



FALL 2025

Finding Friendship, Belonging, and Recovery

When Rollie and Alex first walked through the doors of Victory House, neither expected to find an unlikely friend who would play a key role in their recovery. Rollie, an ambitious chef with a big personality, and Alex, a quiet barber working hard for a fresh start, come from different worlds. Yet inside the walls of our men's recovery home, they discovered common ground: a determination to heal, a longing to belong, and a shared commitment to live life on life's terms.

Born in Puerto Rico, Alex came to Massachusetts with his family at the age of ten. Uprooting his life and moving to a place so different from what he knew, Alex struggled to fit in. "I didn't belong to any group," he explained. "I just felt out of place." To cope, he began acting out, getting into fights, and eventually, using substances. "I started hanging out with the wrong people, got into weed at 14, cocaine at 16, and then heroin. That's when everything went down the drain."



"You come in alone, but you don't stay alone." –Alex

Addiction followed Alex into adulthood, shaping his relationships and family life. He spent years in and out of treatment, stubbornly trying to work through things his own way while pushing out the people who loved him most. "I had so much weight on me. My divorce, trying to be there for my children, dealing with losing my grandfather," he explained. "I just gave up. My support system was there, but I never used it."

This time around, Alex is approaching recovery differently. "My way never worked," he admitted with a laugh. "This program has done everything for me...Resources, support, guidance, but it's still up to the person. You've got to put in the work, and the staff here helped me see that I can actually do it and stick with it." Today, Alex is pursuing his GED, cutting hair, and building toward stable housing. "It's been one positive thing after another," he smiled.

Adopted into an abusive home, Rollie always sensed he belonged somewhere else. Books became his refuge, and he excelled in school, even earning a scholarship to the University of Vermont for psychology. "I wanted to become a psychologist because of all the abuse that I went through," he explained. **"I wanted to understand the minds of people, why they do what they do, especially to children."**

Things began looking up for Rollie, especially when he met his biological family. "When I met my real mom for the first time, it was just a lot of tears," he reflected. "It was a sad, but happy moment for all of my family." Yet even there, tensions surfaced, leaving Rollie feeling like an outsider once again. In a bid to connect with his father, he began using substances with him. "I thought it would help us bond a little bit better, which it did for the most part... in the beginning," Rollie said. "It all started to decline a bit for me when he started giving me heavier stuff. I was hooked."



"Something shifted for me when I came here." –Rollie

After college, unresolved trauma resurfaced, and Rollie's life spiraled, resulting in his incarceration. "I was devastated," he recalled. "My career was down the drain. I could never be a psychologist now. But I can say, I was always resilient. Everything I went through, I was still managing to make it through life. So, why couldn't I stay sober, too?"

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Message from President and CEO Sarah Porter

In the latest attack on America's at-risk and unhoused population, in July, the White House signed Executive Order 14321, titled **"Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets."** We all read the order, shocked by the vicious description of those we work tirelessly to assist, yet not surprised given recent developments.

Victory Programs strongly condemns this executive order, not only for its offensive

and inflammatory language, but also for its misguided and harmful approach to the ongoing homelessness crisis. Instead of promoting bipartisan and evidence-based housing-first solutions, the order advocates for an incarceration and institutionalization-first approach that enforces "civil commitment," otherwise known as involuntary commitment, a practice that decades of data have shown to be both ineffective and inhumane.

We recognize that such "solutions" are as effective as a Band-Aid on a bullet wound. Instead of tax dollars going to housing-first policies or harm reduction services (now both considered risky terms), they will instead be fueling jails and prisons that brutalize our most vulnerable. Unless paired with more treatment beds and additional safe housing, this executive order is likely to exacerbate an already growing issue.



Victory Programs will continue to evolve and adapt in the face of this shameful executive order, ensuring we meet the ever-changing needs of those this administration seemingly deems undeserving of housing, health, recovery, and hope. **We aren't going anywhere, Boston.**

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Please consider joining our efforts.
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Alex and Rollie "stooping" in front of our first red doors.

Like Alex, Rollie spent years cycling in and out of recovery homes, slipping whenever life became too heavy. "You know, something shifted for me when I came here [to Victory House]," he said. "It's a five-star house, but that doesn't matter if you're not willing to put in the effort. They helped me realize that you put out what you put in."

Today, Rollie is an executive chef at Boston Children's Hospital and serves as Food Director for SnapChef. "It's a different dream, but I'm still doing something that I love," he grinned. "I'm excited for my future. I met a couple of good friends here, like Alex. He's quiet and grounded, and I respect that. He's a really good dude."

For both men, the search for belonging has finally found a home at Victory House. "You come in alone, but you don't stay alone," Alex said. "You find people who understand. Rollie's one of those people for me." Rollie added, **"The first door opened when I walked through here. And since then, others keep opening. You can't beat that."**

50 Years of Opening Doors

For half a century, these milestones have guided our path forward. See more of our storied past at www.vpi.org.

1975

Ted Cantone and John de Miranda establish Victory House for men returning from the Vietnam War

1976

18-year-old Jonathan Scott volunteers at Victory House | *photo 1*

1985

Victory House opens doors to people living with HIV/AIDS

1991

Victory House, Inc., officially becomes Victory Programs, Inc.

1994

Bobbie White House, New Victories, and the Living and Recovering Community (LARC) are established

1999

Victory Programs opens Administrative Offices | *photo 2*

2007

Joelyn's Family Home opens its doors

2012

The Boston Living Center joins Victory Programs | *photo 3*

2014

Chamblet Family Home opens its doors | *photo 4*

2018

Victory Programs' Founder & President Jonathan Scott steps down after 43 years of service

2019

Sarah Porter appointed Executive Director of Victory Programs

2021

Victory Programs opens transitional and permanent low-threshold housing in response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding near "Mass and Cass" | *photo 5*

2022

Victory Programs transforms former admin space into the Victory Connector

2024

- Victory Programs establishes the peer-led Jamaica Plain Recovery Center
- The Boston Living Center celebrates 35 years!



2025 VICTORY TURNS 50!





You're Invited...

HOPE STARTS HERE FUNDRAISER

50 YEARS OF BUILDING PATHWAYS TO VICTORY

Thursday, November 6, 2025

Artists for Humanity, 100 W 2nd St,
Boston, MA 02127

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Scan the QR code or visit
www.vpi.org/50-year-celebration for
more details on tickets, sponsorships,
auction previews, and special guests.

If you have any questions, please contact Shauna Helton, Chief
Development Officer, at shelton@vpi.org or (617) 318-3434 x146

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Hope for the Holidays: Help Us Spread Warmth This Season

At Victory Programs, we believe everyone deserves to feel cared for, especially during the holidays. Cold weather, tight budgets, and the emotional weight of the season can hit hard, especially for those without stable housing or a strong support system. And while December may seem far away, the truth is that **the need for warmth, comfort, and connection starts now.**

This season, we're putting together winter gift bags filled with essentials: a cozy hoodie, a hat, gloves, and a scarf. The kind of simple, heartfelt items that bring warmth in more ways than one.

There are many ways to get involved:



Shop our **Hope
for the Holidays**
gift registry



Start a
peer-to-peer
fundraiser



Host a **coat
or sock** drive



Plan a team volunteer
gift wrapping event
this Fall

With your help, we can ensure that when the holidays do arrive, they're wrapped in care, dignity, and joy.

For any questions, email volunteers@vpi.org.