



# COUNSELING NEWS

Fall 2020

## KEVIN'S STORY

### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES & ACCELERATING SOBRIETY

"When I was in college I wanted to be a police officer, but I have an eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa that prevented me from doing that. I started to become a little rebellious, started going to parties, and started selling drugs. I also started using drugs and eventually dropped out of school.

After seven years of this, I was arrested during a drug raid. Once I got arrested, that was basically my rock bottom. After spending a week away, I was directed to the YMCA Counseling Service through the court system. Honestly, when I first joined the program I hated every bit of it. I thought no one knew what I was really going through.

It came to a head one day when I was consistently testing positive each time I went to the Counseling Service and the counselor gave me a choice: get clean by the end of the week or start a 90-day program. After that, I took one step forward and started actually working the program. I started listening to my counselor and it just started to work out. Every day I got sober, life got better. I learned so many different things from the program.

Although I was sober, I still had to go away for eight months. On the one-year anniversary of my sobriety, I started my sentence. I was able to get released in March because of the coronavirus pandemic. Once I was out, I came straight back to the YMCA Counseling Service. They took me back with open arms.

When the pandemic began, I was worried because I had planned on immediately starting in-person counseling again once I came home, but the Y worked around it pretty well with their virtual services. The virtual services work because people have to have something to turn to, even if it's just a video chat. Treatment isn't something you can just quit, and the Y stepped up and did their thing.

Since I've been back home, I've gotten a full-time job and started helping my family again. They trust me again. I never would've achieved two years of sobriety without the Y. The program saved my life.

Eventually I would love to work at the Y. I plan on going back to school to become a counselor, and I wouldn't have been inspired to do that if I hadn't had such a great counselor myself.

The main thing I tell people in active addiction is to join an Intensive Outpatient Program because the counselors will gauge what you need. That's what worked best for me. I think it's a good first step because it introduces you to Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and a community of people also trying to get help. And always listen to your counselor, because if you're not listening, you're not working."

#### YMCA COUNSELING SERVICE

South Shore Center, 3911 Richmond Avenue  
Staten Island, New York 10312 (718) 948-3232

North Shore Center, 285 Vanderbilt Avenue  
Staten Island, New York 10304 (718) 981-4382

### WHO WE ARE

The YMCA Counseling Service is a comprehensive outpatient chemical dependency program providing prevention, treatment and recovery services to children, adolescents, adults and their families.

During this time, as a means of ensuring everyone's health and wellness, we are offering both in-person and virtual services. For more information, or to schedule an assessment, please contact either of our convenient locations.

### OUR SERVICES

- ◆ Assessment & Referral Services
- ◆ Individual Counseling
- ◆ Group Counseling
- ◆ Family Therapy
- ◆ Psychiatric Services
- ◆ Addiction Medicine Management
- ◆ Peer Counseling
- ◆ Little Steps Program For Youth Impacted by a Loved One's Substance Misuse
- ◆ Prevention Programming
- ◆ Family Association
- ◆ Specialized Group Meetings

#### ENJOY THIS ISSUE?

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who you think may find it useful.

### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR IDEAS?

Contact Anna Bagliore, the editor, at [abagliore@ymcanyc.org](mailto:abagliore@ymcanyc.org).

## MEET OUR STAFF!

CONGRATULATING MARIE ON HER RETIREMENT



After almost 20 years of service, **Marie** is retiring from her time with the YMCA Counseling Service.

Marie began her career with the Y as a Hospitality Agent, greeting our clients with a friendly face as soon as they entered the building and helping them get started on their recovery journeys.

In time, Marie moved on to become an Executive Assistant. This allowed her to serve our clients in new ways, such as planning our Anniversary Celebration to honor them, the progress they've made throughout their treatment programs, and share the impact that the YMCA Counseling Service has on our community. She also took on the role of managing the Annual Campaign, which ensures that we are able to provide our clients with the treatment they need, no matter what their financial situation is. No matter which hat she wore, Marie's priority was always our clients and their needs.

"I moved to Staten Island in October 2000. In April of 2001, I was ready to get a nice, little part-time job. I saw an ad in the Staten Island Advance for a receptionist for the YMCA Counseling Service. This sounded like a quiet, little job and it was four blocks from home. I had no idea this nice, little part time job would give me a whole new life. I loved the job, I loved the people, but most of all I loved the clients. I've stayed for almost 20 years. When I applied for the position, I didn't know that it was an outpatient substance abuse treatment facility and that the United States was headed for an Opioid Epidemic. I was right where God wanted me to be."

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to Marie for the amazing work she has done over the years, and for always being a true champion for the YMCA Counseling Service. She will truly be missed, but we are wishing her a wonderful, well-deserved retirement.

**Congratulations, Marie!**

## YMCA COMMUNITY FUND

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL & SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

The YMCA of Greater New York serves nearly 500,000 New Yorkers annually, including those who live in vulnerable and under-resourced communities. We've been able to continue this work through the generous donations made over the years by supportive organizations, corporate donors, and the generosity of our members. But since closing our branches in mid-March, the Y has lost over \$70 million in revenue, threatening our ability to serve those who need it most.

In an effort to restore some the funding lost over the past several months, the YMCA, including the Counseling Service, has launched the **YMCA Community Fund**. Our Campaign for New York City will help the YMCA of Greater New York reach a goal of \$5 million to support the city's most at-risk populations through expanded resources so we can all emerge from the crisis as a stronger YMCA community. These resources include childcare for frontline healthcare workers, expanded transitional and emergency housing services, virtual and in-person support for NYC public school students, virtual engagement and outreach to seniors and members, virtual and in-person counseling services, immigration services, and more.

We understand that many are still recovering from the effects of the pandemic. If you are able to donate, please consider doing so by visiting [www.ymcanyc.org/give](http://www.ymcanyc.org/give). You can also support our campaign by sharing it with friends and family so that they may learn more about our goal to continue helping all New Yorkers.



### DID YOU KNOW?

The YMCA Counseling Service is an Opioid Overdose Prevention Program and is able to train anyone in Narcan administration and provide them with a kit free of charge. Narcan is a safe medication that can reverse the effects of opioids and prevent fatal overdose.



For more information, contact us at 718-948-3232.