



East Bay Center

...leading lives to hope and recovery

I persevered!

My name is Jackie and I could be your neighbor, your best friend, or your family member. My nightmare started in 1961 when I was five (5) years old. I was taken from my biological home (for reasons unknown to me at the time) and put in a foster home. For years I experienced abuse from my foster mother, and countless days of bullying from children in school. Today there is much discussion about bullying and cyber-bullying, but back in my day, it was tolerated. People looked the other way at the damage that was being inflicted on helpless people. In my case it was beatings on the bus, taking my clothes during gym class and throwing them in the shower, while "friends" talked about me behind my back. But I persevered.

In 1990, I found out from a distant relative that I was placed in foster care because my biological parents sexually, physically, and mentally abused me. It explained some of the reasons why for years I woke up screaming in the middle of the night but didn't know why. I had gone through years of counseling and therapy without success, and the trauma placed my marriage and motherhood in jeopardy. After thirteen (13) hospitalizations and four (4) suicide attempts, my husband threw me out of the house and I lost custody of my nine year old son, whom I wouldn't see again for many years. But I persevered.

From 1994 till 2001, I scraped by doing odd jobs while living out of my car, and then in and out of homeless shelters. I did what I had to do to survive. I persevered.

About five (5) years ago, with the help of East Bay Center, I started to find myself again. I lived in one of EBC's group homes for nine (9) months, learning how to take care of myself, manage my symptoms, reconnect with people, and find recovery through employment. I worked every day (walking through snow, ice, and rain if I had to) and saved money to venture out on my own. I persevered.

I was put on a waiting list for independent housing managed by East Bay Center. My life was coming back together. I went to CNA school and passed with flying colors. I got a great job and reconnected with my son, who is now twenty-nine (29) years old. I persevered.

Many things have happened to me since then, good and bad, but FINALLY, I am very happy with my life and I am about to change my last name back to my

birth name. I have wonderful friends who see through the mental illness and care for me no matter what, I've reconnected with my son, and I haven't been in the hospital for over five (5) years. I am a success story, because I needed help along the way, and I received that help and support from East Bay Center. I persevered.

This is the personal success story of one of East Bay Center's clients. She chose to tell her story with the hope that readers would understand more about mental health and that success is possible – no matter what the circumstances.

EBC's mission has remained the same for many years – to improve the lives of individuals and families within our communities by providing a broad range of high quality mental health and addiction services. Especially in the face of adversity, EBC will be here to help you, your family, and your community. We encourage you to visit our website at www.eastbay.org for information regarding services, employment, locations, etc. To speak to someone regarding services or to schedule an appointment, please call 401-246-1195 and ask for “Intake”.