



East Bay Center

...leading lives to hope and recovery

“Melinda” is a young woman who currently lives with her grandparents. While growing up she faced some hardships that deeply affected her ability to make friends and socialize. She dropped out of high school, and missed out on all of the activities a teenager looks forward to – school dances, social clubs, cheering for her school’s football team at the Thanksgiving Day game, and walking across the stage to receive her diploma.

Her grandparents knew that “Melinda” was withdrawing more deeply into depression, and reached out to East Bay Center for help. Once assessed through the Triage Department, a treatment plan and a treatment team became her lifeline. Initially “Melinda” resisted the team’s attempts to engage her in social activities that included people she didn’t know. Even small groups of people bothered “Melinda” and she began to withdraw even more. The team did not give up on her.

During a community visit to her home, a team member observed “Melinda” interacting with a neighbor’s cat. She was a completely different person – animated, cheerful, engaging, and emotional. Word spread throughout the team. The next time she came in for an appointment, the Activities Coordinator mentioned to “Melinda” that she had three cats at home and how one of them had gotten stuck in a precarious position the night before. “Melinda” opened up and spoke about how she loved being with animals, and how she wanted to someday work with them when she was “in an OK place again”.

A few phone calls later, and “Melinda” was enrolled in a volunteer program through the RI SPCA and assigned to her local animal shelter. Once orientation was completed, she began caring for, and socializing the cats in the shelter, and teaching shelter dogs the etiquette of loose-leash walking. Her treatment team has observed her initiating conversations with visitors who are looking to adopt a pet, and giving her insights to the likes and dislikes of each animal. By working with animals who provide unconditional love, “Melinda” is learning to give of herself and return to the happy teenager she once was.

“Melinda” still has a journey ahead of her as she learns to apply coping skills, and manage the feelings she has towards people, but with the support of her

family and her treatment team, there is no doubt that she will get to that “OK place” where she wants to be.

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”.