

**Troy's apartment** looks about as comfortable and welcoming as one could hope for. Just past the entryway, a clean kitchen with plenty of cupboard space leads into a small dining area with a table and a sturdy wood cabinet. An old-fashioned radio sits on the table, along with a few electronic knickknacks. On the wall is a calendar where Troy keeps his appointments. Moving into the living room, two fish tanks hum quietly next to a cozy-looking couch and a TV. A red and black tapestry hangs on the wall, along with several pictures of nature scenes. On the other side of the room, a lamp bathes a hardwood desk in a warm yellow glow.



This is where Troy has lived for the past few years, after leaving Northlands Rescue Mission in early 2019. It has been a difficult journey for Troy, but his story reminds us that there is hope for every individual who walks through our doors. It just takes a strong foundation, self-dedication, and a few people who care.

*"When I came to the Mission, I could barely walk,"* Troy says. *"I had alcohol withdrawals, lack of muscle use, lack of nutrition. I had anemia. I was very weak and confused."*

Over the course of three months, Troy slowly recovered. His health began to improve and he got to work on a plan for housing, with the assistance of the advocacy team.

*"The shelter didn't give me all the answers,"* Troy says. *"I had to do the work...make the phone calls, do my own research. But the shelter plugged me in to a lot of different things to get me out of there. I learned a lot [at the Mission], about myself and others."*

Troy moved into his apartment soon afterwards, and the Mission helped jumpstart him with some furniture and food boxes. Still, things didn't come together overnight for Troy. To rebuild his life, there were more challenges to overcome.

*"It takes awhile to learn how to do things again once you're not homeless,"* Troy says. *"Now you have responsibilities. You have to plan meals, you have to pay bills. Avoid temptation."*

When you're dealing with trauma, mental health issues, and addiction, as Troy has, that is easier said than done. Troy experienced extremely traumatic events when he was young. He also suffers from a form of anxiety that causes his mind to race chaotically. He has used alcohol to cope with these things before, and he admits that he fell back into drinking once he was on his own.

Things were different for Troy than before, however. He had resources. He had a home, and he was connected to addiction and mental health support because of his time at the Mission. It was just up to him to take action, and that's exactly what he did.

*"One morning I woke up and I thought to myself, 'I can't do this anymore.' I knew...it was live or die,"* Troy says.

Troy went to treatment and successfully quit drinking. He is now 6 months sober, and he feels better than he has in a long, long time. He has found a renewed motivation to take care of his physical and mental health. He enjoys cooking healthy meals and experimenting with new recipes in his apartment.

Troy has developed healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with his racing thoughts. When he feels overwhelmed, he likes to go for walks, tend to his fish, or visualize scenes of nature in his head. He spends much of his free time researching and learning how things work. That keeps him grounded and focused on the here and now.

*"Now that I'm sober, [taking care of myself] isn't as big of a deal,"* Troy says. *"I have enough to work with."*

Troy currently receives disability income, which allows him to maintain his apartment and vehicle. He has severe arthritis and spine damage stemming from several accidents and a hard life of physical labor. It's been hard for Troy to find steady work in recent years. He was an electrician for 20 years and owned a farm, but those things are out of the question now. He's not giving up on work, though.

*"I just got into an education program that they offer at the age of 55,"* Troy says. *"It's for people with disabilities, and they try to work you back into the system, even if it's at-home work."*

Troy is also working with vocational rehab to find a job that will fit his situation. Together with his improved health, it's left him feeling confident about the future.

*"I think it was about the end of the road [for me],"* Troy says. *"There are many times that I had lost hope. But now, I know I can maintain this. I'm just taking it day by day."*

We know that the journey doesn't end for our clients when they leave the Mission. It takes work, dedication, and a solid foundation to beat homelessness for good. Thank you for giving Troy that foundation through the Mission. Now, he is proving to himself and others that he can sustain this success. Troy will be 3 years housed in January.

*"Most of my life, I never woke up and felt good,"* Troy says. *"Even when I was young. In the last six months, there have been several times I've woken up and felt good. I'm taking care of myself now, and I have things on my agenda. I feel human again."*

God Bless,



Sue Shirek  
Executive Director

*In their hearts humans plan their course,  
but the Lord establishes their steps.*

**Proverbs 16:9 NIV**