



New Expectations: Nicole's Story

Sept 15, 2004 was the first day of the rest of my life. I had just given birth to my son Robert and had nowhere to go. I wanted some help – I did not want to use drugs anymore. When I called Child Protective Services, they sent someone out to see me. I told the case worker I needed to find somewhere to go with my child and I needed to get into treatment. I had given a child up before because of my drug addiction and did not want to give this child up. The case worker contacted New Endeavors by Women and set up an interview for me with the New Expectations program, which serves homeless pregnant women and drug dependant mothers and their children. My baby was put into

foster care – he would be returned to me if I got into the program. I got in.

I did not know what to expect when I arrived at New Endeavors. I felt confused. My drug use made me feel lost and out of touch with living life and dealing with society. The program gave me another chance. During my interview Miss Cheryl, the NEW case manager, said everyone deserves a second chance. I had already used up my second chance – and NEW actually gave me a third chance to get my life together. Going into the interview, there was so much desperation in my heart. I cried when they told me I could get my things and come back in one hour.. It was the hope I needed. The program showed me how to put my life back together and helped me learn how to be a mother all over again.



In the New Expectations program, it was mandatory for us to participate in our recovery. Our participation included attending relapse prevention groups, daily Narcotics Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and having a sponsor. There were rules like obeying curfews, helping with dinner, and doing chores (such as keeping our rooms cleaned and helping to clean the house). There was education in the form of parenting classes, a job or some kind of training or job ready program and learning how to find child care for our babies. Weekend passes were a privilege, not a right. I was a mess and needed the structure because I had been using drugs for so long. It was a lot to do, but I was willing to work hard, and I knew that with hard anything is possible. I was able to get in touch with a lot of my issues in our groups. The program helped me build relationships with myself, my two daughters, and my family. I was able to pull together as a member of a family with the sisters in the house. It was very therapeutic for me.

I started the program on probation doing regular drug tests. In 9 months I was able to complete the program – and my probation. I graduated from the New Expectations program on July 30th, 2005. I went to school, got my own apartment and now I have a good job, working at the Department of Labor. I am engaged to be married next year to my son's father. My self-esteem is back.



Today, I still do many of the things I learned in the program, like keeping my house clean, and spending time with my son, daughters, fiancé and family. My son Robert is still in the same daycare and I still interact with women in the New Expectations program. I still go to NA/AA meetings. In fact, I am involved in service work for two different groups, and I am the sponsor for two women who are trying to change their own lives. I have now been clean for 20 months. New Endeavors gave me the ability to do something totally different from the first two times

I tried to change. On September 15, 2006, I will celebrate two years of learning to take charge of my own choices and my own life.