

The Company You Keep

BY: ANNA DELLINGER



Lindsay Haley has been in and out of prison, in and out of relationships, and in and out of reality. Her addictive personality led her to begin abusing substances at age 14. This destructive behavior continued for over 20 years — until she learned the importance of hanging with the right crowd.

“My life was consumed by drugs and alcohol,” Lindsay said. “I tried everything, but meth was my demon.”

She would try to get clean for a while, but she always ended up relapsing.

“I went back to the same playgrounds, play places, and people. When I got out of prison, I thought things would be different. And then immediately, I got back out and got right back into it.”

When Lindsay started selling drugs, even losing a relationship with her five kids didn’t cause her to reconsider her lifestyle. She simply took them to live with their dad.

“I didn’t lose my rights, but I wasn’t a mom,” she remembered. “I was too afraid of what I was going to miss in the dope world.”

After she got out of prison the second time, Lindsay began a relationship with someone who was still addicted. She fought the urge to use at first, but tension between the couple escalated.

“Instead of getting out of the relationship, I started using, thinking it would save the relationship,” Lindsay said. “It did. But I lost myself again. When he passed away, it was my rock bottom.”

People who Lindsay thought were friends blamed her for his death — but she had genuinely loved him. With no support, Lindsay went into a deep depression and her drug use spiraled out of control. She was caught committing a crime and faced 29 felonies. She knew it was time to change.

“I pled into Drug Court, and I made a promise to myself and my children that I was going to make it worth it. Every tool I could get, every training I could get, I would take it.”

Lindsay was interested in going back to school, but she figured it was a long shot. A counselor told her about the Center for Social Innovation (CFSI) and Lindsay decided to apply. The CFSI program is designed to give hope to individuals overcoming social barriers by offering training, resources, and tuition stipends to attend OSU-OKC.

Lindsay was a perfect fit. She enrolled in classes, attended trainings, and earned certifications. She chased after life change like there was no tomorrow.



“It wasn’t just the college experience that kept me sober and made me want more out of life. Everything about CFSI was life changing and eye opening and encouraging. I can overcome my past because of all those trainings.”

When Lindsay’s mother died in May 2023, during graduation week at CFSI, it could have been another stumbling block in Lindsay’s sobriety. This time, however, she was surrounded by a community who loved and supported her as she grieved.

“My friends at CFSI didn’t let me have a moment to myself. Instead of letting myself lose it, I decided that my mom got to see me turn my life around and break that generational curse of addiction,” Lindsay said. “If I can handle that, there’s nothing in this world I can’t handle.”



Today, Lindsay is going on two years sober and works as an Outpatient Navigator at Diversion Hub, connecting inmates to court-ordered outpatient treatment facilities. She credits her time at CFSI with helping her acquire a good job, get off food stamps, and become a productive member of society. CFSI also aided Lindsay with the down payment on a car so she would have a reliable mode of transportation.

“I’ve learned traits where I can go out and help other people turn their lives around, people who think they don’t have lives or dreams or futures.”

Lindsay is now engaged and has a solid relationship with all of her kids and her father — something she never thought she would have again. Most importantly, Lindsay no longer has drug addicts in her circle.

“I have sober people in my life working toward a better future. I needed the Christian fellowship and positive energy from all the people that came from CFSI and the whole college. They wrapped us up and loved us until we could love ourselves — that’s the whole point of recovery!”