



POWER Inspires Progress

Good Friends,

As the part-time Donor Relations Coordinator for Power Inspires Progress, I am thrilled to be a guest writer for this Holiday Season communication! I am even more excited to share an update on a PIP Graduate who was featured in August 2015's newsletter.

At that time, one of PIP's Trainees (Rachel) described how her stipend from Venice allowed her to pay her rent, purchase renewal tags for her car, and pay for groceries, while still leaving her with money in her pocket. With tears in her eyes and sincere gratitude in her heart, she told us that this was the first time she ever felt she had enough money to take care of herself.

I recently met Rachel for dinner so we could catch up. As our appetizer – a cheese board – arrived, Rachel excitedly explained the different kinds, where they were from, and why some were served with quince jam. Rachel reminded me that upon graduation from PIP she had secured employment at a restaurant which specialized in cheeses and smoked meats. I began to ask way too many questions about smoked meats and Rachel confidently answered them all.



Rachel then shared that the restaurant that had given her that “second chance” closed due to management and overhead issues.

This is normally where I brace myself for bad news. Unexpected change, the ground shifting beneath your feet, can cause anyone to take a step backwards. Loss of housing, heat, water, or even relapse into self-destructive behavior and subsequent hopelessness may occur as a result of poor timing or unforeseen circumstances. Often, I'll hear from Alums who would like to come in and receive help updating their resume or asking where they can find additional resources to begin the job search process anew – a sign of their own resilience and resourcefulness. Knowing folks are confident enough to return to PIP at such times is a source of pride for us.

Yet Rachel had found not only another restaurant job on her own, but also another after that! However, she eventually realized those jobs were threatening her wellbeing and stability, and made the decision to move on. She is now working at an area non-profit where she is able to utilize her many industry skills as well as share her own journey towards a substance free lifestyle – of which she is celebrating 2 years this December – in ways that help others. Throughout our conversation, Rachel expressed immense gratitude for the lengthy journey she had undertaken, for the learning gained at each place of employment, and the progress she had made. The joy in her heart was hard to miss when she spoke of her time at Venice.

I asked Rachel, “What made you keep going? What made this time different from the past?”

“Honestly,” she said, “you guys taught me that it is okay to mess up. I was so scared of messing up and ruining everything. I'm still fearful and scared, but now I know I can walk through the fear. It is going to be okay... it might even be great.”

A United Way Agency Partner

The corner of 13th and Vine continues to provide both a haven and a platform for those learning, again and again, to fall down and stand back up. Sister Judy Tensing and the folks at Venice recognize individuals' abilities, highlight their strengths, and share so many of the tools needed for success with every member of our unique team. As each new chapter of their lives is written they are celebrated.

And as we at PIP continue to write our own history, we realize the story would be incomplete without recognizing the continued interest and support of so many good friends and generous donors like you. Thank you, dear friends for your support.

As the temperatures begin to drop and the snows fall, please consider remembering PIP this Holiday Season as you consider your end-of-the-year giving. Sister Judy, Rachel, myself, and all the folks we serve know how much it means that you do, so . . . THANK YOU!

Warmest wishes for a Happy Holiday Season from our kitchens to you and your family!

Lauren Roberts
Donor Relations Coordinator