

Beau's New Life: A Tale of Moving Forward

I was adopted when I was 5 years old. I had seizures and my real parents didn't want to deal with my health problems so they gave me up to an orphanage somewhere. I lived in Mississippi with my adoptive mom and dad and 15 other adopted kids. We lived in a middle class environment. My mom kicked people out or they moved out once they were old enough. I left with my sister when I was 18 and came to Minnesota. She wanted to come here to live with her boyfriend. I lived with them in Fridley from June of 2016 until September. My sister wanted me to get a job and work to pay the bills. I struggled with the work and my brother-in-law told me to go to give blood to make money. I walked two hours there and they said I had low blood pressure. I told them I had seizures in the past so they said I couldn't give blood. I walked two hours all the way back home and told my brother-in-law I couldn't give blood. He said "how are you going to pay for your rent?" I said I didn't know and I told him I wanted to kill myself because nobody actually cared about me. They called the police to get me to leave. I left with my backpack and they put my stuff outside. I banged on the door and begged them to let me in and I was angry. The ambulance came and took me to the hospital because I was trying to stab myself. I wanted to give up on life because nobody cared about me or wanted me around. I was in the hospital for a week and at the end of my stay, I was given a taxi ride to SteppingStone shelter.

I was afraid to go to SteppingStone, but it helped me. They told me about HOPE 4 Youth and I went there. I was shy and when I walked in, I was nervous. I met Naomi. She sat with me and asked me questions and said they could help me. My favorite thing about HOPE 4 Youth is the people. The stuff that they provide to you is nice, but more than that, how people help you not give up and see to it that you move forward. During this time, I did my assessment at SteppingStone and they told me it was for me to get into housing.

I remember the day I was able to come to HOPE Place. Eddie told me that I was accepted and I was in shock. I said "For real?" The day I walked in the door the first time, I was so excited that this was where I was going to change, grow up and be responsible and do what I have to do to succeed in life. I was ready to become the person I am today. I have goals to graduate high school on June 1st and then go to college to be a Certified Nursing Assistant.

I set goals when I first got to HOPE Place. I wanted to get glasses and I did. I wanted to go to school every day and just got an award for perfect attendance since living here. I want to take my driver's permit test in June. I've been working out every day in the fitness room. I used to eat a lot and now I eat better, and have lost 30 pounds in the past few months.

HOPE Place helps me to better understand about adults, how to communicate and reach my goals. They hold me accountable and care about me. They want all of us to succeed and help us with whatever we need. If I didn't go to school, I know staff would talk to me, so I go. The Connexus Community Room is great. It's helping me learn how to play with others. I love foosball and have fun watching TV and communicating with others there. I am now willing to stand up and help others, I take out the garbage, talk about our past lives if they want to, respect each other- live like a family.

I want to thank the staff and volunteers. Thank you for helping us and being willing to spend time here and better understand how we communicate. I love playing cribbage with Katie and Stephanie, and cards with Pat, Brooke, Bailey, and others. I like to play Lisa and Daeona in foosball. Especially when I win. I also like meeting with Jenilee to plan my future. I hang out with Shane and he is my best friend. I met him at HOPE 4 Youth and we were the first two to move into HOPE Place. We play foosball together and cook and eat together. I am grateful for all I have now and the life I am

working on.