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Small Steps toward Success for Woman Battling Schizophrenia

Woman regains her life after losing her job, apartment and children due to mental illness.

Dayton, Ohio. August 7, 2009. Nikita remembers the day she came for treatment and the voices in her head sent her out of the building as she left her children behind. She remembers that she “felt like (she) was dying” when she first went to Franciscan Medical Center for help with her illness. As for the medications she now takes on a daily basis, she acknowledges “they totally saved (her) life.”

Battling both hallucinations and panic attacks, Nikita has been in and out of various hospitals and treatment centers – including Franciscan and the Community Living Center (both since closed). But eight years ago, she found support at Eastway Behavioral Healthcare where she gets counseling, case management and medication in one central location. She now comes to Eastway on a daily basis for her medications and needed support.

Through Eastway, she was matched with Megan Mundt, a case manager who provides support and guides Nikita through each step needed to move closer to rehabilitation. For many years, she unsuccessfully moved from group home to group home, but for a year now she has been in her own apartment provided by Eastway’s housing services. Mundt worked with her to find a landlord, discussed how to cover rent, and provided support by going with Nikita to sign the lease. Nikita is re-learning how to care for herself, cook her own meals, and run a household. Recently, she and Mundt went shopping together to find furniture to fill her apartment. Mundt has only been working with Nikita for a year now, but she sees great steps. Mundt says, “Helping her to regain her independence and witnessing her progress not only makes me proud of Nikita, but helps me to take pride in my own work.”

Nikita and her brother have had a strained relationship, as her children are currently in her brother’s custody. However, as she has gotten healthier and controlled her schizophrenia, her family relationships have grown as well. Regarding her brother, she says, “We see that we need each other.” Although Nikita has not regained custody of her children, she visits with them every Sunday for a family dinner. Her next small steps include getting a driver’s license and finding a job, but she has high aspirations for the future. Thankful for the help she’s received at Eastway, Nikita wants to go back to school and become a case manager. Mundt has clearly made a difference in her life; as it’s been said before: “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.”

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Eastway is advancing behavioral healthcare, housing and employment effectiveness through innovative programs and services that positively impact the lives of those we serve every day.

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