

# Amy's Story

I got out of Coffee Creek on June 29th after almost 6 years. I went right into an Oxford House with the clothes I wore out and not much else. Besides one friend and my HGO mentor from prison, I knew no one in this area. During my "reach in" while still incarcerated I met Nancy Ferry, a recovery mentor that works with women getting out of Coffee Creek. Nancy came and saw me within a few days of getting out ...she helped walk me through the basics of what I now needed to do. It sounded easy enough ... but starting over at 47, in a new city pretty much alone, is very overwhelming. She gave me a bus pass, helped me obtain my ID, scheduled a time to see me again, and let me know that it was going to be OK.

This wasn't my first time getting out of prison; I was incarcerated years ago in another state, but this was my first time on my own. While incarcerated I developed a great support system through DDA, education and my spiritual groups/associations. I knew I had to do things differently and a big part of that was being humble enough to know I needed help and to ask for it. I am currently enrolled at PCC in the Life Track program, a program for adults in transition who are interested in going back to school. I will be going back to school full time next term. I remain involved with DDA, support groups including the Washington County Reentry Council and other groups involved in the reentry process.

Having recently come out of the system, I understand how important those first few days and weeks are to someone's success. Having someone who saw me as a person and understood what I was going through made all the difference. Having that help gave me the room I needed to deal with my anxieties and fears so that I didn't become overwhelmed. I hope to remain involved with reentry for a long time to come; it is a way that I can give back and help others also be successful. I've been given a new chance at life and nothing is worth losing that chance, so I make sure when I make a decision I look at the big picture. I make sure that what I'm doing aligns with my values, who and what I want to be, and that I'm doing the best I can in any given moment.