

Impact thank you!

Breaking the Cycle of Addiction

With YOUR help, Abbie's life has been transformed

On the outside, Abbie was your typical high school student. She loved sports. She was involved with softball, gymnastics and cheerleading for years. She participated in Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and was Secretary of her high school chapter. She grew up in a beautiful home in Barrington with her older sister, younger brother and two loving parents. She never wanted for a material thing.

Despite her safe and nurturing home life, she always felt different.

"I felt like there was something wrong with me, like I would never be good enough for anyone," said Abbie. She struggled with depression and anxiety. Sports were her only outlet.

At 14 years old, Abbie was injured during gymnastics practice and was prescribed Vicodin, a highly-addictive opioid for the pain. That's when her entire life changed.

For the first time, she understood what it was like to feel no pain. "I loved that feeling," she said.

Soon, she was using marijuana and selling drugs to her classmates. Abbie was out of control. Her parents didn't know what to do. They decided to place her into a residential treatment facility for adolescent girls with substance use disorder.

Away for her entire junior year, she learned coping skills and relapse prevention strategies. While in treatment Abbie was a model patient, but on the first day she returned to her high school she was offered drugs. Abbie had no one around to help her deal with the pressure. She felt isolated, misunderstood, judged and truly lost.

Abbie's life then spiraled downward and her drug use intensified. She was in and out of 12 treatment centers, had multiple suicide attempts and three overdoses, but none of that mattered. The only thing she cared about was the drugs.



Abbie Stenberg with her dog Keets

"I felt like there was something wrong with me, like I would never be good enough for anyone."

Eventually she hit rock bottom and became homeless.

Abbie was more desperate than she had ever been. "With just a duffle bag of items, I walked into The Providence Center's Anchor Recovery Community Center in Warwick. I dedicated my life to recovery that day and things have only gotten better," she said.

Thanks to you and your generous support, this time was different than all the other times she sought treatment.

The staff at Anchor helped Abbie to find sober housing and she was connected to a certified recovery coach. As a person who is in long-term recovery from addiction, her coach was able to share personal experiences with Abbie and serve as a mentor providing the hope, encouragement and understanding she greatly needed. Together, they set goals for Abbie's future and found available resources in the community.

This wrap-around support was the missing link Abbie needed when she was younger.



Abbie advocating for the healing power of recovery at the Rhode Island State House

"When I was in high school, I had no positive peers around me. I had no one to say, 'Hey, I understand and I have been there. This is how I got through it – you can, too!'"

Today, Abbie is pursuing her degree in Social Work at the Community College of Rhode Island and is working full-time as a Peer Recovery Specialist at The Providence Center's Anchor Community Centers. She is also working directly with young students at The Anchor Learning Academy – The Center's recovery high school to create a new teen-focused Anchor center. She has dedicated her life to being the proud voice for young people who can't advocate for themselves.



(Left to right) Abbie's mother Maureen Gardiner with her children Abbie, Corey and Emma Stenberg

"The Providence Center helped me gain my life back," said Abbie. "And, I will be forever grateful."

For more information about how you can support The Providence Center, please contact:



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