

BRITTANY

Born and raised in Orange County, Brittany was a good student, involved in speech and debate and other activities during high school. She was also part of a close-knit and loving multi-generational household, which included her mom, grandfather and great-grandmother.

Tragically, her life changed dramatically when the other members of her household all passed away within a short time of each other, including her own mother at the young age of 42.

Brittany was 15 and had nowhere to go. She was unable to stay with her father for a variety of reasons (they now have a close relationship), and was concerned about becoming part of the foster system. She stayed with friends when she could, but mostly stayed on the streets, where she started using drugs to numb the chaos in her life.

Brittany eventually started working in telemarketing and sales at the age of 18 and earned her high school diploma, but continued to do drugs off and on. Eventually she started doing heroin, and was in and out of rehab as a result. Fortunately her employer kept giving her second chances, and when the company moved to Las Vegas, she transferred there with them.

The change in scenery was good for Brittany, and she did well for a number of years, although she never worked a formal program like AA. She became pregnant and welcomed her son August James, or Auggie, named after two of the family members she had lost.

Brittany and Auggie moved back to California in 2021. But she soon relapsed, and social services took him from her (he is currently living with his father). A week after losing custody, she was hit by a car while crossing the street, and suffered severe burns to her torso and broken ribs. She was at UCI Medical Center for six months as a result of her injuries, followed by six months in recuperative care.

During this time, Brittany received inpatient mental health treatment as well, and eventually participated in a 90 day treatment program through Vera Sanctuary. From there, she was placed at an Action Alliance home as part of AAF's contract with the Health Care Agency of Orange County.

"I was at my initial Action Alliance home for four months, where I started working the AA program. Action Alliance has put structure in my life – I wouldn't have made it without them," say Brittany. After Brittany completed the County program and started working again (returning to a position in telemarketing and sales), she was able to move to a different Action Alliance home, where she currently pays rent.

With her life stabilized, Brittany also started pursuing reunification with her son, doing everything she was asked to do by the Court. "I learned how to handle work, recovery, drug testing, court-ordered appointments and more, and took everything seriously. And, Action Alliance was there with me every step of the way," she says. In July, 2024, Brittany got the news she had worked so hard for, when she was granted 50% joint legal custody of her son.

While Auggie, now 8, won't be able to stay with her until she gets her own place, Brittany will soon start seeing him on a regular basis. She also knows she still has more work to do on her own health before she's ready to make that move.

Brittany has been told that her success in regaining 50% custody is rare – that only about 2% of moms in similar situations are able to do so. “I've actually been a resource for other moms with open CPS (child protective services) cases, and may become an official volunteer mentor in the future,” she says.

Now eight months sober, Brittany is looking forward to a bright future, knowing it all starts with self-care. “Action Alliance taught me how to take care of myself,” she notes, “and that allows me to be a better mom.”