



Action Alliance Foundation

Safe Recovery Residences

Meet Barry

At the age of 86, Barry is the most senior of Action Alliance's current residents. He is also among the most grateful.

A hard worker who played college baseball and earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Miami, Barry played minor league baseball before becoming an entrepreneur and working for the federal government. During his childhood and young adulthood, he lived in 14 states, moving to California in 1964. He married and had four children. Yet he was hiding a major secret- he'd been a closet drinker since the tender age of 6.

It wasn't until June 9, 2009, when his wife started a domestic altercation by hitting him over the head with a cast iron skillet, that he was forced to confront his lifelong habit. He decided to take responsibility for the incident, and was convicted of domestic violence. He initially spent time in jail and took court-ordered anger management classes, but after the conviction was reduced to a misdemeanor, he was able to finish the remainder of his sentence at a Jewish rehabilitation center. Attending 90 AA meetings during the first 90 days of his sentence, he kicked his habit and achieved sobriety. He also gave back by teaching GED courses and completing some projects around the rehab facility. In fact, he overstayed his sentence in order to complete a painting project he had started.

After completing rehab, Barry lived with a friend and worked for H & R Block in Simi Valley. A few years ago, he moved to Orange County to be closer to his two daughters and their children (he also has two sons, a total of nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren, with another on the way). In recent years, he's faced some significant health challenges, including three major back surgeries. After living with one of his daughters for a while, he rented rooms he could afford, but never felt safe – until he was introduced to Action Alliance earlier this year.

"Action Alliance took me in and gave me a safe place to live – the best thing that could have happened to me." A former smoker, Barry has been dealing with COPD in recent months – but his Action Alliance housemates make a point of checking in on him, as does his house manager. Barry attends AA meetings regularly and serves as a mentor to his housemates. He's always willing to lend an ear or provide an encouraging hug. And, he sees his daughters on a frequent basis.

"Sobriety is #1 at Action Alliance – they are definitely here to help!," concludes Barry. "There's no doubt about it – Action Alliance helps save lives."