



Gratitude in Action: Dayna's Story

Dayna begins every morning by writing a list of what she is grateful for, a practice she learned as a resident of our recovery program New Joelyn's. "Every single day, there are small things that happen that remind me of how far I've come," she says. "I'm finally happy and content, which is so different than the life I used to live and who I used to be."

From a young age, Dayna experienced a great deal of trauma. She recalls, "My mom is one of us, an alcoholic. Despite that, I didn't have a horrible childhood, but I did experience a few pretty traumatic things when I was a little girl, and I think my mom carried a lot of guilt because of it." As a result, Dayna's relationship with her mother became explosive. She describes her teenage self as angry and rebellious, constantly getting into trouble with the law and fighting with her mother. To cope with it all, she found herself spiraling deep into substance use.

By the age of 17, Dayna left home to live with her boyfriend and quickly became pregnant with her son. "My boy is the love of my life," says Dayna with a bright smile, "but I'm delusional when I'm in the grips of my disease. No matter how hard I tried to stay sober for him, it just pulled me back in so fast." Dayna spent years in and out of detox centers but was never ready to take the next step. She explains, "I would sleep for a couple of days, but as soon as I would open my eyes, the obsession would kick in."

Everything changed in the Fall of 2021 when Dayna was sent to New Joelyn's. "I had never been to Boston before," she told us. "I didn't have anything, only a backpack with nothing in it." With her son back home in Springfield, MA, she had no intentions of creating any roots in Boston. She says, "I felt like I needed to go be a mom, but deep down, I knew I couldn't be anything at that time, especially a mom... It took me a while to understand that I needed to do this for him and for me."



"I take my sobriety one day at a time, and I'm grateful every day for it," says Dayna.

For the first few months, Dayna passively moved through the program, feeling like an outsider. She struggled to open up, never sharing in groups and keeping to herself. She says, "I wasn't doing the right thing. I was going under the radar, but still doing things I wasn't supposed to. By no surprise, I relapsed a few months later."

Undeterred, Dayna found the strength to try again. She told us, "I went back to [the Program Director] Walter and asked for his help. I knew then and there I needed to get it together because I couldn't keep doing what I had been doing my entire life. It was time for me to surrender and trust the process." She quickly



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A Message from Sarah Porter, Executive Director

There has been a lot of press and conversation regarding the workforce crisis. On average, 4 million Americans quit their jobs each month in 2022. Many of us have had our fair share of frustrations when waiting in extra-long lines at CVS or ordering on our phones at a restaurant. These situations have been more intense for the human service industry. I heard a statistic recently that in family services funded by Mass Health, for every 40 clinicians to leave, only one position is filled.

Victory Programs is doing a lot to recruit, retain, and equip quality team members. We've adjusted our compensation scales every year for four years. We've added a 401K match. We've changed insurance contributions. We're regularly training our staff. We're doing

leadership development work. You name it, we're trying it.

But my goal is not to spotlight those changes but rather to highlight those people working in this field...in this organization...still.

We are close to having a workforce of 300 people, which includes direct care professionals, case managers, accountants, tech folks, and leaders, among others. It includes people who shovel snow, people who crunch data, people who fight bed bugs, people who make soup, and those who process payroll. It includes people who provide compassionate care; folks who welcome people in over and over and over again. Team members who specialize in grace and mercy, hope and encouragement. They bring these skills to work daily despite the disproportionate burden, the heartache, the conflict, and the consistency of the struggle. Staff at VPI know people by name, celebrate successes others might consider minuscule, mourn every loss, and live in the ambiguity with many.



If you are an employee reading this, please know you are seen. Your story, commitment, and efforts matter. They always have, but even more so during this workforce crisis.

Thank you for your hard work, your hearts, and your hope. Those things multiplied across all of us make a better and more equitable future.

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BE A FORCE FOR GOOD!

If you're interested in being part of our mission and making a profound impact in the lives of others, consider joining our workforce of compassionate professionals. Together, we can build a brighter and more equitable future. Visit www.vpi.org/careers today to explore job opportunities and become a vital part of our team!

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joined every group she could and developed deep friendships with other women in the house. “The girls I met there, we're all still best friends. In fact, one of the girls had a baby boy earlier this year and I'm his godmother,” she beams.

Dayna celebrated one year sober in February 2023. “Walter and New Joelyn's gave me another chance. They all believed in me when I didn't believe in myself, and hey, look at me now,” she exclaims. Dayna has since made amends with her mother, whom she speaks to nearly every day. After graduating from New Joelyn's, she moved into the sober living home There Is a Solution as the house manager, and once a month, she and fellow New Joelyn's graduate Alyssa (featured in our Fall 2021 edition of The Doorway) make their way back to New Joelyn's to host group meetings.

Dayna's dream for the future is simple: A two-bedroom apartment for her and her son. She says, “My son is my world, and as long as I do the right thing, the two of us will have a great life together and that's the most important thing to me. Maybe down the line, we could get a German Shepherd like we've always wanted, but for now, we'll start with the apartment.”

Empowering Lives Through Compassion and Connection

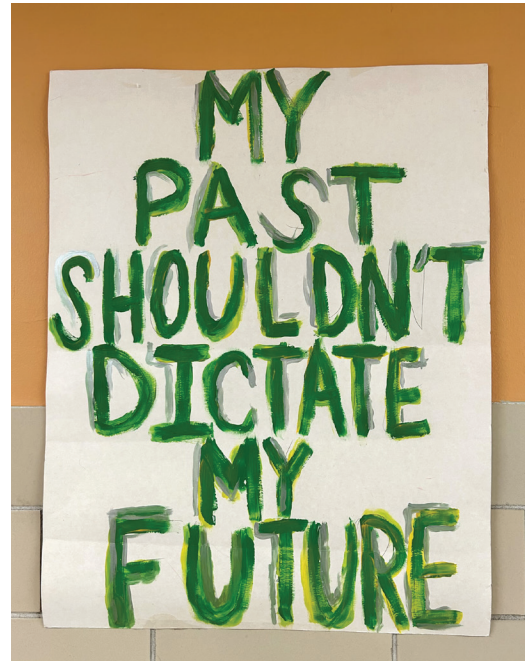
Bhumi Aryal has dedicated his life to serving those who need it most. His journey to becoming Program Director of Victory Programs' recovery program LARC is fueled by his belief in the power of connection and deep-rooted desire to ignite positive change.

Bhumi's career began in his home country of Nepal, where he embarked on a public health mission to educate rural communities on HIV prevention and treatment. His passion for serving the underserved led him to the United States, where he earned his second master's degree in social work. While the decision to leave Nepal was difficult, he knew there was so much more for him to learn. He explains, "In Nepal, it's all about macro social work. When I came to America, I discovered that social work here was very different. It was all about the individual. This was the piece I was missing; this was exactly why I came here."

A few months shy of graduation, Bhumi took a chance and applied for an internship with LARC. As a bright-eyed but shy clinical intern, he was committed to engaging and connecting with his clients. Seven years later, as the Program Director, he still brings the same level of passion to his work every day. "I love to run groups," he exclaims. "I try to invest as much time as possible to connect with the clients. That's why my office door is always wide open. I want them to trust me enough to bring me their problems. I'm here to serve them, and the best way to do that is by giving them a safe space to share their trauma so we can work through it together."



"Most of the people who come here have experienced chronic homelessness on top of co-occurring conditions and severe, intergenerational trauma. As a provider, it can be challenging to triage their needs, but my incredible team works hard to get the best outcome for our clients," says Bhumi.



The hallways of LARC are adorned with inspirational posters made by the clients.

Bhumi's humble nature belies his transformative impact on the lives of those he serves. He is always quick to redirect praise, acknowledging his incredible team and their collective efforts as the backbone of the program's success. "I'm the person to get the credit, but honestly, many things are under the iceberg. All the hard-working staff, they're what's most important in making this program work as well as it does," he shares.

When we asked Quiana Arroyo, a substance use disorder counselor at LARC, what it's like working with Bhumi, she said, "I think Bhumi is such a great leader. He always pushes us to be our best for ourselves and our clients. He doesn't come in and tell us, 'This is what you're going to do.' He listens to everybody and is open-minded to all of our ideas. It's refreshing."

Bhumi reminds his team every day that success revolves around small victories, with every moment of a client's progress being a triumph. "We meet people where they are at, so success looks different for each person, and it's not always what you might think," he explains. The interview was briefly interrupted by a client knocking on Bhumi's door frame, asking for a spare notebook. Without hesitation, Bhumi handed one over from a box of supplies. She lit up with a smile, thanking him before walking away. He returned to his seat and told us, "Happiness doesn't come from the big things, but the small things, like a notebook. If it makes them smile, I consider that a success."

JOIN US VIRTUALLY ON OCTOBER 19TH AT 5 PM FOR

Exiting the Commercial Sex Trade: How Victory Programs is Helping Survivors of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Find Hope

Human trafficking continues to be a grave violation of human rights, affecting individuals of all ages, genders, and backgrounds across the globe. Traffickers prey on vulnerability and thrive in times of conflict and instability.

Victory Programs is committed to serving our community's most vulnerable. These individuals, experiencing housing insecurity and substance use disorder, can find themselves caught in the clutches of traffickers, robbed of their agency and dignity. Recognizing and addressing this intersection is crucial in effectively combating human trafficking, as comprehensive efforts to provide substance use disorder treatment and safe, stable housing can help break the chains of exploitation and empower survivors on their path to recovery and freedom.

On Thursday, October 19, at 5 p.m., join us virtually for a thought-provoking discussion led by a panel of experts and advocates who bring invaluable perspectives to the table. You'll gain critical insights into the issues surrounding the exploitation of vulnerable individuals and learn how we are breaking down barriers that perpetuate human trafficking.



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DATE

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Scan the QR code to
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Embracing New Beginnings

At Victory Programs, our mission revolves around more than just providing support; it's about empowering individuals and families to step into a future brimming with promise and independence. Every journey towards stability is a testament to human resilience and the power of a helping hand.

As our clients take the monumental leap from our programs into their very own homes, we believe it's a moment worthy of celebration. That's why we equip our program graduates with home essentials like bedding and kitchenware as they embark on this next chapter.

You can help us celebrate their independence by purchasing items from our "Welcome Home" Amazon Registry. With every donation, you're not only providing home essentials, but you're also sowing the seeds of confidence, stability, and comfort. It's an investment in their dreams, aiding in their journey toward self-sufficiency. As you play a pivotal role in this transition, you become a vital thread in the fabric of their success story.



Scan the QR code to view our complete "Welcome Home" registry and make a gift today!

If your workplace, community group, school, or religious organization is interested in a fun and impactful activity, building welcome home baskets for our clients is a great option! If your group would like to host an event or drive, please email volunteer@vpi.org or call (617) 318-3434 ext. 147 for more information.

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