

A mom's tough love helps son kick drug habit - at last

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David Nein and his mother, Mary Nein, embrace Friday inside Water Street Ministries.

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Several years ago during Thanksgiving week, Mary Nein called police and asked them to take her son, David — who was wanted on a parole violation — from her home.

It was one of the hardest decisions she has ever made, Mary said, but one that eventually led David Nein to Water Street Ministries, where he found the faith and hope he needed to restart his life and repair his relationship with his mother.

David graduated May 1 from the Men's Discipleship Center, a program under the Water Street Rescue Mission ministry.

"I have 100 or 1,000 steps to go," David, 45, of Marietta, said. "I pray to God that I have the strength to take it."

For nearly three decades, David has been in and out of jail for stealing to buy drugs, including crack.

In 2006, he was arrested and charged with stealing copper wiring from a local railyard. When he skipped a court hearing, he was sentenced to 40 days in jail and then ordered to enter the program at Water Street Ministries.

At first, David was reluctant to enter the Men's Discipleship Center program. But during an interview with the director of men's ministries, Aaron Eggers, David realized it was finally time to get clean.

"I am a good person. I never gave myself a chance," David said. "A chance to show that I can be somebody."

Mary said she has seen a dramatic change in David over the past year.

"It's a miracle," said the single mother, who raised five children by herself. "I always hoped it would happen. He was so close to death so many times."

This Mother's Day will mark a new beginning for David. The entire family will spend the afternoon at Mary's house in Marietta.

It's enough that the family will be together, Mary said, but more importantly, David will be sober.

But David is not stopping there. "Hopefully they will let me do a little cooking," he said. "I love to cook."

While Mary never stopped loving David, she would not feed his addiction through the years and often would not let him return home for the sake of her own sanity and her family's well-being.

There were months when Mary had no idea where David was. "It was a nightmare to me," Mary said. "Thinking that the police would come to my door and tell me that my son is dead. When that didn't happen I thought, 'Well, no news is good news.' "

David's trouble with alcohol and drugs started when he was a teenager. He said drinking with the neighborhood kids eventually evolved into smoking marijuana and using crack cocaine and LSD.

"I was high all the time," David said. "It was an ongoing thing. I would steal from my mom, sister, anybody I could, just to feed my addiction."

Though David has graduated from the Men's Discipleship Program he will stay at Water Street Ministries for up to another year while looking for work as a warehouse worker, cook or perhaps as a carpenter.

David knows creating a better life for himself won't be easy. "It's a constant battle every day how you are going to fight your addiction," he said.

But he is ready for the fight. "Every job I had, I tore it up," David said. "I'm going to start at the bottom and work my way up. I am willing to do that."

David credits the support of Men's Discipleship Program, outside mentors and God as the reasons for his turnaround.

"I didn't think there was a way out," he said. "But I realized that there is help through having a relationship with God. Now it's a chance for me to have a real life if you do the right thing. I am not going to give up."

Mary said she will be by David's side from now on. "We are on the same page," Mary said. "We all want to be self-sufficient but we are not. I've been praying in church for him for 37 years. If it wasn't for God he wouldn't be here. No one can do it on their own."

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