

Shauny's story

Hi, my name is Shauny and I am 47 years of age. I have lived all my life in the Tillydrone community. As a young boy I loved my sport and found great joy in playing football. When I left school at 16 I became an apprentice butcher but by the end of my apprenticeship I was already starting to dabble in drink and drugs. As my habits increased I was unable to sustain regular employment. I soon became one of the boys, stealing from shops and breaking into houses on a weekly basis. This cycle of stealing to provide for my habit meant I eventually landed in prison. I did my first jail sentence 1992 and got 3 months for house breaking!

When I you got out of prison I met a girl who became the mother of my kids. Although I was still an addict our first few years together had some happy moments. My three children were born in 1995, 1997 and 1998. Tragically I lost one daughter in a house fire. My partner also suffered permanent damage to her health through smoke inhalation. She never recovered and died in hospital in 2007. At this point I started taking more and more drugs to block out the pain. However when I got up in the morning the pain was a bad as ever. My life was a mess; I was a no hoper, deeply enslaved to substance misuse. In 2007 I got 18 months in prison for intent to supply others with drugs. I was in a dark place.

After my sentence I continued attending the Lighthouse Support Centre. I enjoyed the community time and the support I received there but I never went to the studies or the life groups. I was not a believer and had no faith but over time, and against what I thought was my better judgment, I started attending the faith based recovery groups. Through these groups I finally had a pigsty moment when I was able to hand all my troubles and pain over to Jesus. From then on my life started to change and for the better. I knew I had a turned a proper corner but I still had big struggles ahead.

In seeking to improve my well-being, I decided to go through the Hep c treatment. This unfortunately triggered a bad reaction in my body. I landed up with rashes and open wounds all over my body. This went on for months. It was a torrid time for me and I got really low and depressed. I was severely tempted to go back to my old ways but my faith, loads of prayer and my lighthouse mentors supported me through it. It was a personal triumph for me that I never slipped back at that time. As well as the Lighthouse the M26 club

also played a role in helping me move on. Through the M26 and the church I was privileged to go on a mission trip to Uganda which was also life changing.

Since then I have kept on going and growing in my faith. I attend church every Sunday and I'm disciplined in going to my study groups through the week even if it means missing my football on television! I enjoy my new routines that are sign posting towards life rather than death.



After I got myself stabilised, I started doing some voluntary work with Robertson upholstery. Then I got a break as a part time cleaner. Following this I felt I was now ready for full time employment. I was chuffed to get a job with Straightaways which has benefited me greatly. I have enjoyed learning new skills like fencing, lock blocking and landscaping. The devotions in the morning also help me get my bearings and I love working as a team. I still have an ambition to learn to drive and move forward in my career. I

recently got engaged to Sharon and I'm very happy in a stable relationship. On Wednesdays I help with the football coaching at Riverbank Primary school and I go to the matches on Saturdays. At the end of last year I won a Drugs Action recovery award.

I am grateful for the way God has turned my life around. His grace is truly amazing! All this has taught me that even if life is in the deepest darkest pit there is always hope. I'm passionate now about helping others find this same hope.