

THE ROAD HOME

Until the age of 17, Victor was a model student. He was well-behaved and respectful to his parents. Then he started drinking and cutting classes. At first, his family thought he was acting out like many adolescents. But his behavior became more and more erratic. "After that point," says Lorraine, Victor's sister, "his life was never the same. He was always in some kind of trouble."

Although his parents attributed his behavior to alcohol, it was years before Victor received a proper diagnosis of bipolar disorder. Victor's delinquent behavior led to his subsequent placement in a state mental health facility. His family was relieved, hoping it might offer Victor the help he desperately needed. Unfortunately, Victor's behavior spiraled out of control.

Upon discharge, Victor was transferred into a state program. Over the next few years, he revolved in and out of several psychiatric programs. Finally, when mandated by the Court to join Father Bill's Place in Quincy, Massachusetts, a social service agency that helps the homeless, Victor was directed to Vinfen.

"For 40 years," says Lorraine, "we walked around aimlessly. Our lives were never comfortable, couldn't be, never knowing what he was doing." At work, Lorraine lived in constant apprehension, fearing she'd receive another call saying Victor was in trouble. After he joined a Vinfen residential program in Randolph, his life began to turn around. "The program gave us the feeling that we finally had a 'controlled package' that would guide us in a positive direction," says Lorraine. "And there is nothing more important than that, when you're standing alone and don't know who to turn to."

Once Victor had a structured environment, he started to see a psychiatrist and take his medication. For the last seven years, Victor has been sober. He shares his residence with two other men, also served by Vinfen. During the day, Victor goes to Atlantic House in Quincy, Massachusetts, where he receives rehabilitation services in a supportive environment. Around 4:30 p.m. he returns home.

As a result of Vinfen's support to family members, Victor's relationship has also improved with Lorraine. Today, brother and sister are close and she senses in him a newfound contentment. Seeing Victor's transformation, Lorraine has only the highest accolades for the staff at his residential program: Senior Program Director Lauri Leeds always gives Lorraine her undivided attention whenever she calls. "Lauri has shown me how Vinfen has been a supportive source in transforming the lives of our loved ones."

Residential Counselors Martin Muiruri and Samson Gacheru have encouraged Victor throughout the years, and Site Manager Danielle Sciarini brings the gift of laughter. "The staff is focused in such a way that they make these people feel like they really care about them, and you know what, they really do," says Lorraine. "The fact that Vinfen brought Victor back to even wanting to have some kind of existence speaks for itself."

"I have my own space in a peaceful setting."

Dennis Young, Resident at Harvard Commons

Vinfen transforms lives by building the capacity of individuals, families, organizations, and communities to learn, thrive, and achieve their goals. As a human services leader, we strive to be the provider, employer, and partner of choice.

