

OVERCOMING HOMELESSNESS TO HELP OTHERS

Travis went from experiencing homelessness to studying at university. Now, he's helping others get their lives on track.



"Becoming homeless was really stressful. The first time I really didn't have anywhere to stay, I spent the night on the shores of a lake in my neighbourhood. I didn't know what else to do.

It started when I was 15 - I was removed from my family home by the police when things got really bad one day. I ended up doing a lot of couch surfing, but thankfully, I only spent a few nights outside.

Things didn't get better when I graduated from high school; they actually got worse. I was still angry and hurt. I ended up hitchhiking across the country, getting into drugs and living on the streets.

But in 2015, I was offered the chance to go home and get clean. A few months later, I was accepted into a United Way - supported transitional housing program for men recovering from addiction.

There were a lot of very strict rules, but I was being held accountable - maybe for the first time ever. I started doing everything I could do to avoid falling back into old habits, like volunteering at a community garden.

Now, I'm studying computer science at university and working part time at a local homeless shelter. I remember when I stayed at different shelters, I struggled to connect with the staff. But getting to work at the shelter gives me the opportunity to be that staff member who people connect with. It's been a very fulfilling experience - being able to identify with people and actually getting real with them when we talk.

"WHEN I WAS AT MY WORST, I WOULD WALK DOWN THE STREET AND PEOPLE WOULD PRETEND I WASN'T THERE. NOWADAYS, PEOPLE CROSS THE STREET JUST TO SAY HI."

When I was at my worst, I would walk down the street and people would pretend I wasn't there. Nowadays, people cross the street just to say hi to

me. I plan to finish my degree and I'm thinking about doing a master's. I'd also like to get more involved with the shelter system in my city.

I want people like me to know it can get better. There are always going to be people there for you - you just have to open up and allow them in." -Travis



United Way
Saskatoon & Area

MOVING PEOPLE FROM POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY