

Melissa Young is dedicated, determined and courageous in her relentless motivation for change



I have battled with substance abuse for over 15 years, funneling in and out of the county jail. Often times I found myself with little to no hope of ever doing anything different in my life. When I say nothing different, I literally mean nothing different. Not even the birth of my older two children was enough for me to stop using drugs or change my criminal behavior. I was released from doing a 6-month sentence at the Franklin County Correctional Center in 2015 and returned within a month and a half doing yet another 90 day sentence of probation violation due to another relapse from opiate addiction.

This time was different for me because I really was tired. I signed up for this program called Pathways for Women Healthy Living, but a few weeks in, I was removed from the group due to an institutional keep separate from a fight. I was so hurt because after the first group I knew that this was something that I needed. From day one I could feel the compassion of the facilitator and the need for me to do something different. 10 weeks later I signed up again and was accepted into PWHL, I knew then that this was a new beginning for me. This time I was determined to hang in there and not allow anything or anyone to take me off focus.

I did just that and completed the Pathways program before my release. I learned things about myself that I never know, such as: how to deal with situations, triggers, warning signs, people, places, and things. I learned who I really was as a person outside of my addiction. I learned that I am a caring, loving, compassionate person with a heart of gold. This program called Pathways was a family – a family that I never had before.

Upon my release, I was a little scared, but I was more determined to change my life and develop into the amazing woman that I had learned I could be through the hands-on approach and outreach of the Pathways team. This time when I left the Franklin County Correctional Center, I left with a purpose in mind, that being to keep my head up and focus on the new life-style that I now wanted more than anything.

I enrolled myself into an Alcohol and other Drug intensive outpatient program at The Columbus Health Department. This AOD program which is a total of 16 weeks has enhanced my determination and resilience for a new-life style for me and my unborn child. I have learned techniques and processes that can assist me in my sobriety, as well as empower my self-esteem and strengthen my self-perception. It is through the support of my Pathways team that I was able to accept the services I needed in order to improve my life. I graduate December 2016 and for the first time I can say I have accomplished something I am proud of.

I am very thankful to have Pathways team in my life and every step of this journey. I recommend anyone to get connected with this amazing program and give themselves a change at developing a better, stronger and healthier lifestyle. I am now in the process of regaining those things that I lost while in active addiction: Rebuilding a relationship with my 2 younger sons was once a dream, but has now become a reality with the support of the Pathways team. I feel so much better as a woman and a mother – one who refuses to allow addiction to control my life anymore.

Today is the beginning of a brand new me and I love who I am discovering one step at a time. Thank you to Commissioner Brown, Michael Daniels, Homeland Security & Justice Programs, CIT Officers and the awesome team of Pathways to Women's Healthy Living.

I have battled with substance abuse for over 15 years, funneling in and out of the county jail. Often times I found myself with little to no hope of ever doing anything different in my life. When I say nothing different, I literally mean nothing different. Not even the birth of my older two children was enough for me to stop using drugs or change my criminal behavior. I was released from doing a 6-month sentence at the Franklin County Correctional Center in 2015

and returned within a month and a half doing yet another 90 day sentence of probation violation due to another relapse from opiate addiction.

This time was different for me because I really was tired. I signed up for this program called Pathways for Women Healthy Living, but a few weeks in, I was removed from the group due to an institutional keep separate from a fight. I was so hurt because after the first group I knew that this was something that I needed. From day one I could feel the compassion of the facilitator and the need for me to do something different. 10 weeks later I signed up again and was accepted into PWHL, I knew then that this was a new beginning for me. This time I was determined to hang in there and not allow anything or anyone to take me off focus.

I did just that and completed the Pathways program before my release. I learned things about myself that I never know, such as: how to deal with situations, triggers, warning signs, people, places, and things. I learned who I really was as a person outside of my addiction. I learned that I am a caring, loving, compassionate person with a heart of gold. This program called Pathways was a family – a family that I never had before.

Upon my release, I was a little scared, but I was more determined to change my life and develop into the amazing woman that I had learned I could be through the hands-on approach and outreach of the Pathways team. This time when I left the Franklin County Correctional Center, I left with a purpose in mind, that being to keep my head up and focus on the new life-style that I now wanted more than anything.

I enrolled myself into an Alcohol and other Drug intensive outpatient program at The Columbus Health Department. This AOD program which is a total of 16 weeks has enhanced my determination and resilience for a new-life style for me and my unborn child. I have learned techniques and processes that can assist me in my sobriety, as well as empower my self-esteem and strengthen my self-perception. It is through the support of my Pathways team that I was able to accept the services I needed in order to improve my life. I graduate December 2016 and for the first time I can say I have accomplished something I am proud of.

I am very thankful to have Pathways team in my life and every step of this journey. I recommend anyone to get connected with this amazing program and give themselves a change

at developing a better, stronger and healthier lifestyle. I am now in the process of regaining those things that I lost while in active addiction: Rebuilding a relationship with my 2 younger sons was once a dream, but has now become a reality with the support of the Pathways team. I feel so much better as a woman and a mother – one who refuses to allow addiction to control my life anymore.

Today is the beginning of a brand new me and I love who I am discovering one step at a time. Thank you to Commissioner Brown, Michael Daniels, Homeland Security & Justice Programs, CIT Officers and the awesome team of Pathways to Women's Healthy Living.