't calling my sponsor. I withdrew from everyone and anything that mattered in my life. I quit praying because I felt so unworthy of God's forgiveness and grace. The loneliness was overwhelming and the shame unbearable.

One morning I woke up in utter despair. I prayed for God to please help me. Later that morning I was going through a pile of mail on the kitchen table. In all that junk mail appeared a newsletter from St. Anne's. I knew that God had answered my prayer. I immediately called St. Anne's and told them of my relapse and that I wanted to come back for treatment. You see, I had been at St. Anne's 2 years ago and knew what the facility could offer me. I was completely defeated and willing to do whatever I had to do to get clean and sober. I've been told that getting to come to St. Anne's is a calling from God and that there are angels working there. I know that to be true. Ms. Deloris has a special gift that I can't begin to describe. Jill is also a blessing. Her soft, caring voice and love guides us through intense trauma groups. Being here at St. Anne's has helped me get to the core issues of my disease. I've learned about acceptance of myself and others. I've learned about solutions, how to deal with family dysfunction, codependency, trauma, and relapse.

I've learned how to feel again, how to set boundaries and how to work through grief and loss.

Living in a home with 17 women can be challenging at times. Learning to communicate and share myself with the other women here has been an awesome experience. I've been able to let down some walls and just be me. I'm starting to like me again and that feels good. I'm starting to trust again. I'm so grateful to St. Anne's and God for giving me a new attitude, a new hope and a new way of life. God willing, I will continue one day at a time.

Sherry



As I look back on my days here at St. Anne's, the only word that comes to my mind is WOW!!! When I arrived here, two months ago, I had no idea what recovery meant, no clue about who I was, and couldn't find my place in this world. Knowing that all the women here have gone through the same struggles, heartbreaks, and suffering helped me to open up and share. I have grown tremendously just from the fellowship I have with these women. Ms. Delores and the rest of the staff are terrific. I have never in my life felt more "at home" than I have here. St. Anne's has given me the tools I need to stay in recovery and to be happy. I have learned a tremendous amount about addiction and alcoholism, but most importantly, I have learned who I am. I am a strong, beautiful, devoted mother, daughter, sister, and friend. St. Anne's is a beautiful place with beautiful women, and thanks to all of them, I am now ready to face the world. I am so blessed to have lived here, learned here, grown here, and began my journey of life being sober. I am Jessica. I am an alcoholic and an addict.

Jessica



Dear St. Anne's,

I arrived on the doorsteps of St. Anne's a broken, lost little girl. I was out of touch with my emotions, my thoughts were skewed and my spirit was all but dead. My addiction to alcohol had taken me so far out of reality that I had lost hope of finding my way towards a fulfilling, peaceful life.

I began drinking alcohol at the age of twenty-eight. I know today that alcoholism is more than a drinking problem-it is a thinking problem. Looking back as far as I can remember, my thinking about my life, who I am, and my reality was skewed long before I picked up my first drink. This realization that St. Anne's helped me to see has been the greatest asset in my recovery. In my past attempts at recovery, I had been blocked. I thought if I took away the drink my life would magically get better. While at St. Anne's, I learned many things about myself that needed to change if I wanted to stay sober. I surrendered to a new way of life and thinking. I began to incorporate honesty, faith and hope into my life.

Today, I continue to work the 12 Steps of Recovery with my sponsor and I get to see and feel the miracle of recovery every day. I have a peace today that I have not ever known. That lost little girl is blooming into a loving, secure woman who can live in her own skin. St. Anne's has given me a life that I never knew existed. I didn't get my old life back, I have re-created a new one and for that I am grateful.

Sandy S.