

Richard's Story

Late in Summer of 2004, Richard woke up to find that he had been sleeping on the grass in Lincoln Park. Having nowhere to go, he realized that it was time to make a change.

Growing up in Southern Indiana, Richard became involved in drugs in his teenage years while working in the food service industry. Largely due to the fact that he had a steady income, Richard left high school prior to receiving his diploma.

Several years later, Richard moved to Chicago to further his career in food service management. Despite His involvement in crystal meth, he managed to secure a position as a corporate trainer for a large, nation- wide restaurant chain. Eventually, however, his addiction proved overwhelming and his career disintegrated. Subsequently, Richard learned he was HIV positive. Upon hearing the news, his live-in partner threw him out of the house, leaving Richard homeless.

With nowhere else to turn, Richard entered a 28 day treatment program. Ultimately, this would be the spring- board to his stay at Bonaventure House. Since his arrival, in February of 2006, Richard has proven to be a valuable asset to the Bonaventure House community. In addition to attending recovery and HIV support groups, he volunteers at *Vital Bridges* and is taking classes toward earning his G.E.D. "I feel like I'm at the beginning of the beginning" Richard explained when asked to reflect upon his time at Bonaventure House. "The start of an adventure, learning a new way to live".

As for the future, Richard is not sure and is hoping that through attending classes, he will gain a better Sense of direction for himself. "This is an incredibly supportive environment," Richard noted. "It really starts to feel like home. This is going to be a hard place to leave".