

Client Success Story: Holli

Former Client Now an Employee

“I really feel like this is my calling,” Holli says of her position as Peer Engagement Specialist with GCB’s Paths to Recovery program, which focuses on engaging people who are homeless and chronic inebriates. The Paths to Recovery program is funded by a federal grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Holli focuses on street outreach, making the rounds with GCB case workers on the streets of Over the Rhine, in Washington Park and surrounding areas. They attempt to develop relationships with the goal of leading people toward programs, services, and ultimately recovery. Holli brings a unique perspective to her work, having been homeless with a mental illness diagnosis and a substance abuser. She is now clean for nearly two years and in City Gospel Mission’s recovery program for women, “Having the Courage to Change”.

As she progressed, Holli became involved in The Recovery Center’s programs designed to enhance life skills to further recovery. It was there that she met Chris Pedoto, Recovery Center Director, who saw Holli’s focus and desire to succeed and recommended her to Greg Pieples, who heads Paths to Recovery and needed a peer specialist. “What I saw in Holli was just a very engaging and positive person,” says Pedoto. “She made friends quickly upon her arrival to the Recovery Center and was very supportive of them as well as the other members of the Recovery Center. She really understood the concept of peer support. Even though she was here to work on her own recovery, she did more giving than receiving.”

Holli estimates she has brought four people into the program since she has been with Paths to Recovery, but has developed relationships with many more that she hopes to someday bring to the network of help and support she has found. This, for Holli, is what makes it all worthwhile. “It is so fulfilling to see the face of a person when you hand them the keys to their own apartment for the first time.”