

Step Inside Step Denver:

Meet Chris J., Resident of Step Denver

I GREW UP IN A GOOD HOME with loving parents, in a great community. I never had any suspicions that I would fall into addiction or homelessness. I went to school, had quality friends, and few problems. I played sports, which included baseball, wrestling, and gymnastics. I had one problem growing up, which was that I was passionate about partying and fitting in. I always felt like an outsider if I wasn't completely engaging in social activities. One of the largest social activities at that time in my life was drinking and doing drugs when I wasn't at practice. I felt like I would be able to cut it off when the time came to grow up, which couldn't have been more wrong. After graduating high school I started to attend university where my habits did not change. I would find myself skipping class, partying regularly, and using drugs to stay awake. This eventually led to me not attending classes at all. Recreational became habitual, and my life persisted in an endless cycle of wake up, scrape some money together, then get high however possible. This continued after I stopped attending college, and I eventually started losing jobs



Chris and his mother

as well. When I couldn't hold down regular employment, it led to me selling and producing drugs on the streets. I eventually formed ties with people and groups that I wouldn't even come into contact with sober. I did things that I couldn't have imagined myself ever doing in my lifetime. I hurt the people that I loved the most, manipulated my family, lost every material possession countless times, and for some reason I still couldn't find myself leaving that lifestyle. It got to a point when my family wouldn't even speak with me because I was always high.

Please see Chris J. on page 2

Join Us As We Celebrate 35 Years of Offering Men a Hand Up, Not a Handout on October 9th!

SINCE 1983, Step Denver has been a refuge to low-income and homeless men helping them to overcome the consequences of addiction and rebuild their lives through sobriety, work and accountability. Join us on Tuesday, October 9, 2018 at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel for this special anniversary celebration and educational event that addresses two social ills plaguing our community: addiction and homelessness. While we celebrate the legacy of our legendary leader Bob Coté, we will also be announcing Step Denver's intentions to combat the escalating rise of drug and alcohol abuse shattering our community.

Step Denver has continued to practice one of its founding principles, that the power of work—being rewarded for one's

responsibility, hard work, and effort—is an essential part of lasting recovery. It is this philosophy along with the continued emphasis on personal responsibility and workforce participation that has allowed Step Denver to impact the lives of nearly 3,000 men over the last three decades. As we reflect on the past 35 years we are humbled by the support we have received from local community leaders, foundations, businesses, athletes and individuals. We hope you can join us as we celebrate everything that makes Step Denver a unique and impactful program for men seeking a better way of life.

For more information please visit stepdenver.org/35thanniversary or contact Jordan Fouts, Director of Marketing and Development, at **720-439-8487** or jfouts@stepdenver.org.



CBS Channel 4 Visits Step and Interviews Resident, Ross R.

STEP DENVER WAS THRILLED to have Britt Moreno from CBS Channel 4 interview one of our residents, Ross R. and Executive Director, Paul Scudo.

In an effort to learn more about the growing opiate crisis, Britt asked Ross about his personal experience with addiction. At age nine Ross started using drugs and began his daily opiate use at sixteen. Ross was candid about hurting those he loved the most and ruining his life while sleeping on the streets. Reflecting back on his using days he is amazed he is still alive, not only because of what he was doing to his body, but also because of the dangers of the drug culture lifestyle he was living.

Ross explained to Britt that unfortunately after his first rehab attempt he was not able to stay sober. For five years he tried numerous programs, including eight detox visits in the past year. Then he finally passed a clean drug test to enroll at Step in January. He has been sober ever since and is grateful to Step for saving his life.

Ross remarked how Step Denver is different than the other treatment centers and programs he's been to because

it's a peer community. "The residents ask each other for help, offer one another support and have each other's best interest at heart so they can all stay clean one more day." Ross also highlighted how Step Denver is unique in requiring its clients to be accountable for their actions.

Executive Director, Paul Scudo also shared his story of recovery and explained how Step Denver helps men suffering from the consequences of the disease of addiction who have nothing left and nowhere else to turn. We offer them a hand up, not a hand out. Paul told Britt, "Our program focuses on Sobriety, Work, and Accountability and we work to affect a behavioral change in our men that helps them to address their addiction and to begin repairing all facets of their lives."

Look for updates on our Facebook page for when Ross and Paul's full interviews will air on CBS Channel 4. We were so grateful and honored to Channel 4 and Britt Moreno for visiting us and educating the community about our mission and program.



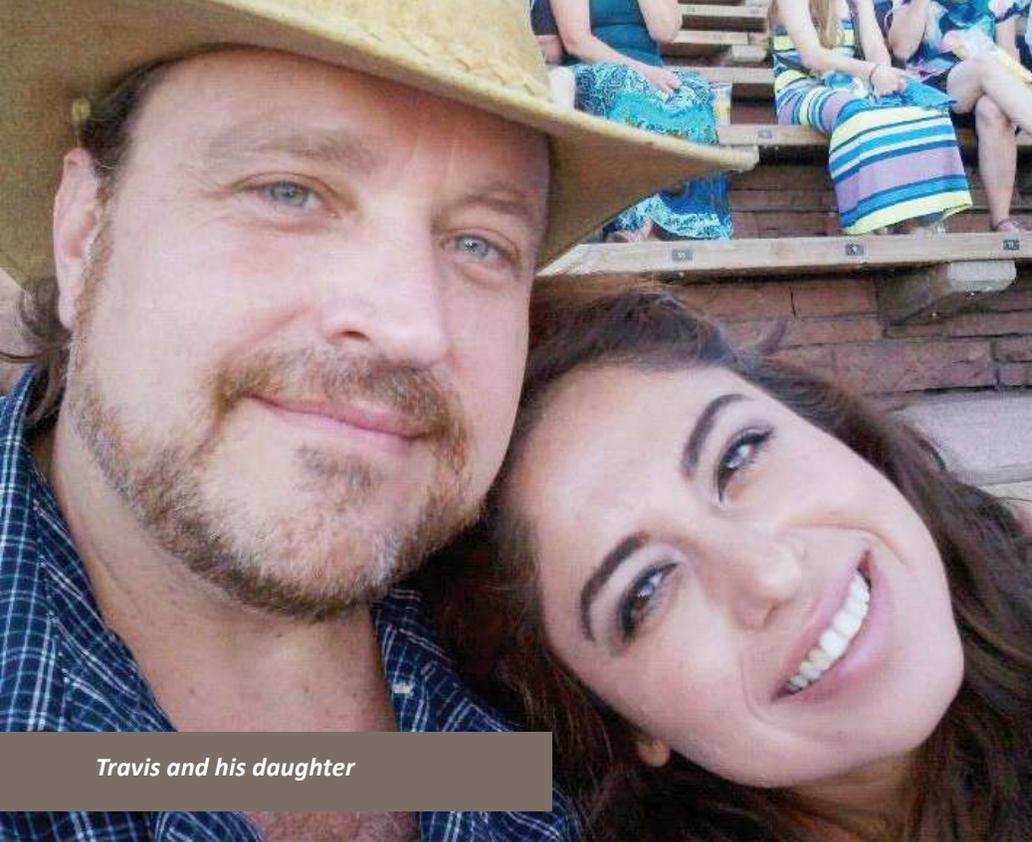
Britt Moreno interviews Ross R.

Chris J. *from page 1*

When confronted about my addiction, I would always lie and say that there wasn't an issue and that I could stop whenever I chose. It got so horrible that my mom traveled to Colorado twice to move me out of state to help me escape my surroundings. Even when I was doing well and sober for a short amount of time, there was always a mental calling to return to my old ways. I truly had to lose everything one last time before I could open my eyes and see how chaotic my life had become. As a momma's boy, there is no feeling more heartbreaking than looking at my mom when she was crying because she no longer recognized her son. I found myself staring in the mirror feeling more mentally beaten down than I could ever remember. I was sitting in a motel room scrolling through my phone for hours, texting everyone I knew just so that I could feel a sense of communication and connection, but my only answer to these desperate attempts was silence. I realized that I had nobody left. My desire for fitting in had found me more alone than I had ever been. In that moment I called my dad and I told him that I was done and could not continue living how I was presently living. My father gave me an ultimatum of two options: it was to get help, or to continue living the way I was without any further communication. I decided to get help and shortly afterwards my stepmother found Step Denver through a coworker.

As soon as I found out about the program I moved into Step Denver, and over the following five months, my life has radically transformed from what it used to be like. I work a regular job

for the time being, but my sights are set much higher. Through getting involved at Step Denver I have come into contact with countless incredible people who have truly touched my life and helped me grow as a man. Step Denver saved me from my old habits. It has created a stronger foundation for me, set on bricks compared to the sand that I was attempting to build on. I am founder of my own business with one of my "Step Brothers" Daniel. We will be moving to the East Coast to start working on our new venture in September. On top of that, I am starting a non-profit organization with another one of my "Step Brothers", Gunnar, with the goal of spreading addiction awareness and education across the country through a platform of unity and community. I can actually say without a doubt in my heart that I am happier than I have ever been after working on my recovery over the past five months. Like the metaphor of a phoenix, I had to lose every resource and relationship to become my true self. This is the story that I was born to speak, and I am not ashamed of my addiction. I am moving forward with a new-found confidence in myself so that I can speak my truth. I believe that in telling my story it may help others to rewrite their own. My desire to fit in has lessened because everywhere I go I am surrounded by my fellows in recovery. As a phoenix, we all rise differently. Due to this fact I am extremely grateful for every opportunity now presented me. I make the most out of every moment I am alive. Building on my recovery is where I got the courage to say, "This isn't how my story ends." I definitely couldn't have done it without the support of my family and Step brothers.



Travis and his daughter

I found hope again.

Hope in myself;
hope in others;
hope in my Higher Power
and ultimately,
hope in life.

– Travis Michaels

Step Denver Announces New Recovery Support Manager, Travis Michaels

HANDS DOWN, LIVING IN RECOVERY has been the most fulfilling and edifying journey I've ever taken. For the majority of my adult life, addiction has been an unsolvable issue that not only frustrated me unimaginably so, but delayed my recovery in severely sinister ways that invariably added needless pain and heartache not only to myself, but to everyone around me who loved me and only wanted to see me healthy and thriving. If I had been willing to ask and accept help, then help would have been around every corner, just as it is right here and right now to every addict and alcoholic still suffering in their addiction.

It is said "there is not a problem in the world that alcohol doesn't make worse," which has been a confounding issue to me as a Psych Grad from Stanford University. In my mind, I should have been able to fix myself and my addiction issues. High expectations for myself at the time suggested I should have never let it get that far. I should have been stronger. Smarter. Better. But I wasn't. And given that will-power is no real solution to alcoholism to begin with,

my problem solving around the drink problem was not even close to effective. Furthermore, not only did I leave Stanford with an amazing education in Psychology, I also left with a nasty propensity to drain whiskey bottles, whenever and wherever I possibly could.

I lived with tremendously high expectations and it was this investment in illusory expectations that drove me well past addictive behavior into terminally unique self-destructive victim ideology on an unbelievable scale filled with blood, tears and flames. My frayed soul and broken mind were my only real companions in the darkness of alcoholic insanity.

Needless to say, the level of pain I have caused myself and others has been staggering. However, and this has made all the difference, I don't have to live that way anymore. I don't. I believe this statement. I believe it with all I am. Upon entering Step Denver for the first time, with literally nothing but the clothes on my back, I experienced a relief I had thought was lost to me.

Hope.

I found hope again. Hope in myself;

hope in others; hope in my Higher Power and ultimately, hope in life.

During my tenure as a client at Step Denver many things have come back into my personal life. A revitalized passion for my art in my new book; the drive for excellence in the Culinary field as a Chef; an empathy to counsel again, to let people in; and of course, a willingness to work and work hard, harder than I have ever worked whether it be personal and work relationships or simply life in general. I had to want to change and when this willingness finally came into my thought world, everything did indeed begin to change. I am learning that doing the next right thing absolutely ensures the next right thing will invariably, continue to happen.

It is an honor and a privilege to have come this far professionally, to work with one of the finest teams I have ever been blessed to work with here at Step Denver. I am looking forward to this new pursuit in the endless field of excellence, a pursuit I had all but given up, until the opportunity was given back to me, all because I became willing to ask for help.

Join the Bob Coté Legacy Fund!

AT STEP DENVER we would like to acknowledge and recognize the people who have shared with us that they have made a gift that will benefit and ensure Step Denver's mission and Bob Coté's legacy in perpetuity. Planned gifts make use of legal and/or tax strategies, which often produce a result that is very worthwhile. We will work with you to find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family and support Step Denver.

Planned gifts include charitable bequests, IRA charitable rollovers, beneficiary designations, charitable remainder trusts, contributions to Step Denver's endowment fund as well as memorials and tribute gifts.

To become a member of the Bob Coté Legacy Fund or for more information about planned giving please contact Jordan Fouts, Director of Marketing and Development, at 720-439-8487 or jfouts@stepdenver.org. Or visit our website at stepdenver.org/bobcotelegacyfund.

StepDenver

A Hand Up Not a Hand Out

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Please use the enclosed donation envelope to provide vital support for our men.

Car Donations

YOU PROBABLY KNOW that you can donate your car or truck to Step Denver and receive a tax deduction for the gross amount it sells for. But do you know that you can also donate your motorcycles, RV's, and even boats? Our expanded warehouse and dedicated team make it easier than ever for you to make a big impact and benefit from the tax deduction.

We make it easy! Give us your title and the keys and we take care of the rest! We arrange pick-up or drop-off. We try to maximize your donation to benefit our program in the most impactful way.



To donate today go to StepDenver.org or call 303-296-9020.