

REMARKABLE STORY OF SUCCESS

Cynthia Canann



Unspeakable grief, that's what the 44 years prior to my recovery and redemption looked like. The death of my parents, abusive relationships, and the states removal of my children and termination of my rights, led me down a very dark road that nearly ended my life. I spent years screaming inside, feeling like the world just wouldn't stop and let me catch my breath; wishing someone would just ask me what happened. Instead, I was met with professionals who wanted to fix me, hospitalize me, diagnose me, medicate me, or incarcerate me. My last arrest led me once again to Lincoln County Detention Center in North Platte, Nebraska. My lawyer told me he wanted me to apply for Midwest Nebraska Problem Solving Court (drug court), so I did.

This time was different, I had absolutely nothing left to lose and nothing to look forward to if I were to be released, so I figured I'd try it because it included a relocation to the other end of the state. I hit my knees and prayed. I prayed for God to enter my heart and give me the strength to surrender completely. I was sent by Drug Court to the Stephen Center Heroes Program in Omaha in April 2022. I was encouraged to share my story, in my own words, not what my CPS case file said, not what my criminal charges were and not what the local newspapers opinions of me were; rather MY OWN TRUTH!

A friend and former coworker of mine encouraged me to apply at MHA after she heard Tessa Domingus speak at a VLS conference about MHA's Omaha expansion. I had never heard of MHA but the more I did research and learned about Intentional Peer Support (IPS) the more I knew I wanted to be a part of their mission. I was still hesitant, I had worked for a program that had a great mission on paper but lacked integrity and compassion. After learning more about IPS in orientation and hearing Ashely and Tessa speak, my hesitation was gone. I knew I wanted to not only be here but to learn everything I can and to advocate for MHA, especially the small communities where I grew up. In rural areas of the state access, resources, and knowledge of IPS are limited or non-existent.