

Options for Recovery Residential Treatment Center for Women with Children Address to the Graduating Class of 2008-09 – Oct. 7, 2009

Hello my name is Bonnie Love, most of you know me as B.LOVE. I have three wonderful children, 12, 10, and 8. I am originally from Kansas City, Mo., and thanks to Volunteers of America, I will be eight months clean and sober on Oct. 23, 2009.

I want to first thank God for everything he has done and what he is about to do in my life. I would like to thank God for the angels he has put into my life.

A local women's shelter gave me the support that I needed when Child Protective Services removed my daughter. They sent me for an alcohol and drug assessment. It was then that I met Diane Waltman, who told me about Volunteers of America and "Options for Recovery." I don't know what I would do if not for these angels sent by God.

It was Oct. 5, 2005, when I sat by my Aunt Flora's bed in the hospital. Aunt Flora never asked for anything. She was always there when I needed her. She watched my children and took care of me and my children. The thought of losing her would devastate me and then the doctor came in and told me that she wasn't going to make it. The pain I felt was too hard to bear.

I started to kick the walls and cussing. No one could control me. I ran out to the parking lot, jumped in my car and drove to the nearest liquor store. I can't remember anything after that, except my mother sending my oldest children to Sacramento to live with their father.

This angered me and I saved up my money jumped on the train with my baby daughter to Sacramento.

Once I got here I had no place to go. I stayed here and there until I got into the women's shelter. I found myself in and out of various shelters for four years. I finally got a place paying \$32 a month, while my partner spent most of his time drinking and using drugs. The relationship became abusive. I lost my place and my daughter. I had no other choice but to live with my abuser. I had to do it so that I could get into the women's shelter. From there I came here, Option for Recovery.

I am very grateful for Option for Recovery. I met a wonderful team of professionals. Thank you to all the staff members who assisted me in my treatment. They not only looked at my addiction, but at all of my issues. My counselor, Toni Bottia, helped me with my trust issues, CPS challenges, and my mental health. One day, Options Program Director Kym Haas took me outside and showed me how to remember things by planting a flower with a note that stated what I wanted out of life and counselor Ms. Blanche shared how she really cares for the children. She taught me how to get down to a child's level without being physically, verbally, or emotionally abusive to them.

Here at Options For Recovery, we learned a whole lot of great skills and how to be willing to grab hold of our recovery the first time. Yes, I love being clean and sober. I learned that I have to be honest, open minded and willing. I finally found the courage and confidence to stay clean. I received strength from God and his angels that gave me good support. My daughter Amerion Love was returned to me on Sept. 17, 2009 at 8 p.m. My family is back in line and for that I am grateful.

I now reside at Options for Recovery Transitional Housing Program and attend NCADD outpatient treatment program.

Ladies, you may think the grass is greener on the other side, but there will always be obstacles, trails and tribulations to concur. Remember, put on you soldier outfit and be ready for war. My encouraging words would be to have faith and believe in yourself, stay strong, ask for help when you need it, and never give up.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I give to you the Options for Recovery graduates of 2008-2009.

I'm Bonnie Love and I'm out!