

Bryson arrived at the Mission homeless, jobless, and discouraged about his future. In less than two weeks he was employed, living in his first-ever apartment and paying his own bills.

Bryson is a friendly, outgoing 20-year-old with a wide smile and a great sense of humor. His positive energy is quite contagious. Had you met him just two months earlier you'd have gotten a different impression.

Bryson recently lived with his family in Minot. He worked for a local painting company, but he didn't feel like his life was going anywhere.



*"I just wasn't really doing anything I was supposed to be doing,"* says Bryson. *"I was smoking weed...I was just not really on the right path."*

One day, Bryson and his brother got into a big fight. His brother charged at him with a wrench, swinging violently. That attack was a wakeup call for Bryson. He knew he was in a bad situation and needed to get out.

*"I went to the hospital because I was just in a bad place,"* Bryson says. *"I went into the psychiatric unit. I knew they would be able to help me because I just had a lot of depression and stuff growing up. I struggle with that. I was just at a really low point in life, and I knew I needed help."*

Bryson talked with a psychiatrist and a therapist while in the hospital. He was prescribed anti-anxiety and anti-depression medication. He says that has made a big difference for him.

*"When I was getting discharged [from the hospital], they were trying to figure out what I wanted to do,"* says Bryson. *"I told them I'm not going back [home] because I had a bad feeling about that whole situation. I knew I needed to get out of there. My grandma was the last person I talked to before I left, and she told me, 'Sometimes you have to uproot yourself and plant a new tree.' So, I asked myself...do I want to live like this, or do I want to plant a new tree?"*

Bryson decided on the latter. He took a train to Grand Forks, with just one regret.

*"The hardest thing was having to leave my dog Snoopy, because I knew he wasn't going to be taken care of properly,"* says Bryson. *"I felt awful, but I knew I couldn't bring him here. I mean, I thought I might be living on the streets. I didn't know anything about Grand Forks. I didn't know what to expect."*

Bryson soon arrived at the Mission and met Nate, who forms one third of the Mission's advocacy team.

*"I didn't know about the whole housing [support at the Mission],"* says Bryson. *"Nate asked me something like, 'What do you want in life?' I said, 'I don't know, to be honest.' He asked, 'Do you want an apartment? A car? Do you want to get your GED?'"*

*"Nate was giving me all this positivity when I was flat down in the dirt,"* says Bryson. *"I had wanted to hop on a bus to Colorado and go be a knucklehead. But Nate...it completely snapped my whole [negative] mentality. It made me be like, 'This guy doesn't even know me, and he's just going to sit there and say he believes in me?'"* Bryson laughs. *"I'm like, 'Okay, let's do it!'"*

Nate first helped Bryson get health insurance. He also got Bryson involved with Freedom Church, where Bryson attends Bible studies and sometimes goes to the gym. Bryson also met with Bobbie, another member of the advocacy team. She helped Bryson find a job making pizzas.

*"Bobbie really got my foot in the door with that for sure,"* Bryson says. *"She had me walk over there the first day and fill out an application, and I got the job that same day."*

Now that Bryson had a source of income, he could apply for housing. He just needed to come up with a deposit and rent money. Even with that, he found a community ready to support him.

*"[Freedom Church] helped me with \$150,"* says Bryson. *"St. Joe's helped me with \$150 as well, and I paid \$150 myself plus first month's rent. That's something that I'm proud of."*

Bryson also got Snoopy back, who is now living with him in his downtown apartment. Bryson is excited to be able to walk Snoopy on the Greenway.

Bryson plans to stay in Grand Forks for now. His short-term goals include getting furniture for his apartment, saving up enough money for a car, and getting his GED online. There's a lot going on, but one thing is certain: Bryson feels more hopeful than he has in a long time.

*"God turns bad into good,"* says Bryson. *"I think that's what happened with my brother. It all got turned around, and this was God's way of pushing me into something better."*

As a Mission supporter, *thank you* for opening your heart to Bryson and others like him. You are a blessing and the reason we can tell this story today!

God Bless,



Sue Shirek  
Executive Director



*Snoopy makes a great companion in Bryson's new chapter!*

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*

**2 Corinthians 5:17**