



Lynn Hoberg

*Us Together*

ST. MARY'S  

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CENTER  

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ANNUAL  

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REPORT  

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Hodges

I've always been a loner. When I first came here, I was sort of a stick-in-the-mud. I was stuck up. I was living in my truck. The people from St. Mary's Center found me at my truck. That's how I got involved here.

A lot of people say this is the best shelter that they have been in. The staff don't talk to us like we are crazy or drug addicts. They treat us like human beings.

Because of my drug charges, I was required to attend the Recovery 55 meetings. I was always quiet at those meetings. I would sit in one special corner, and I didn't seem to want to participate or talk or anything. One morning Georgia asked me what did I think about being in these meetings? I told her "I'm only coming because the courts told me to." She said, "Oh, you'll be back." Sure enough, she was right. Even after the court order was over, I kept coming back.

I don't want to live on the street again. I'm going to try to avoid that. I'm not a lazy person, I like doing something. I'm a diabetic

and have high blood pressure. It's good for me to walk. So when I walk around, I make it useful. I recycle as I go, which keeps a few dollars in my pocket.

Susan asks us to do art. Before I know it I'm painting or drawing! It don't come to me until I come into this class. I don't have no drawing in mind.

But you give me some paper and some pencils and you say, "Draw," and I'll start doo-daddling around until something comes out! I admire myself to be participating like this because I didn't think I had it in me! It's amazing what can come out of a person. Yep!

St. Mary's has brought things out of me that I didn't know about. Some people say that I have opened up more since I have been here. I like that! I just started gradually, like a flower, budding out. I started blooming.

When new people come to St. Mary's, I tell 'em, "Hang in there and keep coming back, because it'll rub off on you. Gradually, after you keep coming, you'll start knowing the people and how they treat you, and you'll start liking it." I'm rather enjoying the St. Mary's life!

JONES



"... I didn't think I had it in me!

It's **amazing** what can  
come out of a person. **Yep!**"

*Jeanette*

*Hundley*



**“I don’t feel as alone. My journey  
has given me...a feeling of unity  
with the rest of the world.”**

Becoming homeless was something I never dreamed of happening to me. My husband and I had a very successful life. However, my husband became very ill. He lost his job and our financial resources diminished; we even lost our home. Upon his death, I was left penniless with nowhere to stay.

I first stayed with relatives, then in a little low-income hotel room. The job I had didn’t last, so I had to move out of the hotel. I couldn’t go back to my relatives; I had to find a shelter.

Frantically I started calling shelters. St. Mary’s was the one shelter that answered. I finally heard a warm soul at the other end of the phone who asked me to come to the Center and see how they could help.

I literally dragged myself in, not really knowing what to expect. I was depressed, frightened, ashamed, and lonely. I wished I could disappear and not have to deal with life anymore.

At first it was scary for me to be with strange people. It was a culture shock. But the other ladies in the shelter were encouraging and I found a great blessing in disguise. I met the most wonderful staff.

They give us the feeling that they sincerely care for each of us as individuals. They’re very personal!

In the shelter, we have group meetings every day at 4 o’clock. We express ourselves and talk about our feelings. The staff checks in with how we’re doing and goes over issues that we want to discuss. Sometimes there are specific topics, like housing. Sometimes we do art. The way they do art classes at St. Mary’s is like therapy. St. Mary’s is a good shelter to get into, and the three meals a day are good.

Due to my chemical imbalance, which causes depression and anxiety, I’m seeing the psychiatrist at St. Mary’s and seeking disability. I work with my caseworker to find a place to live, and to learn things without pressure. Eventually, I will do more to help others, whether or not I get paid.

With the staff’s guidance, genuine care, and great spirit, I found inner strength, motivation, and hope that I did not know existed in me. I don’t feel as alone. My journey has given me more compassion, wisdom, and a feeling of unity with the rest of the world. I feel like I’m just starting to live. Hopefully the best is still to come!

# James

I used to be as mean as a snake in mating time. You did something wrong to me, I beat you up bad. Simple as that. Especially when I was drunk.

That's changed a whole lot since I came to St. Mary's. They've made me look at aspects of myself. Now, I'm more calm. If somebody do me wrong, I push it aside.

The staff here, they're all so friendly, always wanting to help. So I confiscated some of those feelings and kept them for myself. I started doing things for other people, and it made me feel good. You can get enjoyment out of helping someone else when they're in distress. And the staff likes me for that. They like me quite a bit! They say, "Look at all you've done for us." I feel good just to know that people care that much for me.

This recovery group we have is a combination of drug addicts, alcoholics, and people that's got pressure on 'em from different things goin' on in life. There's a lot of people we have helped. They have come back and said,

"I've been to a whole lot of recovery groups, and St. Mary's is the best one there is."

We tell 'em, "Hey, we accept you. People make mistakes. We're not goin' to chase you away because you went out and got on your bender last weekend. Just get a grip on yourself, and come back Monday. Eventually, you'll quit." And they do quit. Then they're so glad, and they're proud they found a place like this. And I'm proud to be a member of it. That's right.

We have a nice time at the meals. We have a very racially integrated group. We participated in Black History Month. We have Filipino celebrations, too. We just have a nice time. We gets along pretty good here. And we be trying to make things better in the neighborhood and in the community. We workin' on that.

I'm involved in a whole lot of things – helping out in the drop-in center, political advocacy, all kinds of things. We're always trying to help somebody. We have so many programs going I can't do 'em all!

I'm still growin, still getting better. I find I can leave more and more derogatory stuff alone. At night, I sleep in peace, get up in the morning, and feel good and rested.

# Jeremy



**"I used to be as mean as a snake in mating time. That's changed a whole lot since I came to St. Mary's."**