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Former Salvation Army Client Helps Others Break the Cycle of Addiction

Posted on 6 February, 2024 by The Salvation Army

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While facing incarceration in 2018, Spencer Kell decided to change his life and break free of a cycle of jail and addiction. He reflected on the ways his behaviour and substance use could have gotten him killed, so he committed to changing his life path.

Spencer was granted bail to seek rehabilitation. He turned to The Salvation Army's Booth Centre in Ottawa and accessed the Stabilization addiction treatment program.

"I had requested applications for drug treatment, knowing that I wanted to make a change. The Salvation Army Ottawa Booth Centre was the only place that was able to take me while I was in a pre-sentence state of incarceration," Spencer shared.

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During his time at the Booth Centre, Spencer took an interest in becoming a member of The Salvation Army, so he requested to meet with Captain Thomas Yoo, the Booth Centre's chaplain at the time, to discuss this possibility. He credits Captain Yoo with giving him the drive to look forward to a better life.

"I remember leaving his office, feeling it was a turning point. It changed the way that I was looking at my past and, in turn, helped me understand that there was a better way to look at my future. He

made me feel like I had value."

After getting clean and completing the Stabilization program, Spencer knew what direction he wanted to take. He was accepted into a community service worker program at a local college.

While studying, Spencer found housing, worked part-time, volunteered for different social programs, and was a regular attendee of Salvation Army church services. Later in life, he would go on to fulfill his wish of becoming an official member of The Salvation Army.

Spencer believes that if it wasn't for the Ottawa Booth Centre taking him in, he might not have had his freedom today.

"Had I not had the opportunity to be out and participate in my recovery, it's quite possible that I would still be incarcerated as a result of the charges that I was being held on at that time."

"They treat people with dignity, no matter where they're from, what their background is, or what they've done."

Once he received his official counsellor certification, Spencer dedicated his life to helping others who were going through similar experiences as he once was. He founded the charity [Love Soluble](#).

Currently, he is preparing to open the Manie Daniels Rehab Centre in Maberly, Ont., which aims to provide addiction support to people awaiting trial. The centre was named in honour of his close friend and former cellmate, Maine Daniels, who died of an overdose shortly after being released.

Today, while working on the final preparation of his rehab centre, Spencer plans to incorporate lessons learned from his positive experience at the Booth Centre into his new initiative.

"What The Salvation Army does better than any other service centre out there is that they treat people with dignity, no matter where they're from, what their background is, or what they've done. That's the biggest takeaway I have from my experience of being a client of The Salvation Army," Spencer said. "I aspire to have that atmosphere of love, care and compassion at our centre."

By Juan Romero

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