

June the 18th, 2017 it was Father's Day, it was also the day my son David overdosed for the 7th time. The time that introduced us to Converting Hearts Ministries. I didn't know about the other times he had overdosed until he shared his testimony while at Converting Hearts. That time was the time we almost lost him, his dad found him on the floor in the bathroom. Once he finished detox and knew he was going to CHM he couldn't wait to get there. I remember him sitting up all night with his bag packed waiting to go.

Once there he found acceptance and love like he had not known before. Of course, we loved him and didn't judge, but this was different. These were guys that were living the same thing he was. I remember shortly after he arrived, he had a dental emergency and I had to go get him. While he was away, he had to have prescription pain meds for a procedure so he couldn't return immediately. He never even took any of those meds. He wanted to get back as quickly as possible. He called them daily and checked in, told them how much he loved them and would be back as soon as he got his tooth taken care of.

David spent a little over a year at CHM, he didn't want to leave. God had given him a heart for helping those men. He had been a house manager, the house barber (poor guys, he had no idea what he was doing) and eventually moved to one of the spaces on the farm where he could be somewhat independent. While there, God gave him the vision of becoming a barber with a mobile unit. He wanted to take it to the streets and help guys that were at the bottom. He asked if he could come home. I agreed as long as he had a plan.

He found a local Celebrate Recovery group, contacted them and started the ball rolling to go to barber school. It took him a full year at home before he began barber school. During that year I saw God working in his life like never before. He had made good friends in his CR group and was taking part in the leadership. He traveled to other CR groups in the area and shared what God had done for him through CHM and CR and how they too could stay sober. He was coaching Upwards Soccer and forming relationships with those kids.

Unfortunately, David's story didn't end the way we would have hoped. He met a girl, she got pregnant and they got married while he was in school. The stress of a newborn, a new marriage and being a full-time student led to a relapse and on September 8, 2019, just 4 months shy of achieving his goal of becoming a barber, we lost David to Fentanyl poisoning. The year and a half he was at CHM and the first year he was back home, we had our David. The one we had been missing for 20 years. It was all due to the work that began at Converting Hearts Ministries. Our family will forever be grateful for Converting Hearts and the work they did in David's life, for giving us the old David back. David's story is not over though. I continually hear from people who were encouraged by David at one time or another. I was given experiences and knowledge to help others in similar situations. We formed relationships with people at CHM that will be with us the rest of our lives.

I have parents contact me from time to time "what can I do". The first thing I say is, find you some praying friends. Don't be ashamed, you don't have time for that. The second thing I say, if their child is male....Converting Hearts Ministries...call them.

Livvie Gooding