I was eleven years old when I took my first drink. I remember the feeling like it was yesterday. I

felt happy and most of all at peace. My parents met in treatment, my mom recovered as soon as

she found out she was pregnant with me and my dad struggled for many years after. My mom

has been by my side from day one, working multiple jobs while going to college to support me

and my dreams. My dad had a rough go, in and out of prison and lost custody of me. I had seen

what alcohol and drugs do to people and their family. I had made a promise to myself that I

would never touch alcohol or drugs.

I was a very outgoing child, always talking to people, always wanting to be around people. That

slowly faded after I started using. I kept chasing the feeling that I felt when I took my first drink,

but for some reason I could never get it back. As time went on I tried other substances still trying

to get that feeling. Eventually there wasn’t a part of the day that I wasn’t drunk or high. I started

going to Alcoholics Anonymous when I was thirteen years old and met my best friend who is

now my sponsor. Surely this was what was going to give me peace, but I had to give everything

to God. I hated the idea that God was going to keep me sober because where was God all those

times I needed him? So I left AA and went searching for any other thing that would help me

stop. I would make compromises such as only drinking and getting high on the weekends, only

with friends or I would tell myself I would only use a little bit. My ideas were not working.

In September of 2020 I was at one of my friends' house where we were both using. We were

having a good time not having a care in the world. The next morning I woke up and he didn't.

How could this happen? We did the exact amount. The person I loved was gone. This sent me in

a spiral. Everyday, I was using to just get by. Why? I asked this question a lot. Why can't I stop

using? Why can't I love my family enough to stop? Why? My head was full of noise, it felt like I

was drowning in my own thoughts. So many questions I had went unanswered. Then later that

year I tried to take my life. I felt that I was a burden to my family, I felt that I was unworthy of

love. I thought that all the pain and hurt I was feeling would go away. Most of all if I was dead

my head would be quiet.

My family sent me to a treatment center where I stayed sober for only about two months. By the

time I was fifteen years old I was heavily addicted to opiates and alcohol. I had lost everything,

my family didn't know what to do with me. I hated myself and the person I had become. My hurt

and pain started turning into anger. A few months later on my way to school I crashed my car

while high and drunk. Not remembering what happened and forgetting to take care of my sister.

How could I do this? How could I do this again to the people I love so much? My parents sent

me to treatment again, and this time I was there for five months. I was desperate, at this point it

was life or death. After getting alcohol poisoning and overdosing again and again, my body was

failing to keep up with my addiction. No medication, no therapy, and no treatment center was

keeping me sober.

So I decided to give AA one more try, I gave everything I had, and on January 30th 2022 I got

sober. I met with my sponsor and decided to be honest for the first time in a long time. I broke

down and told her every single thing and started to work the steps. Slowly overtime the outgoing,

talkative person I once was came back. I started doing really well in school, made friends, and

mended the relationships with my family. In order to stay sober today I continue step work and

sponsor others. Sponsoring people and doing service work has become my purpose in life. If

you're struggling with addiction it's ok to ask for help. I got sober at a young age and always felt

like I was the only one. That is simply not the case, UNOs CRC has provided me with life long

friends and hope. It has shown me that even at a young age I can stay sober and have an amazing

life. As of today I am happy and at peace with life, my head is quiet. If it wasn’t for God,

sponsorship, AA, and programs like this I wouldn’t be here. My life is still full of ups and downs

but both have shaped me into the person I am today and I wouldn't change any of it.