

## STHT Story

At 13 years old, the very first day I moved to Fort McMurray, I started freebasing cocaine. At 15 I was living common law with a guy; we'd live for a while at my moms, then at his. I had my first baby at 18, but was too young to handle the responsibility. I started using again after the baby turned a year old.

Five years ago, in second stage housing through Unity House after leaving an abusive relationship. With one child already, and another on the way, the challenges got to be overwhelming. After my second baby was born, I went back to using, and ended up on the streets. The children went to go live with family.

While on the streets, I got pregnant again. Being pregnant while being homeless makes it very hard to clean up your addiction. I went to treatment when I was 7 months pregnant but didn't complete it. We were able to rent our own place finally, but when baby was 20 days old, Children Services intervened on suspicion of drug use and came and got the baby. That was when I really crashed. So sick with disappointment in myself, I dived back into my addiction. After several months we had to give up the apartment and I found myself back on the street.

May 2007 I finished a treatment program, came back and stayed at Unity House. I started visiting with my baby, but was in denial thinking I had everything under control. Within a month, I relapsed and ended up back on the streets. My use continued until a month before I was going to lose my baby for good. I realized how much I loved my kids, they never asked to be brought into this world, and it's my responsibility to take care of my kids.

I got connected to the STHT, stayed with a family member for a while, went from Unity House, to Pastew Place, back to Unity House, back to the family member, then to treatment again. All the way through I continued visits with my daughter, got my ID's back, and kept working to get my life on track.

I got back from treatment and stayed at Unity House for five months. I worked with counseling at Unity House, FCSS, AADAC, and Children's Services. With 10 months clean under my belt, I moved into Centennial House. Within months of moving in, I got full custody of my baby under supervision of Children's Services. I continued to work with the STHT, transitioned into independent living within a year and had yet another baby.

Today, about a year later, I'm still living independently. The only services on the STHT I use are counseling with FCSS once in a while and checking in with the Coordinator. In September I'll be going to Keyano to finish school so have asked to stay involved with STHT for continued support until I decide I don't need it anymore.