

Step Inside Step Denver:

Meet Sherman C., Resident of Step Denver



Sherman C., Resident

BY THE END OF MY DRINKING, life had been reduced to basic survival mode. I was still employed, mostly because I worked for my father, and I lived alone in a small farm house in the mountains of western North Carolina. Every morning I would come to on the couch with tattered nerves and dim remembrance. My floor was littered with bottles and cans and whatever melancholic country music I was listening to the night before would still be playing. I would lie there for a minute dreading what was about to happen. As soon as I sat up I would have to run to the bathroom and vomit bile and foam because I certainly didn't eat. Upon finishing the dreaded routine, I would return to the couch and finish the room temperature beer left the night before and smoke a cigarette. Only then could I make it to the shower in which I drank three more beers. After dressing, I had a breakfast of vodka. I would pack my lunchbox with enough booze to get me through the workday.

Ultimately, I ended up in the hospital with pneumonia, heart failure, liver failure, kidney failure, sepsis, and I had blood clots in my chest and legs. A whole team of specialists were assigned to my care. I required supplemental oxygen and a PICC line was inserted through which ran a myriad of medicines. During one of the cardiologist's visits he actually shook his head at me and told me I have to quit drinking. My mother drove from across the state to be with me and had to witness the signing of my living will stating I did not want assistance

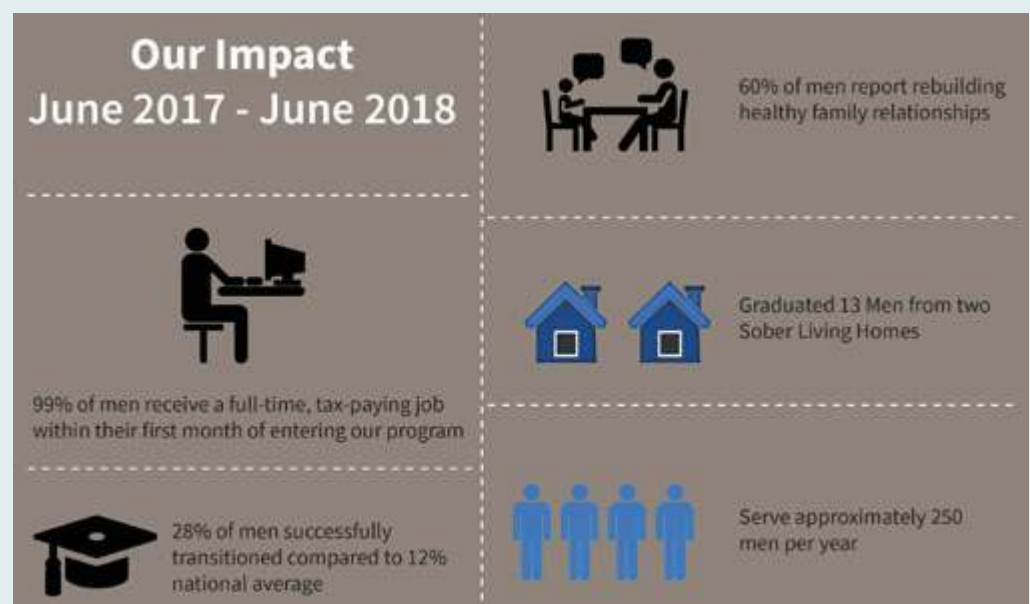
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It's Been an Amazing Year at Step Denver!

WITH STEP DENVER'S FISCAL YEAR COMING TO A CLOSE, we wanted to reflect on another impactful year of transforming men from transients to taxpayers. In our daily operations we see the human faces and hear the diverse stories of people experiencing addiction and homelessness. We strive to meet each man where he's at, empowering our residents to become productive, contributing members of their families and community.

This year was particularly unique with the successful opening of our first two Sober Living Homes.

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Step Denver Announces New Director of Vehicle Donations, Stephanie Landree

HELLO, MY NAME IS STEPHANIE LANDREE. I joined the Step Denver team in February of this year as the Director of Vehicle Donations. My passion is to work for a purpose, to work for an organization that helps others. I have seen firsthand how the disease of addiction can destroy a person's life. Both my Father and Sister are addicts.

It took me a very long time before I could openly say that my Father was an addict. I always knew he had an addiction to pain medication and alcohol, but never wanted to say it aloud. My father was in a severe auto accident at the age of 18, spent an entire year in the hospital, and was treated with painkillers. The first time I knew my



Stephanie Landree

Father was an addict was when I was 10 years old. My siblings and I were getting ready for school; mom and dad had already left for work when I noticed my dad's car was still in the driveway. I went outside to see why my dad was just sitting in his car. That's when I noticed that he was not moving and the cigarette he had in his hand had burned a hole in his fingers. My dad had overdosed. I will never forget that moment, as they revived my father he grabbed my hand and would not let go, and rode in the ambulance to the hospital. Upon release, my dad entered a treatment center for addiction. The next 30 days our family watched

my dad try to turn his life around; he was sober for 30 days. In the years that followed it was a never-ending battle between my mom and dad, the pain was real, and it took bigger quantities of pills to ease his addiction. I watched my mom hide his pills, only giving them to him on a schedule, but somehow my dad always found the hiding place, would take whatever he could get his hands on and that led to many more visits to the ER and more fighting with my mom.

I grew to resent my father, resenting him for choosing the pills over his family. I watched my mom struggle every day to find some sort of balance between enabling my father's addiction and keeping her family together. As my father grew older, he quit drinking; I think he knew his body could not take both so he chose the pills over the alcohol. In the final year of my Dad's life, he was in the hospital 7 times, all centered on various complications from taking too many pills. My Father passed away on March 1st of this year, the very day my parents were married 55 years ago.

My Sister's story is much like my Father's, same path and I am afraid, it will be the same outcome. I cannot help but think how different our lives would be if they both received the treatment much like the treatment provided by Step Denver. As I continue in my new role at Step Denver, I see firsthand just how remarkable this program really is and the men we serve. I am honored to work alongside the amazing staff at Step Denver and cannot help but believe that I was put in this position for a purpose.

Sherman C. *from page 1*

should my condition worsen. I was tired of life and even resented God for keeping me alive. What the body can endure is amazing.

Weeks later I was discharged and went to convalesce at my mother's house. I could no longer work, I was absolutely broke, lost my house, I had not a trace of dignity; there was nothing left. Despite all of that, I was still using opiates but that was okay because the cardiologist only said I had to quit drinking. He didn't mention opiates. I actually believed that.

On July 4, 2017 I checked into detox and rehab in North Carolina. My counselor helped me work on a transition plan and I found Step Denver online. The thought of moving across the country with three weeks sober was frightening, but a place like Step does not exist in North Carolina and I had nowhere to go. My mother bought me a one-way ticket, gave me \$500, and I brought two bags of clothes not knowing what lie in store.

While residing at Step Denver I found a meaningful life again. At first I struggled because I had forgotten some basic life skills. I couldn't make a bed properly, I didn't want to follow any rules, I had to clean up after myself and be accountable to my peers in the program. Forty-five hours of community service later, I started to pay attention to what I was doing and actually committed to trying things a different way. The one thing I did do well was twelve step meeting attendance; I made 110 meetings in 90 days. I met my eventual sponsor at Step's Monday night in-house meeting.

I worked on my resume in the Career Counseling Center and ended up with the best job I have had in my life. I was honest with my employer about my whole situation (something I had never done before) and have been promoted, given a raise, and become one of his lead employees. He even had me to his house at Christmas because I have no family here. Through gainful employment and working with my Recovery Support Manager, I have paid off all outstanding debt, increased my credit score 140 points, and have savings sufficient for future housing.

My life has taken an about face for the better. I've heard people say write down what you want from your life after a year of sobriety. Had I done that, there's no way I could have gotten even close to the gifts afforded me by recovery. In 313 days of continuous sobriety, I followed through with my medical treatment and overcame heart failure, I have a great job doing something I love, I cleared up my financial wreckage, I have an opportunity to get my driver's license back, I've slept in a bed every night, I have a sponsor and am working Steps. I speak with my father and mother every week. Sometimes she cries because they are proud and they miss me, not because I've disappointed them again. I have made great friendships and next month I have an opportunity to fly home and make amends to my family. Most importantly I have come to trust and rely upon God.

Thank you Step Denver.



Left: The Denver Gents; Right: Step Denver's Jordan Fouts and Vincent Turnbull at Denver Gents

The Denver Gents Kick Off Summer with a Fundraiser for Step

ON FRIDAY, JUNE 1ST STEP DENVER WAS HONORED to be the recipient of a portion of sales from the **INSPIRED MAN ART SHOW** hosted by the Denver Gents, a charitable men's organization that believes in elevating the style and culture of Denver. The event was nothing short of amazing!

Since Step Denver is a men's only facility, we were thrilled to partner with this cutting-edge men's club bringing sophistication and generosity to our community.

Thanks to this popular public event during Santa Fe's First Friday Artwalk, Step was able to inform hundreds of people who did not previously know about the work we do and the men we serve. This opportunity was only possible because of the dedication, popularity and collaborative spirit of the Denver Gents.

Stuart Crowell, Co-Founder of the Denver Gents said, "We're thrilled to partner with Step Denver for our first



Guests at Denver Gents

official public event. Step Denver has been instrumental in the lives of so many disenfranchised men in our community, helping rebuild lives and make change. To be a gentleman is to promote a sense of confidence and self worth that one can only have when they are proud of themselves and their accomplishments. Step Denver helps these men gain that back in their lives and live free of addiction or affliction which is incredible and important work."

Thank you to the Denver Gents and Denver's art community for providing vital funds that directly benefit Step's 250 men overcoming the consequences of addiction and rebuilding their lives to become productive, self sufficient men in our community. And a special thank you to Travis Yaggie from TravisYaggiephoto.com for taking and donating the event's pictures.

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Thanks to our supporters we were able to serve 250 men in our primary Larimer facility and 13 alumni in our Sober Living Homes. Of the 67 men who successfully transitioned, 62.5% remained sober, self-sufficient and employed after six months of leaving our program. Furthermore, Step Denver saved the

Denver community and government \$3,075,000 by housing and employing our men.

Step Denver has been a thought leader through our Steps for Success Program, social enterprise model Driven to Donate and advocate for more effective and efficient approaches to addiction and homelessness. Thank you for joining us and being a part of the solution, offering men a 'Hand Up, Not a Handout' for 35 years.

Save the Date!

Tuesday, Oct. 9



Save the date to celebrate
Step Denver's 35th Anniversary!

Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, 1550 Court Place

5–6 p.m. – VIP Reception

6–7 p.m. – Film "Chasing the Dragon:
Life of an Opiate Addict"

Panel and Q&A directly following the film

For information about sponsorships and tickets please
contact Jordan Fouts, Director of Marketing and
Development, at **720-439-8487** or jfouts@stepdenver.org.

StepDenver
A Hand Up Not a Hand Out

2029 Larimer Street
Denver, CO 80205
StepDenver.org

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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.