

March 19, 2019

To whom it may concern,

My name is Allan Rucker, and I am a Certified Recovery Mentor working at the Addictions Recovery Center. I am also a 2006 Community Family Court graduate. I am sharing my CFC story with you as a heartfelt advocacy for the program.

I include a back story here, the only reason being to let you all know the type of person I was growing up, and so in turn, you will better understand the impact Community Family Court had in forever changing my life in this most positive manner.

As a child, I grew up in a dysfunctional and sometimes violent household, where “escaping” was a normal process for me, no matter how it came about. With help from my lineage, I was exposed to alcohol at a very young age. At the age of eleven, I started using tobacco first, then marijuana, and by the age of 13, I was a full-blown drug addict, using basically any and every drug I could. I also started committing crimes and rebelling against the “system” in whatever way I could. My teenage and young adult years were full of anger, depression and suicidal ideation. With those emotions came jail stays, broken relationships, an overdose, and extremely bad decisions. I bounced around from place to place, state to state, always extremely lost in my addiction. I was not okay, by any means, and I was not what you would call a “productive member of society”.

Fast forward to 1999, and a son was born to me. By the time he was born I had quit using some of the drugs, but I was still using excessive amounts of alcohol and pills daily. I remember sitting in the window of the hospital room, holding my newborn child, and I knew that it was not about me anymore. Here was this tiny little dude that needed me to be there for him in life. But even the love I had for my son could not seem to stem the tide of my addiction. I continued to use on a daily basis, and in even larger amounts.

My marriage with my son’s mother could not survive both of our addictions, and in 2002, we divorced, and entered an extremely nasty arena of pure conflict, usually centered around the custody of our child. Primary custody of our son was changed up three or four times, with him going to live with whoever was doing better than the other at any given time, or, to whomever could fabricate the better lie to tell the judge. Neither of us could see the negative effects we were placing on our child at that time.

My ex-wife’s story is really her own to share, but a point of time happened where she became pregnant again, and at a doctor’s appointment, tested positive for an illicit substance, and DHS was called. At that point, I was not in any trouble yet, and they were looking to place

my son with me. We had a Family Decision Meeting scheduled, and attended, where alcohol was smelt on my breath, and I tested positive on a urinalysis for it. This happened on two different occasions. My ex-wife had already pled into and been accepted into CFC, and it was then offered to me. I was accepted in as well, although I asked for a different judge than my ex wife had, citing less chaos for all involved. And so, I started my seventeen-month journey into a new and better life.

When I arrived in CFC, I still clung to that rebellious attitude, and I was convinced that I could do everything my way, and that it would work. I had yet to see that my way was not working for me anymore. I was then introduced to Judge Schively, who has since retired. He was a stern, but fair judge, and he soon made it clear to me that it would be in my best interest to accept and participate in the program the way he and the team were lining it out for me.

I still had the rebellious streak but was smart enough to see that he meant business. I was also very scared of the thought of my son being placed in foster care. So, I started doing as I was asked, and next thing I knew, doors started opening for me everywhere. One of the biggest things I fought against was having to go to 12 Step meetings and acquiring a sponsor there. That was so out of my comfort zone, but I did not want a sanction, so I did it. This might very well be the best decision that was ever made for me, because as of today, I still attend meetings, and I still do step work with that very same person who agreed to sponsor me back then when I finally got up enough courage to ask him to do so. Becoming part of the 12 Step community also had a huge impact on my life and on my behaviors. I started noticing that I was changing, and every time I next appeared in CFC court, the reports started getting better.

But I am a drug addict, and I did not quite have the tools yet to confront all these new feelings of mine, and I became overwhelmed and I relapsed. It was that angel of a son of mine that caught me, and he told me that I needed to call my sponsor. What 6 or 7-year-old child tells their father that he needs to call his sponsor? For me though, it was the look of pain in his eyes as he said it that I will never forget, and hopefully never, ever experience again. This was truly my bottom for me, and it was also my first experience with the Higher Power that would become so integral in my life from that point forward.

So, I called that sponsor and he immediately came to my house and helped start the journey of me getting clean again. Both CFC and my sponsor supported me, and never left my side, and though it was a struggle, I got clean once again, and have been so ever since. My team at family court also helped me to once again acquire permanent housing, get my driver's license back, and to gain employment. I would have to say though that the thing they did that really touched me the most was the love and support they showed my son.

When I was doing good, they rewarded me with tickets to take him to the movies, and that year on Christmas, they brought him a few presents. I truly believed that they cared about our welfare, especially his, and that was the key for me to being able to unlock the closed doors in myself.

I had been searching all my life for acceptance and faith, and when my CFC team showed me their belief in me, along with my sponsor and new friends in the Recovery community, then I started to believe in myself. I started to have that acceptance and faith in myself and my journey.

I am still a work in progress, but I prosper and heal a bit more each day. I truly believe that this would not be the case, if I had not been accepted into the CFC program. I believe that my addiction would have killed me, and that my son would've been without his father today.

So, now it is 2019, and as I write this, I am less than a month away from celebrating 12 years completely clean from all drugs, including alcohol. This is the most important factor in my life, as I know that without my Recovery, all else would be lost. I am blessed to be in a relationship to the most beautiful and supportive woman for around 7 years now and married for almost 4 of those years.

We recently purchased our own home, and we are certified foster parents to our 3-year-old granddaughter, who has lived with us since she was one year old. This beautiful little girl, who has Papa wrapped around her little thumb, doesn't ever have to see grandma or I loaded because we have broken that link in the chain of addiction. That is a huge and wonderful gift. That little boy of mine who steadfastly walked alongside his father through CFC, addiction and 12 step meetings, divorce, daily struggles, and tears is now a healthy, employed 19-year-old who is on his way to becoming his own man, and I am super proud of him.

I have been employed at the Addictions Recovery Center for almost 5 years, where every day I try to help struggling addicts get clean. I am also involved in two non-profits, one of which is bringing a Recovery Café to the valley, and another that empowers abused children to not live in fear. They are both wonderful organizations and I am blessed to be a part of their dream. Today I am humbled by and extremely grateful for my journey thus far.

I try to be the best father, son, husband, grandpapa, employee, and friend, as possible. I pray for this. I call it "Walking in Grace", and I strive for it daily. Thank you for helping me with that CFC. Thank you to Judge Schively, Josh Miller, Traci Roberti, John Hamilton, and thank you to Miss Lisa McCreadie, who is absolutely one of my most favorite human beings on this planet. Thank you for not giving up on me and thank you for planting the seed for me.

Wow, I have accomplished what I never thought was possible, or even wanted for that matter... I have become that “productive member of society.”

Sincerely,

Allan D. Rucker

Below is the quote that I read to the audience on the day I graduated CFC:

“The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict. We concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done in the past. Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings.

When we realized we are not able to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and loneliness often made us feel that we were not getting any better. We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma. We were critically ill, not hopelessly bad. Our disease can only be arrested through abstinence.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming into the fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. Answers are provided and problems are solved. It is a great gift to feel human again.

What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the program works. It is the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. We discover new opportunities. We find a sense of self-worth. We learn self-respect. This is a program for doing just those things. By working the steps, we come to accept a Higher Power's will; this acceptance leads us to recovery. We lose our fear of the unknown. We are set free.”