

SAUNDRA

Saundra, who was born into a chaotic and abusive household, faced challenges from the start. While her father was a good provider, he was an alcoholic. She lived mostly with her mom, but was taken from her and placed in foster care at a young age. Her father regained custody, and she lived with both he and her stepmom – also an alcoholic – for the next several years. Sadly, it was a very abusive situation, with school becoming her refuge.

When she was 9, Saundra moved in with her 18-year-old sister, but eventually moved back with her dad (now single) at the age of 12. They moved to Las Vegas, where Saundra soon discovered meth, started dealing, and no longer found school to be the refuge it once was.

Within a few years, men entered the picture, and Saundra looked for love in all the wrong places. Her life became a vicious cycle of men and drugs. Welcoming the first of six children (now ages five to 18), Saundra would do well at times, but would then slip back into substance abuse. “Drugs will find you whether you’re looking or not,” she notes.

In 2014, Saundra moved back to California with her children but quickly got involved in a bad relationship. She lost custody of her children, but did well in Drug Court, eventually regaining custody.

In 2021, using again, Saundra fell 40 feet down a hillside and shattered both ankles – she has a visible limp from the injury. She continued to use, and hit rock bottom shortly after, when she got into a fist fight with her oldest daughter.

After serving 11 months for assault, Saundra was released to an Action Alliance home in July, 2024. “This time, my main focus is on recovery – I’m doing this for me,” she says. Saundra works in telemarketing and sales, and is also in touch with her children by phone, with in-person visits slated to start again soon. “This time, I’m learning to manage my emotions,” says Saundra. “I’ve built a great community at the Action Alliance house where I live, along with AA. Both of my sisters are also in recovery, and we’re all there for each other as well.”

“I’ve learned that I need to do this for myself – not to regain custody of my kids, or because it’s expected of me,” continues Saundra. “I have a routine now and know to take life one day at a time.”