



Brighter, Behavior, Choices Inc., NFP

# Success Story

Hello, my name is Christina Borowski. I started drinking alcohol in the 60's at the age of 11. At that time, the adults would give me drinks because they thought it was cute to see me tipsy. It was also around that time my father died. He was my best friend and I had watched him deteriorate from cancer or the "C" word which it was called because of the stigma associated with it back then. I continued to drink and was the girl who carried alcohol to school in a thermos. At 18 years old, my two best friends, who were also 18 were, killed on St. Patrick's Day; this destroyed me! Nobody spoke about it or knew how to approach me and when people asked how I was doing, I would sarcastically say, "I can at least dig up two new friends."

My drinking increased until there were so many disasters and tragedies in my life that my rock bottom was endless. My parents were dead, my family didn't want anything to do with me; and I was homeless, going from hotel to motel, even living in a tent at one point. The end came when I ran out of money, and had gotten rid of all my clothes, except what I was wearing. Standing outside on a Chicago street in snowy, subzero weather, with only the clothes on my back, I looked up at the sky and said "I give up!" A friend of mine and I began to move from shelter to shelter where you had a certain time to get in at night but were on your own during the day; I did this for six months until one day I asked a priest at one of the shelters for bus fare to go to treatment. He agreed on the condition that I pay him back and gave me what I asked along with a stamped envelope to return the money; which I did. I hadn't taken a drink in the six months I was living in shelters, so after being in treatment for six days, I was told I had to leave because I was "too sober". A call was made to Ms. LaShawn at BBC who agreed to accept me into the recovery home

as BBC's first emergency placement. We butt heads when I first got there, but it was the best experience in my life. It had been a long time since I had a home and a bed, but I never felt bad about myself. I was given the opportunity to use my talent for decorating around the house and the void of not having my own family was filled by Ms. LaShawn and the ladies of the house; they became my family, it brings me to tears thinking about it.

When I left BBC to move to Florida, Ms. LaShawn threw me a going away party. Since I've been gone, I have had difficulty, due to losing my job because of COVID, Ms. LaShawn is still a support to me, telling me I was welcome to come back if I ever needed to, and sending me the money to pay my rent when I didn't have it. I am 62 years old and I don't jump as fast as I used to, but every day I jump out of bed ready for the day. I have learned to love every single moment, I am grateful that I still have my mind with all the drinking I did. I've learned that being positive is a choice and how to reverse negative thinking. I wouldn't be where I am without BBC. There's no comparison between my past and my life now, it is wonderful to wake up and not need a bottle of vodka by my bed. I never say "Never" anymore, all things are possible! I want to travel and see the world.

***Christina Borowski***