

My name is Cecilia Jones and I am a resident of Partner Arms Two. I have a beautiful teenage daughter, a full time job and a future full of possibilities. But it wasn't always this way. I made some poor choices in my life and struggled for years making one bad decision after another. Having to deal with the peer pressures of life also contributed to helping me indulge in worldly activities that devastated my life. I decided to turn my life around about three years ago and entered a treatment program at SOME – So Others Might Eat. I lived there, learned the Metro system (coming from Maryland I had no idea how to ride the Metro or the bus), and I completed a recovery program.

The staff there encouraged me to speak up and speak out when I needed something and I took that advice to heart. I was looking for a place where I could live with my daughter without worrying about the dangers of drug dealing that is found too often in low income housing. I was riding the bus one day when I just spoke up and said, "Does anyone know of any low income housing where I can go with my child?" Some of the folks on the bus looked at me like I was crazy. But one woman, a resident of Partner Arms One, told me about this program. I went right back to my case manager and told them they just had to help me get into Partner Arms. I filled out all of the paperwork and six weeks later, my daughter and I moved into a fully furnished apartment.

Since I've been in Partner Arms, I have received assistance from the Case Managers who have pointed me in the right direction toward training classes and have encouraged me to go after job opportunities I was unsure of. I started out working at the Old Soldiers Home, which is close enough to Partner Arms that I could walk to work. From there, I worked as a temp and got a short term position with the DC government. I worked hard, I was always professional and punctual and in January I was hired full-time at the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services.

I am working with the Summer Youth Employment Program, helping the young residents find summer jobs. These young people have made a bad decision that has resulted in their being sent to Youth Rehabilitation Services. I try to let them know that this one choice should not define their lives or who they are. They have the chance to turn things around, just as I did, and go on to achieve great things. That's one of the most rewarding things about my job -- it gives me the chance to give something back.

I have been elected the President of the Tenant's Council at Partner Arms Two and I try to encourage the other residents to really strive for a better future. I always say that this is a testing place, not a resting place. Partner Arms is a place where you get to work on yourself, so you can live and work in the larger society. I know that I am tested and ready. I know I'm making the right choices for myself and my daughter but I don't take all of the credit for where I am now. I give glory and honor to God for standing with me on my journey.