



Initiatives in Action: Adult Self Sufficiency Initiative



We can do more together.

My Road Home - Jamie's Story

All I ever wanted was a place to call home. When I was a kid, my parents got divorced, and I was tossed around between countless family members in metro Denver. I changed schools a lot, but I still graduated on time from high school.



During Jamie's fourth month of pregnancy, her cancer came back. She broke down and needed help. That's when she came in contact with the Mental Health Center of Denver, a program supported by Denver's Road Home and Mile High United Way.

After school, I got a job delivering for a bakery. I really enjoyed it, but the grueling hours and constant lifting were hard on my body. I started losing weight and my energy level kept decreasing. I tried my hardest to keep working, telling myself the long hours would be hard for anyone, but I had a deep fear that something was going terribly wrong in my body. Eventually, I had to quit my job. I didn't want to, but I was beyond exhausted. I was getting weaker every day and my body simply couldn't handle it anymore.

I thought my world was going to end when I found out I had cancer at the age of 19 and no health insurance. I had to take the bus to my chemotherapy appointments for six months. My family didn't want to go with me, my friends couldn't handle it. I spent my birthday and Christmas alone in the hospital. As I went through cancer as a teenager, I didn't think life could get much worse.

Then, the hospital bills started arriving. How on earth could I pay the astronomical amount that they wanted? Through a series of complications, I became homeless. I remember sleeping under bridges in Denver in January when there was no room at the shelters. I was scared and just felt lost.

At age 22, I finally had a stroke of good luck when I reconnected with some friends and started living with them. During that time I met a wonderful man who is now my fiancé. I was doing really well; I was happy. But, somehow life just crashed down around

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My Road Home - cont.

me again. I unexpectedly got pregnant and I could no longer live with my friends. So, I was homeless again and now pregnant. My fiancé worked hard at a fast food restaurant to save money for our family. We got vouchers for motel rooms, but were uprooted every day.

During my fourth month of pregnancy, the cancer came back. I broke down, I needed help. That's when I came in contact with the Mental Health Center of Denver, a program supported by Denver's Road Home and Mile High United Way. They saved my life. They found me safe housing, gave me much needed support, and even drove me to my prenatal and oncology appointments.

I delivered a beautiful baby boy. He and my fiancé are my life. I finished my last round of chemo, and I finally have a place to call home.

I met a lot of people out there like me while I was homeless. People who have slipped through the cracks because they lost their job or their medical bills are too high or are just down on their luck. Thanks to Denver's Road Home and Mile High United Way, I'm back on my feet, and I can give back to my community. Can you help, too?

For more information about our Adult Self Sufficiency Initiative, please visit our website at www.unitedwaydenver.org.

We can do more together.



Mile High United Way