

Bridge Shelter Success: Costa Mesa resident celebrates New Year by being off the streets and sober

Costa Mesa resident Doug Hawley has a special reason to celebrate the New Year.

After years of living on the streets, he is now sober, has a roof over his head and is seeking gainful employment thanks to his resolve and the hard work of Costa Mesa's outreach staff, the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter and the Illumination Foundation.

Hawley's journey from homelessness to sobriety and finding housing was a long one.

He suffered chronic back pain from a debilitating injury, lost his job washing windows, and then he took to a life on the streets and alcoholism.

Despite numerous attempt by outreach staff to assist him, he was unable to maintain his sobriety and/or follow-up on medical appointments. By living on the streets in extreme weather conditions, he even re-injured himself. And outreach staff stopped trying to help him as he expressed a desire to live independently.

Then the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter opened and Hawley saw an opportunity to change his life path for the better. He realized he had hit his bottom and needed help. He jumped at the chance of getting a bed there and he renewed his previous relationships with outreach staff.

He left the shelter after a few months, but this time he was determined to get well, stop drinking and work on his housing

plan. He continued his relationship with outreach after he left the shelter and together they crafted a plan to move him off the streets.

As part of the plan, he agreed to attend two residential treatment programs and complete his permanent housing assessment. Additionally, he began getting his physical and mental health life in order by following up on both medical and mental health appointments. He began taking medication for his chronic pain and agreed to take medication for alcohol cravings.

He agreed to continue consistent medical appointments to ensure that he was sufficiently stabilized once he gained housing.

Hawley's hard work resulting in him being matched for permanent supportive housing through the Illumination Foundation in Anaheim last September. He has been sober now for five months and despite experiencing deaths in the family and other hardships, he remains strong.

Outreach staff and the Illumination Foundation continue to support him on his sobriety journey with the next step will be obtaining a viable income source.

To learn more about the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter and how Costa Mesa is helping individuals experiencing homelessness please visit our website at www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness.