

## Next Step Staff Stories: Elliot Kimball



*(L-R) Elliot's sister, mom & Elliot*

### Elliot's recovery story

I arrived at Next Step on July 24, 2015. It was my mother's birthday. Two months prior, my active addiction culminated in traumatic fashion. I woke up in a hospital bed, unsure as to how I got there. I soon realized how fortunate it was that the outcome wasn't substantially worse. That wasn't my first hospital visit as a direct result of my addiction. Fueled by fear, confusion, desperation and shame, I decided then and there to make recovery the most important thing in my life. I knew that recovery from addiction was vital to my survival.

After two months in inpatient rehab my counselor suggested a few places I could continue with recovery, including Next Step Recovery in Asheville. I chose Next Step as a step-down from inpatient treatment and to help me begin the process of transitioning towards becoming more independent. I knew I couldn't continue recovery on my own. I had tried that many times before, and it didn't end well. I had grown to believe disconnection from others to be at the core of addiction, and thus re-connecting to community as an essential aspect of recovery. Next Step provided a safe environment that allowed me to connect with a community of guys, all working to overcome the immense suffering brought on by mental health and substance abuse problems. The structured program held me accountable while simultaneously working with me, and others, in a client-centered fashion that respects the uniqueness of each individual.

There are two general aspects of recovery that I have come to find as essential for myself. One has been connecting to a community of people suffering with the same problem, trying to get better. The

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second involves working on myself with the direct guidance of someone who has gone through the same process. I've found both to be powerful in helping me to abstain from drugs or alcohol for nearly two years as well as helping to improve my quality of life.

### **How Elliot became a Next Step staff member**

I've long been interested in a career in a helping profession, and in fact was making headway as a graduate student on that front until addiction diverted my progress. As I worked the process as a resident, I expressed interest in working at Next Step. When I did start working as a case manager at Next Step it reminded me why I wanted to work in a helping profession in the first place, and motivates me to continue my education.

### **Advice for addicts and families of those on the road to recovery**

For those in the grips of the suffering that is active addiction and looking for relief: there is hope. For the addicted person, and their closest friends and family, I do believe there is a way out. Whether someone is seeking help for the first or tenth time, I see people getting better, connecting to community and family, and becoming productive members of society. It has not always been easy, but I have found it to be worth it. For me personally it took being receptive to what those trying to help me suggested. It took being fully honest, and dedicated to getting better. While fear and desperation initially motivated me, I've discovered that something positive now motivates me as well to continue my path of recovery. A sense of community and connection, seeing others get well, and the benefits of recovering give me the strength to continue progressing.

### **Fun fact about Elliot**

When I first got to Next Step and worked full time at Starbucks, I met actor Danny McBride when he came through the drive through.

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