



Seeing Hope in the Sky: Derrick's Journey From Desperation to Dedication

If you met Derrick today, you would get to know him as the dedicated housing manager securing the grounds of Linden Commons, a new apartment community for young people who have transitioned out of Covenant House California to a life of independence.

But before he worked for us, he was once a resident facing homelessness himself.

Derrick grew up in shelters with his mom and sister, until he aged out and had to leave. At just 20 years old, he was sleeping on the streets, in parks, anywhere he could find, until a friend suggested Covenant House California.

His friend wasn't exactly sure of our address, but told Derrick the general location he could find our shelter. Undeterred, Derrick searched and searched until he saw a white bird in the sky — our logo.

"Seeing that bird changed my life. I walked a whole new path after that."

Derrick stayed with us for four years until he found permanent housing. Even though he had grown up in shelters, Covenant House felt different. "It was like a family. I had never seen so many people so happy to help youth out and help people find housing."

When he was given an opportunity to work at Linden Commons to help make it a home for kids like him, it was an easy decision for Derrick.

"I just want to make sure everyone is safe and feels comfortable. I know how stressful this can be," he says. As a caring and dedicated manager, Derrick goes above and beyond his duties to ensure every young person at Linden Commons feels at home.

The promise of Linden Commons and the resilience of individuals like Derrick remind us that, with support and opportunities, every young person has a chance to rewrite their story and emerge from the darkness into the warm embrace of a brighter future.



May
Night of
COVENANT HOUSE Stars

September
YOUTH ART SHOW

November
SLEEP OUT

TO FIND MORE COVENANT HOUSE
EVENTS NEAR YOU, VISIT
[COVENANTHOUSE.ORG/EVENTS](https://covenanthouse.org/events)

Covenant House builds a bridge to hope for young people facing homelessness and survivors of trafficking through unconditional love, absolute respect, and relentless support. Our doors are open 24/7 in 34 cities across five countries and our high-quality programs are designed to empower young people to rise and overcome adversity, today and in the future.

www.covenanthouse.org

0524-OASNL-NL

Open Doors

Covenant House: News from the inside

SPRING 2024

Homeless, in an abusive relationship, and at the mercy of her addiction, Sophia's head was full of hateful thoughts toward herself. Covenant House showed Sophia that she was cared for and loved, even when she couldn't love herself.



Rewriting the Lies of Homelessness: How Your Support Gave Sophia a New Outlook

No family, no home, no love.

This was the life Sophia was living.

For young people like her, living on the streets without direction or even a source of human kindness, Sophia began to think the worst of herself. She fell for lies many homeless kids come to believe — *I am worthless. I have no future. No one loves me. And no one ever will.*

"Struggling to battle my inner demons and hateful thoughts, I was always on the edge," Sophia says. Without any positive forces in her life, all this young girl needed was someone who cared. That's when she made a friend she thought could give her the feeling of love and acceptance she was craving.

But things took a terrible turn. Her new friendship budded into a relationship that quickly turned abusive, breaking down Sophia's

sense of self-worth even further.

When her partner introduced her to meth and alcohol, Sophia tumbled into addiction.

"There was rarely ever a moment where I was sober," she says. "Drugs, alcohol, being homeless, cut off from family, and being in an abusive relationship pushed me further away from reality."

It didn't matter if she had money or not, Sophia always had someone to provide her with substances, whether it was her partner or those in her circle who were also struggling with addiction. She remembers even walking to the woods across town to camps where she knew there would be meth.

"Meth was now a part of me, and I was happy about it because it was the only way I could escape my thoughts and reality."

Continued on pg. 2





When I witness stories of young people overcoming incredible odds, I am reminded of the potential every single kid has for

achieving a life far greater than their darkest moments.

In this newsletter, you'll read about Sophia, who overcame addiction and abuse to build a life she had always wished for. You'll also read Derrick's story. A young man who grew up in shelters, he is now a property manager creating a home for youth transitioning out of Covenant House.

Both Sophia and Derrick grew to become authors of their own story, rewriting the narrative of homelessness to one of independence, possibility, and hope.

I want to thank you for playing a part in their story. Sophia, Derrick, and thousands of kids like them now have the chance to reach their greatest potential because of friends like you.

As a loyal friend to Covenant House, your outstanding generosity allows us to be a safe place for kids to find unconditional love and care. Because of your compassion, young people overcoming homelessness, abuse, mental health crises, and human trafficking can receive the care they need to heal and find a brighter future. Thank you for making all this possible!

William "Bill" Bedrossian
President and CEO



Today, Sophia has a life she never dreamed could be possible — sober, working, and taking care of a son she adores.

Sophia's story cont.

Overcoming Addiction With Love

Yet deep inside, Sophia knew she needed help. That's when she came to Covenant House Alaska, lost, scared, and shaking from withdrawal.

While addiction had a tight grip on her, we worked hard to release its hold on this hurting young girl. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters like you, Sophia finally received the help, acceptance, and unconditional love she needed to overcome her pain.

"I was able to receive counseling for the first time, I was able to participate in events that would put a smile on my face, and I was able to leave knowing that I was cared for," she says.

Today, Sophia is celebrating four years sober. She graduated from Alaska Career College and is nationally certified as a medical assistant. Best of all, she is a loving mother to a son. "I could not wish for a better life," she says.

Sophia's amazing transformation was only made possible because of friends like you, who know that every young person deserves love, a safe place to grow, and a chance to reach their full potential. With a gift today, you can help kids like Sophia receive the care they need at Covenant House to build a future they are proud of.

Everyone Has Something to Give

Sarah Lane-Hill noticed a growing need in her hometown of Chicago, yet for a long time she wasn't sure what she could do to make a difference. Then, she discovered how she could help at Covenant House Illinois.

For years now, Sarah has generously offered her skills as an architect to help our expansion efforts on Lake Street, where our Chicago shelter is located. "Everyone has something they can give," she affirms. "I can help create a welcoming space, a safe haven. I can use my architecture skills to give young people shelter and show them they are loved."

Once renovations are completed, we will have an upgraded drop-in center and a total of 60 short-term residential and transitional living beds, which is a tremendous step up from the 12 beds we had when we first opened doors in Chicago in 2017!

This is not done by just one person's efforts, but our community of staff, volunteers, and supporters like you. "All kinds of people come together to make this a success. Lake Street is not an island; it's a community," Sarah says.



Sarah shares her talents as an architect with Covenant House Illinois, helping in the expansion renovations to create a welcoming and safe place so we can house more homeless young people.

A Friend Since the Beginning



As a new Air Force chaplain serving in North Dakota, Father Ed happened upon a Covenant House newsletter just like this one lying open on a table. Intrigued, he began reading, and was immediately moved by our cause.

"I was completely unaware there were all these homeless kids," he says. It was 1976, just four years after Covenant House was founded. At the time Father Ed first read our newsletter, we had only one house in New York City.

Since that first fateful encounter, Father Ed has been a loyal donor and friend of Covenant House. Now, he wants to extend his legacy of generosity past his lifetime by remembering our young people in his estate plans. "What better good could I do with my money?" he asks.

We are grateful to have Father Ed's support for all these years. He has been by our side as one shelter in one city grew to 34 shelters in five countries. With his legacy gift, Father Ed will continue to help us expand and improve our services in the years to come.