



Coalition on a Mission

a monthly newsletter of the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico

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New Home, New Start, New Life

"Life is what you make it, what you do with it is on you. I don't want anything more than to be successful." ~ Carla

**Names have been changed and details withheld to protect the identity of our client.*

For most 17 year olds life is relatively carefree and the biggest worry they face is what they are going to do on after graduation or how to afford a car. For 17 year old Carla, one night changed her entire life and led to the terrifying possibility of becoming homeless with her young child.

Carla was living a quiet life, raising her son with family that loved her and where she felt safe. However, after making the choice to go with some friends and her older brother to a party, the next few hours turned into a tragic event that permanently changed the lives of many people and ultimately led to Carla being incarcerated in juvenile detention for nearly 3 years. "One night changed my life



so suddenly, I was young I never thought of being homeless, I came from a stable home life," Carla explains.

Several things happened while Carla was in juvenile detention. First, her relationship with her son suffered. Although a relative cared for her son and brought him to visit his mom, it was impossible to maintain a good relationship with him. Second, Carla knew that she would be unable to return to her hometown because of everything that happened. "I couldn't go back to my hometown," she explains, "I would always have been looking over my shoulder and that is no way to live with a young child." Third, Carla came to realize that she wanted a better life for her and her son and that it was up to her to make that happen. So as soon as she was released, Carla got to work rebuilding her relationship with her son, finding employment, finishing high school, and making plans to further her education.

Carla planned on living with her relative while she worked on rebuilding her life. Unfortunately, within weeks of being released from juvenile detention, her relative refused to let Carla and her son live with them any longer. Carla was devastated. How could she possibly afford to live on her own with a child? 20 years old and facing homelessness, Carla reached out to her parole officer who connected her to the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico. Because of SHC-NM's partnership with the New Mexico CYFD's Transitions* program, Carla was able to secure housing for herself and her child. And that has made all the difference.

Now that Carla is stably housed, she is working towards obtaining her GED, and plans to earn a college degree so she can work with young people in crisis. She currently works as a caregiver and takes care of her boy who clearly adores his mom and is fascinated with dragons. Because of her new start in a stable home, Carla can look forward instead of constantly looking back. "Back then I didn't know what life meant. I was selfish, I've changed so much. Life is what you make it, what you do with it is on you. I don't want anything more than to be successful."

Helping Young Adults Get A New Start

Carla was able to find help from SHC-NM and the Transitions Program through New Mexico CYFD. [Transitions Permanent Supportive Housing](#) is a program offered to young adults ages 18-21 aging out of foster care or coming from juvenile detention who need help finding and keeping a place to live. It is based on the Housing First approach that centers on providing rental housing first and services as needed. SHC-NM is a proud partner with NM CYFD and the New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative in the Transitions Program, housing young people since 2007. [Check out the 2008 video](#) that describes the program and our partnership that still remains in place today at bit.ly/shcyouth



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