

Peace of Mind

Joy Sparks' Story

“ I would like to first thank Solid Ground for even considering my journey a success story. That’s validation for me, that I’ve worked hard to get to where I am, and that me and my family are more than deserving to be new residents of this beautiful community.

My daughters and I went through several different stages of homelessness — ranging from couch surfing, sleeping in cars, hotels, shelters and transitional housing. I think one of the reasons I was able to move forward and overcome my biggest barrier, which was homelessness, is because of the overwhelming support that I received from Solid Ground and all the other staff and organizations that embraced me during my time of need!

My caseworker Katie Showalter especially played a big part in keeping me grounded. She found out what my needs were on all levels! She was always there using her words to uplift me and motivate me!

She’d say to me, ‘Joy you are artistic and beautiful, smart and resilient.’ She’d use all these powerful words describing characteristics that she’d seen in me that I hadn’t even seen in myself! Katie doesn’t know this, but whenever our meetings were over, I’d always pull out my dictionary and search for the definition to her words of choice, and I’d always feel so awakened and uplifted by their meaning!

There’s a quote that says, ‘The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.’ And Katie has demonstrated just that with her words of comfort and encouragement. She was always there with her mirror telling me to look at myself and love the person I see, and that I am worthy.

I’m not sure if you all are fans of Deepak Chopra, but I’d like to share something he wrote about toxic relationships. He talks about the three kinds of people in your life: Those who leave you alone, those who help you, and those who hurt you.



Joy Sparks speaking at the Brettler Family Place Grand Opening, 4/7/11

People who leave you alone are dealing with your suffering as a nuisance or inconvenience; they prefer to keep their distance in order to feel better themselves. Those who hurt you want your situation to be the same because they do not have your wellbeing at heart.

Those who help you have the strength and awareness to do more with your suffering than you are able to do by yourself. He also says having made a realistic count, take the following attitude:

1. I will no longer bring my problems to anyone who wants to leave me alone. It's not good for them or me.
2. I will put a distance between myself and those who want to hurt me.
3. I will share my problems with those who want to help me. I will not reject genuine offers of assistance out of pride, insecurity or doubt. I will ask people to join me in my healing and make them a bigger part of my life.

Whenever I read this I feel so thankful for the people who've played a role in my life and who've found ways to help me overcome and move forward.

Creating my vision board was another thing that kept me focused. I made my vision board 1/29/2010; we had only been homeless three weeks. But the very first thing that you're able to see on my vision board is a magazine clipping that reads "Homeless to Happiness." That remained my vision and my # 1 goal.

On March 7, 2011 my vision became reality. I went from being homeless to being stable, and secure, which to me is happiness!

Brettler Place to me, means happiness. The beautiful scenery, the view of park, even the green grass and access to the beach have meaning to me. It means family and togetherness! The energy here feels good. There's a peace of mind here!

I have peace of mind knowing that I don't have to pack my bags in a few months and I don't have to transfer my kids to another school again. I don't have to sleep in a car again or call to put my name on a waiting list for shelter. I don't have to expose my children to unhealthy living anymore!!!

One more quote before I go: "Everyone needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul." I have that now and it's all thanks to you, the Brettler Family, Solid Ground, Mercy Housing, Katie Sholwalter and all of you!!!

Thank you so very much!!! "