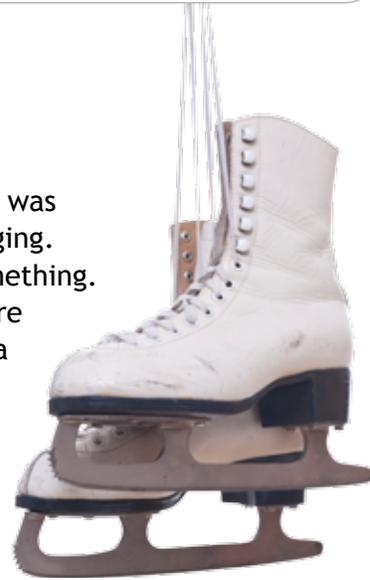




LAW & ORDER

Growing up, I developed self-discipline through ice-skating. Because I was overweight and naturally clumsy, ice-skating was particularly challenging. Starting at the age of eight, I learned how to really work hard for something. By the time I was thirteen, I joined the team representing my rink here in Georgia. I discovered what it meant to sacrifice and work towards a common goal. My team, Peach Frost, took second place at Nationals in Lake Placid, New York in 2002. Practicing dedication and adhering to the principle of commitment are just a few positive attributes I acquired through ice skating. I also learned to accept losses and strive for realistic goals, traits that would prove beneficial for years to come.



As I went on to high school, my focus began to shift and I worked on improving my academic record. I applied all the principles I learned from my years as an ice-skater and was met with success. It was at this time that I acquired an interest in law. About midway through my career as an undergraduate student, my

existing. I lied, played the victim, and manipulated to survive; it ate at my soul. I knew something needed to change, but I was stuck in a self-destructive cycle with such clouded views and twisted priorities that I did not see a way out. Thankfully, God kept showing up in the form of a man with a badge and a pair of handcuffs. On

**I lived like an animal...I lied, played the victim...
I knew something needed to change,
but I was stuck in a self-destructive cycle...**

interest turned into passion, and I knew that I would be pursuing a degree in the field after graduation.

While hard at work as a student, I went to the typical college parties and drank alcohol. In a very short period of time, my drinking turned into a significant substance abuse problem. I was able to exercise some control during the school year, but upon graduation, my addiction took over. The next few years would be characterized by darkness; I lived like an animal, homeless in three states, merely

April 17th, 2014, I was arrested for the final time. I knew I needed to get sober, and that I had to change my life or lose it. While I was incarcerated I went to AA meetings and was told that if I really wanted to stay sober, that I should go to The Extension. In May of 2014, spiritually, emotionally and financially bankrupt, I was released from jail and was granted admission.

I was welcomed with open arms and I slowly started to gain a sense of stability again; it was then that the hard work

Law & Order cont'd on page 2



the EXTENSION

The solution for homelessness and addiction

The Extension is a quarterly publication. The Extension is a non-profit, tax exempt organization as described in the internal revenue code in section 501(c)(3). The Extension, Inc. is governed by a volunteer board of directors.

Comments or questions about this newsletter or any of the functions of the Extension, Inc. are encouraged, please send correspondence to us at P.O. Box 793, Marietta, GA 30061 Phone: 770-590-9075

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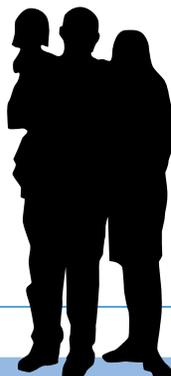
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A member of our staff or Board of Directors would love to come to speak to your group about issues related to homelessness, addiction and more importantly recovery. Just give us a call at the number above.

The Extension
1505 Church Street Extension
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Law & Order continued from page 1 –

began in earnest. Knowing my recovery depended on it, I faced my fears of rejection, inferiority and failure, and I took a moral inventory wherein I identified my character flaws and committed myself to becoming the person I was meant to be. Besides the slave labor required to maintain an addiction, the work I put in for my recovery was the hardest work I have ever done.

Lack of willpower was never my problem; my problem

endeavors brought me clarity and a new perspective about myself and the world.

By the time I transitioned in 2015, I had developed a truth: avoidance of responsibility only deprives you of the liberation acquired by addressing wrongs and making amends. My amends are far beyond what any court would be able to order, and will be a lifelong process. Today, I give back to The Extension, and I share my experience to make a difference.



My passion for law has never diminished... In 2016 I decided that I would pursue my passion and apply to law school.

was a thick head. I had to be completely broken so that I could be put back together in a meaningful way. I was not an easy client for the counselors, but as they persisted with the treatment plans, so did I. Slowly, I learned what it really means to take responsibility for my actions, to live life on life's terms, to practice acceptance, to give without expectations, and most importantly, to stop lying and playing the victim when things go wrong. Pursuing my recovery with the same tenacity I had practiced in my previous

My spiritual, emotional and social gains are immeasurable. Freely giving the assistance that was given to me is only a part of who I am today. What I seek from life has changed. Rather than pursuing only self-serving opportunities, I prefer to assess how I can be of service. My passion for law has never diminished, but the reasons for pursuing the education, and my plans for the future certainly have changed.

In 2016 I decided that I would pursue my passion and apply to law school. Atlanta's John Marshall Law School extended

an offer with a partial Academic Scholarship. Since matriculation, I have encountered conflict in my personal relationships and struggled with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. Thankfully, The Extension has taught me how to reach out, persevere, and overcome. When offered an opportunity to mentor members of the incoming class, I enthusiastically accepted. As a student and mentor at AJMLS I have been enriched immeasurably and have grown exponentially. I do not possess any superior intellectual ability, yet I am ranked in the top 10% of my class. Recovery has taught me to take life one day at a time, to do my best and to help others along the way without excuses.

I am grateful for all of the strength that came from my struggles. Experience, not knowledge is my greatest asset. Recovery has given me an ability to recognize and empathize with the struggles of others. My continued work in the community gives me strength and perspective. I am not selfish enough to think that I was given the benefits of a life second to none, without sharing it with others. Through knowledge we transmit advice; through experience we transmit hope.

The pain was necessary, but the suffering was optional. Today I am grateful the journey eventually led me to acquire the emotional peace I have been looking for my whole life; my only regret is hurting people along the way. It is, and will be, my duty to transmit hope for as long as I live.

— Tracy

MY NAME IS SHAWN MCKINNEY

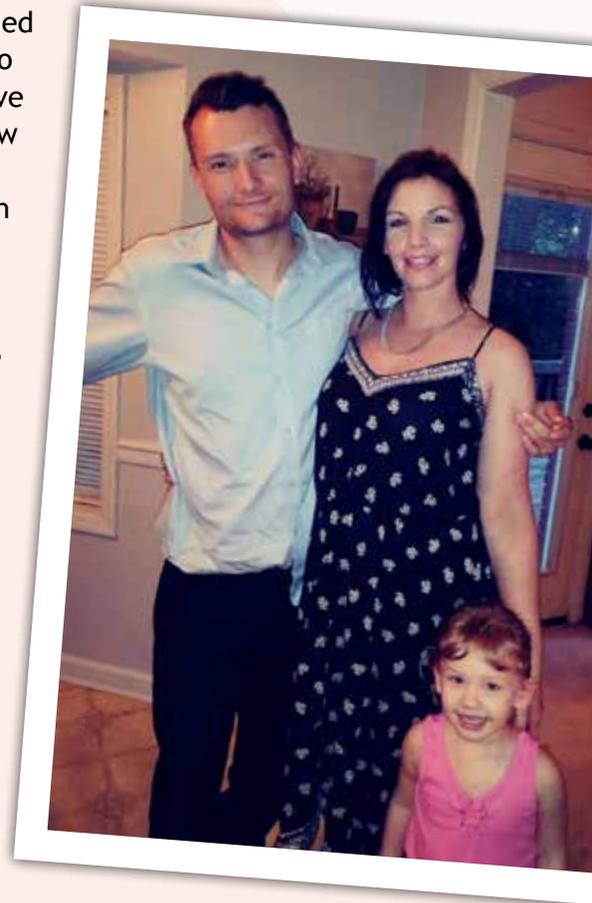
I entered The Extension on September 1, 2017. I came in a broken man. The choices I made, trying to feed my addiction turned me into a monster.

I became dishonest, a liar, and a selfish human being. My only concern was getting and using drugs and alcohol. I didn't care who I had to hurt to achieve that either. My friends, my family, even my own daughter didn't matter to me at the time. I felt dead inside in every way a man could feel dead. I was dead emotionally, physically, mentally, and most of all spiritually. I felt nothing except for guilt, shame, and remorse for the way I was living.

The Extension was a ray of light in my dark world. It opened up a way for me to change who I was inside. The Extension gave me an opportunity to learn new coping skills so that I can live by spiritual principles. Through The Extension and working a practical program of action I have completed the program and have turned my whole life around.

Today I am an honest trustworthy man. I recently got married to the love of my life that miraculously stood by me and we are raising our daughter in a happy healthy home as a family. I have learned to rely on God and put others first in my life. I can say that The Extension has been vital in recreating my life and reconnecting me with my family. I am extremely grateful today for The Extension. The Extension has given me a chance to live and be a father, husband, and friend. Most importantly, The Extension has given me a chance to live!

Sincerely Grateful,
Shawn McKinney





SOME OF THE PEOPLE HELPING MAKE ALL OF THE DIFFERENCE

Robin

I STILL REMEMBER THE DAY. IT WAS CHRISTMAS, 2015.

I had called the Extension Women’s Campus a few days before to ask if I could bring cookies and small wrapped gifts for the residents. I was told, yes, the ladies will be grateful for my gifts and that someone would be on campus to accept my holiday offerings. So I arrived with ten dozen freshly baked cookies plus shopping bags filled with wrapped journals and pens for the residents.

I had decided for the holidays that year to spend it quietly in service to others. My daughter had moved away and my son was just a few months out of treatment and living out of state in a long-term transitional sober living facility. I was very grateful for his successful recovery so far, and needed a simple holiday without the hustle and bustle of previous years.

As I arrived at the Women’s Campus, I saw a few young women sitting on a rear porch enjoying some sunshine and cigarettes. I told them why I was there, and one went inside to inform the property monitor of my presence. I spent a few minutes talking to the women and explained that my son was in recovery in another state and that I just wanted to do something nice for those on the same journey closer to home.

The property monitor was the person I had spoken with on the phone, and when she appeared, she greeted me with a big smile. I still get to see her big smile each week because she’s Christy Hamby and is now the Case Manager



for the residents on campus. We unloaded the shopping bags and trays of cookies, and I shared with her the story of my son’s recovery journey and my parallel journey to a saner life now. She gave me a heartfelt hug, and I felt an instant connection to this special community.

I was in recovery myself... recovery from being a codependent enabler for my son. I was working my own 12-step program and rebuilding my life. It was amazing to discover how much time I had to focus on myself now that I was no longer enmeshed in my son’s former chaotic days of active addiction.

I thought about my Christmas Day visit and my chat with the ladies for the next few weeks. I was looking for ways to be of service and called to ask about volunteer opportunities at the Women’s Campus. A month later I was a regular on the calendar volunteering a few hours each week doing the least glamorous jobs in the organization: answering the phone and providing office support. My initial idea had been to do whatever I could to support the



residents, but I soon realized I could best serve the residents and the mission at the Extension Women’s Campus by doing exactly what I was doing, thereby easing the burden of Program Director Wynema Barber and the Case Manager at that time.

So I added “Volunteering at The Extension Women’s Campus” to my growing list of other recovery work that included being a speaker at family workshops and a family mentor at a couple of treatment centers out of state, along with attending meetings with a wonderfully supportive Nar-Anon Family Group.

On most days at The Extension, I field calls from women seeking placement in the program, so I go through a pre-screening questionnaire with them. If our program is not appropriate for their situation or needs, I always give them referrals to other programs which might be a better fit for them. It’s important to me to

never end a call without giving the caller a referral and a few words of encouragement and hope.

Many other calls come from friends or family members and often times, I recognize the desperation and sadness in their voices; they remind me of my “old days.” I answer their questions about the program and our services, but I think it’s equally important to offer information and compassion for what they are experiencing. Addiction is a family disease and affects everyone involved with the person in active addiction. Families need to heal as well. I know what they are going through and tell them so, and talk to them about the importance of taking care of themselves by finding a 12-step support group or other outlet.

I remember one caller in particular, a man who called hoping to find a treatment option for his girlfriend of two years who had tried to keep her addiction a secret from him until her life spiraled out of control. I gathered information from him about his girlfriend and told him about our prescreening and interview process. Then I asked him what he was doing to take care of himself through all of it. There was a moment of silence, and then I realized the man had started to cry. He told me that he had been on the phone for hours calling more than two dozen places, and I was the first person who had taken the time to actually talk to him. In trying to save his girlfriend, he had already lost his home and a car and a job that he loved. He felt lost and alone, but I assured him that everyone who loves someone suffering from an addiction,

including me, knows how he feels. We talked for several more minutes, and I told him where to find a 12-step meeting where he would find a roomful of support, people just like me waiting to ease his burden.

Other duties for me during a typical day include some normal office work such as making copies and filing plus accepting donations of food, clothing and

It was amazing to discover how much time I had to focus on myself now that I was no longer enmeshed in my son’s former chaotic days of active addiction.



supplies. And I do get to interact with our courageous residents as they sign in and out to go to work and appear in the office for meetings and sessions. The connection and power of the community on campus is palpable and, I believe, it is the reason for the strength and success of our program.

It’s such an awesome thing for

me to witness the transformation from when a resident comes into the program lost in the insanity of her disease to the day they transition out to independent living as sober women with hope and support and skills to live a better life. Granted, not all women here make it through the year of treatment. It’s hard work, and some leave when it gets tough, but I always hope that one day they realize that they are worth the effort and will once again reach out for help.

A few months ago, I was asked to step up as Volunteer Coordinator, so now I also conduct the orientation, training and scheduling of new volunteers. We have a small core of dedicated and dependable individuals, but I wish I was busier showing new folks the office ropes. There are still time slots to fill on the weekly calendar, so I’m inviting anyone who has a few extra hours each week to give us a try at the Women’s Campus. I know my life has been enriched by volunteering here, and I’m a better person for it.

When I brought those Christmas cookies to the campus almost four years ago, I never dreamed I’d still be volunteering here today, but I found a real need for service to the dedicated staff and hard-working residents. I’m grateful for the opportunity, and it feels good to be a part of the solution.

— Robin

Editor’s note: If you think volunteering at The Extension’s women’s campus office might be for you, please call Robin at the women’s center at 770-528-4852. For information about a host of other volunteer opportunities, please call Tyler at 770-590-9075. Thanks!

WE GOT THIS!

Do you have a special person in your life or perhaps a group of people that mean a great deal to you? Groups could be the folks you work with perhaps or your church, and hopefully us? Are you struggling with finding that perfect gift? No worries—we've got you covered!

Custom cornhole boards are what everyone wants, even if they don't know it yet. Cornhole, what some might call beanbag toss, is *the* gift this season. What's even better is that Aaron Plank and alumni of The Extension is making cornhole boards customized with your choice of graphics such as a company or sports team logo and painted trim. Each set of



regulation sized cornhole boards are handmade and hand finished by Aaron and are far better quality than most commercially available cornhole sets. Best of all The Extension receives a

portion of the \$200 cost of each set. All you'll need to buy are the beanbags, which are available from most sporting goods stores, as well as Walmart and Amazon.

There is simply no better gift this holiday season for that special person or group on your list, but don't wait to order your set—Aaron can only make a limited number in time for Christmas. You'll be a gift giving hero this holiday season and best of all help those served by The Extension. Call or email Tyler Driver at The Extension to place your order, 770-590-9075 x301, tylerdriver@theextension.org or call or email Aaron directly at Plank's Wooden Wonders, 678-656-5487, plank.aaron@gmail.com. Thank you!

THE EXTENSION RESIDENTS GIVE THANKS...

I am most grateful for:

- Having the leadership position as houseman in a place I call home. — Cory
- Being able to be here with a house full of people who appreciate me. — Ryan
- A second chance at life, a new life. — Jeff
- Being here and not on the street killing myself with drugs. — James
- Being surrounded by people who love me and believe in me. — Tyler
- The staff showing a genuine interest in my success. — Bryan
- Knowing that I am not my failures. — Josh
- Not being in jail and being in the best facility in Georgia. — Paul
- Having the choice to be healthy for my family and kids. — Stewart
- Working, being encouraged, supported, and clean. — Scott
- Not having to sleep outside dope sick. — Tony

I am most thankful for:

- The relationship I am rebuilding with my parents and brothers, thanks to my recovery. — Kelley
- My new found spiritual relationship with God. — Sharon
- Having the courage to make the positive changes that I want to see in my life. — Steph
- My sponsor, the women at the Extension, and my recovery friends outside the Extension. — Teresa
- The gift that God has given me, the Extension, and a new life in recovery. — Trina
- My new life I am living, sober and free of the past wreckage I created for myself. — Tonya
- My willingness to do whatever it takes to stay sober and being here in this program. — Lindsey
- This program and for all the people that make the Extension a wonderful place to be. — Brandy
- The opportunity to be living my new sober life. — Stephanie
- The authenticity of this program and being able to heal while learning healthy life skills. — Natalie
- A fresh start at life. — Jacklyn

Please post at your church or place of business. Thanks!

NEEDS LIST



Copier paper
Comet, Ajax, etc.
Coffee & cups
Commercial mops
Cleaning supplies
Laundry detergent
Peanut butter & jelly
Bathroom tissue
Twin sheet sets

Shampoo
Towels & washcloths
Shower shoes
Bars of soap
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste
Bleach
Instant oatmeal
Instant grits
Canned soup
Tea bags
Feminine hygiene products
Socks
Unopened first aid supplies
Working washers and dryers
New pillows
Sanitary pillow covers
Light bulbs

Gift cards
Shaving razors
Blankets
Sweatshirts
Deodorant
Dishwashing liquid
Paper towels
Brooms
Jackets & coats
Sugar & Creamer
Notebooks & journals
Pens & pencils
Batteries
Stocking caps & gloves
Stamps
Umbrellas
Bicycles with helmets
Lawn & garden tools



the
EXTENSION

The solution for homelessness & addiction

Of course, your financial support is also appreciated!



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P.O. Box 793 | Marietta, GA 30061

www.theextension.org

info@theextension.org

770-590-9075



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WE NEED... We need volunteers to prepare and serve dinner, please call 770-590-9075 for details.



I WANT TO HELP!

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

I pledge \$ _____ per month quarter year

- I would like to be sent a reminder of my pledge.
- I would like someone from The Extension to contact me.
- I made an online donation at www.theextension.org

Please mail to: **The Extension, P.O. Box 793, Marietta, GA 30061**

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City State Zip

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Email