

## **January: Ronnie**

Ronnie has been in the Lawrence Community Shelter for a long time. It was rumored that he had decided to “live off the government” for the rest of his life. However he received no assistance from SRS or any other organization, except for LCS.

Ronnie rarely worked, although he usually left for the day, on most days. More recently he began doing some work, but he was always paid under the table. It was explained to him that he could not be in our work program, and therefore get a free bed every night unless his work was “official”, but he was not interested. Ronnie had already been asked to leave for a month on two other occasions because he was in violation of our 120 day rule. As Ronnie began working more regularly, his case manager encouraged him to save his money, as is required in the work program. Ronnie began saving his money and within a short time had enough for an apartment. When this was pointed out to him, he said that he did not want to live in Lawrence; he wanted to go home to North Dakota. At that time he was given 30 days to make arrangements to leave.

Ronnie has been very excited during the last couple of weeks. He has had several phone calls with family, and is making plans for when he returns home. In the past he has said that he could not bear to return home empty-handed. He is proud to be able to arrive with enough money to get a place of his own, and perhaps to help other family members. Although it appeared that Ronnie wanted to make LCS his permanent home, it has worked out that he is ready to start over elsewhere.

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## **February: Frank**

When Frank came to us, he had been out of work for several months. He had worked since he was a teenager and he has had a difficult time being unemployed. He collected unemployment and looked for work, but was so far unsuccessful. When he lost his apartment and had to move to the shelter, he was very disappointed. He blamed himself and his self-esteem plummeted.

Frank did not fit in well at the shelter. He did not make friends easily perhaps because he often bragged about what he had done before he came here. Every day he went out to look for work, but did not find anything.

Frank became involved in our Back to Work program. It turned out that he had an extensive history in factory work and had even been a supervisor for several years. He has been working on his interviewing skills and has applied for several jobs, for which he has experience. He has been called back for a second interview on one of them. It is hoped that he will have a job very soon.

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## **March: Larry**

Larry was released from a mental hospital to our shelter. He had a rough time in the month prior to his intake here, and needed a great deal of support. He was receiving SSI, but had to get it reinstated. We have helped others through this process, and were able to help Larry. He began looking for an apartment that he could move into on the first of the month. Rent is expensive in Lawrence, so he found a house and began trying to interest others in moving into the house together to share expenses. We helped Larry get back and forth between the house and our agency several times. We paid his application fee and also provided him with transportation when it came to moving day. Three men his age agreed to move into the house with him. One of them was also receiving SSI, so there was enough money for a deposit and to have their utilities turned on. We had a mattress donated and delivered by an employee of SRS. We gave

them canned goods so they would have some food when they first moved in. They appear to be off to a good start, and are happy in their new home.

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### **April: Cody**

Cody is a young man who has been reluctant to work with a case manager. We have known him for some time, but he often left town just as we thought he was getting more involved in our programs. Recently, Cody expressed an interest in quitting drugs. Having never confessed that he was a drug user, this was a major turning point for Cody. He began attending classes at DCCCA and attending AA and NA meetings. Very soon after that he applied for housing in a local halfway house.

Cody left town once more to see his mother. Apparently she pays for him to come see her in a nearby state. When he got back he threw himself into his recovery. He also received confirmation from the halfway house that he had been accepted. He talked to me several times about his future and how he wants things to be different. Cody is still very young and could easily start over. He has talked about going to college and getting a part time job. The programs at DCCCA and the halfway house should be the perfect support for his future plans.

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### **May: Jerry**

Jerry had been at LCS for awhile, but was unable to advance due to the fact that he had no ID. The process of getting a state ID is strict and cumbersome. One has to have several forms of ID to get a state ID. Since he had nothing with a picture on it, he was unable to go forward. For the entire time that Jerry has been with us, we have worked on trying to get his ID.

Jerry worked a volunteer job at the Shelter. He did a good job and was very proud of himself. He wanted to go to work at a real job, but his lack of ID prevented this. One of the Homeless Outreach Specialists from Bert Nash assisted in trying to obtain anything that would help Jerry get his state ID.

In the last couple of months Jerry has become friends with a couple of women in the shelter. This speaks to his growth of confidence. When we first met Jerry he was far too shy to speak to women easily, or even other male guests or staff.

Recently Jerry's grandmother sent his birth certificate from his home town. Jerry's family had been working on finding its location. We immediately put together some other materials such as medical instructions from Health Care Access, a letter of homelessness from here and a voter's registration. Within a day, Jerry was able to get his state ID! Within two weeks Jerry had a job! This was a long, drawn-out process to reach a very happy and satisfying conclusion.

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### **June: Alex**

When Alex arrived at LCS he began looking for work on his own. He had lost his job suddenly, but almost immediately found a job. He was working during the day and I had not had a chance to meet with him, so I sent him a note asking if he wanted to be a part of our Employed Worker Program. He agreed and signed a contract, committing to putting away a certain amount of money every payday. On the following payday he began putting money into our savings account. Before long he sent me another note that he

had found a second part-time job. The staff who worked with Alex told me that he seemed to be very responsible and cooperative.

After Alex had been here approximately two months he came into the shelter during the day to meet with me. He announced that he had gotten housing and would be moving out. He was very pleased about the short duration of his stay and being able to move on so soon. His goal from the first day was to get a job and housing, and he never wavered from his goal. I regret that I did not get to know Alex as well as I would have liked. Alex left the shelter and we have every reason to believe that he will be successful in future endeavors.

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### **July: Ed**

When Ed came to us he was anxious to be involved in our work program. He worked with the Back to Work Program, but then settled in to working as a volunteer in our kitchen, which he did very well. After awhile, he went to work in a local business. His supervisor reported that Ed did an exceedingly good job and always took his work very seriously. He grew in his new position and even became creative and innovative.

Ed is almost ready to move out. He has been saving money for some time in the LCS Savings Program, but he has been hesitant about leaving. He has been successful here and may fear moving on. The staff have been very supportive of Ed and he has been reassured that we will continue to be a support after he gets his own place. We expect that to happen this month.

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### **August: Richard**

Richard came to the Lawrence Community Shelter shortly after he was released from prison. He had been sober and drug free for several years prior to his 2 year prison sentence, and he maintained his sobriety while he was incarcerated. He was proud of himself and told me that he wanted to start over. He did not want his addictions to hold him back.

Richard was able to obtain employment within two weeks. He got two jobs, one as a machinist and another working in a greenhouse. He was very pleased with his work and began putting money into the LCS savings program. He was able to save quite a bit each week.

Richard attended AA and NA meetings on a regular basis. He made friends in the shelter with other who are trying to stay sober.

Richard is eligible for housing and applied right away. Because he is homeless and working, he qualified for some programs that are not available to everyone. It appears that he may be able to be housed in the next couple of months. Richard has worked diligently over a short period of time, but he has had a great deal of success.

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### **September: Kate**

Kate came to Lawrence Community Shelter during a relapse, after being sober for over a year. She had lost her housing and job as a result. She was hard on herself and her self esteem was very low. She was afraid that she would not be able to get sober again and that life was not worth living if she could not maintain her sobriety. Fortunately, she was able to get sober within a week or so. She began attending

AA meetings and went for an assessment at an out-patient treatment facility. They accepted her and she began attending treatment groups three times a week.

Kate had been seeing a therapist and had been prescribed medication for depression, but she often did not take her medication regularly. Her depression sometimes prevented her from doing what she needed to do to stay sober. She was encouraged to take her medication every day and that it might help her to maintain her sobriety. She began asking for her prescriptions on a regular basis.

After six weeks at LCS, Kate was attending AA meetings, seeing her therapist a couple of times a week, and attending substance treatment twice a week. She has applied for housing and is looking for work. Her self esteem has improved and she is very proud of herself for being able to get sober. Most of the actions she has taken have been initiated on her own and she has been praised for the role she has played in her own success.

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## **October: Ronnie**

Ronnie had lived in Lawrence all his life, but when he lost his job and housing, he found that no one in his family was able to offer a helping hand. Ronnie came to the Lawrence Community Shelter for help. He did not seem to have any particular feeling about having to be here. He saw it as what needed to be done to get on with his future. He got a haircut and new clothes from The Rummage House. He began to look for work.

Ronnie got a job within a week. He started out working part-time, but soon began working more than full time, and even receiving overtime pay. He wanted to participate in our Employed Worker Program, and began to deposit nearly every cent of his paychecks when he got paid. When I suggested that he keep some of his money because he deserved it, he said, "my desire to have my own place is more important than anything else."

Ronnie was doing well at his job, had received a raise, and enjoyed the work. He was able to get a small apartment within three months. When Ronnie left, he was very appreciative of the assistance we had given him. He said that he did not think he would ever need our services again, but he was glad that we were available when he was in need.

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## **November: Alec**

Alec is a 46 year old man who has been homeless several times in the last few years. He has also had periods of being employed and housed.

Alec is an alcoholic. He has had many periods of not drinking, but has been unable to attain long term sobriety. Alec has a mental illness and takes medication to manage it. He is most successful when he takes his medication and does not drink. He had a close friend who died recently with complications from alcoholism. He stayed drunk for quite awhile after that. He recently found out that he has high blood pressure. His doctor talked to him about changing his diet and stressed that he should stop drinking. Alec has been depressed and agitated. He has spent a lot of time talking with me and other staff members. He is trying to sort out his life. He has stated that he feels like he has to do something big to turn his life around.

Alec made a decision to stop drinking last week. He has not had a drink since. Alec has a close friend who lives in Manhattan who has offered to let him live with him. He has drawn up a contract for Alec that stipulates that Alec will not drink, will become employed and pay rent, will attend A. A. meetings, etc. Alec

accepted this offer and has gone to live with his friend. Alec wants more than anything to be sober and he feels that this is his last chance. He is committed to being successful this time.

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## **DECEMBER: Robert**

Robert has stayed with us several times in the last few years. He has been employed many times, but has been unable to keep a job for any amount of time. This time when Robert came back, he worked with our Employment Coordinator to help isolate some of the behaviors that have kept him from succeeding on the job. In time it became clear that his temperament plays a large role in being fired or causing him to leave. It was suggested to him that he ask to work with a therapist at Bert Nash Mental Health Center to try to deal with issues as they arise, rather than to brood over them and allow him either to blow up on the job or to walk away.

Robert also has a drinking problem which can become out of control at times. It was suggested to him that he begin attending AA meetings to try to maintain sobriety once he became employed. He agreed to begin attending meetings.

Robert was employed during the last month. He has a good job, with benefits, that pays a reasonable salary. It is work that he is capable of doing, and he is proud of being able to do it. We hope that planning ahead may be the key that was missing for Robert. Long term success has often eluded him and he is dedicated to doing things differently this time.

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