

My life changed for the better

the day I got an emergency bed at Rachel's Night Shelter. I had been living with an abusive husband on the streets for over a year- sleeping in a tent in the San Diego riverbed or in the back of a truck. I had used drugs off & on for 20 years & was just miserable living this way.

One day I decided that I had enough & asked my husband to take me to Volunteers of America's detoxification center. He beat me up on the way downtown. When the counselors got a look at me, they immediately called Rachel's & asked if there was an emergency bed available. I stayed at Rachel's that night- it was wonderful! They let me get emergency clothing from the boutique, take a shower, eat a meal prepared by volunteers, and have a place to sleep at night I felt really safe!

I went into the Volunteers of America's Alcohol Recovery Center's short-term treatment program the next day. When I graduated from the program, Rachel's was waiting for me with open arms. With their help and support, I got into a transitional housing program, went to a job-training program, divorced my husband, and got my life back.

Today, I have been clean for seven years, have my family back in my life, have a beautiful apartment at The Leah Residence designed for homeless women by-Catholic-charities; and am working at Rachel's Night Shelter- giving back that which was so freely given to me. I tell the women who come to Rachel's that there is hope for all of them. I'm living proof of it!

- Toni R.Catlin

