

For the most part, I had a pretty normal childhood. My parents treated me well and I usually did pretty good in school. However, I remember I often felt weird, out of place and just off. I had friends but I never was one of the cool kids. Part of this would feed on itself, like since I wasn't part of a group I had to differentiate myself. Eventually this resulted in me being pretty anti-authority and rebelling against my parents and school. I started getting in trouble, at first just little altercations at school and becoming more destructive. I smoked weed for the first time in October 2006, in eighth grade. It was fun, it felt different, I was out of my head, it let me not worry or care. I didn't get into it very heavily at first but it was just a matter of time. I got drunk for the first time in December 2007 and eventually started using pot on a more regular basis. In May 2008, I was drunk and/or high with a friend and we were joyriding in his dad's jeep, it rolled three times and I broke my neck. Several months later, the same day I got the neck brace off, I snuck out of my parents' basement to go get high with friends. Looking back, this is one of those experiences where I know I am an alcoholic and addict. Over time, my addiction grew: I began to experiment with various other drugs, blacking out & using more heavily, and getting in trouble with the law, school, and my parents. On August 27th, 2010, a few weeks into my senior year of high school, I was drinking with friends at a park after one of the high school football games. I drove back drunk, and crashed my car, totaling two vehicles and almost killing two girls. That was the last time I drank, and I've been sober ever since August 28th of 2010.

I went through treatment, got a sponsor and started going to meetings on a regular basis and got to know the recovery fellowship in Lincoln for a while before I was sentenced, this provided a stable base for me in recovery. The day after I got out of jail, I moved into the dorms at UNO. I didn't really know anyone in Omaha, and this was the first time I had been living on my own. I saw in the campus newspaper that there was a meeting on campus, and I went. There I met other cool young people in recovery who were able to get me involved within the Omaha recovery fellowship. I have since been going to the campus meeting consistently for several years now.

Today I have been sober for over four years, and enrolled in classes and on track to graduate eventually. I have a job I've held down for almost two years and have been living in an on-campus apartment. I have grown relationships with my family, friends and the fellowship to a level that would not be possible if I was still using. Being in recovery has made it possible for me to succeed in school, and the meeting on campus has been an important part of my sobriety since I've been here. I've been able to get to know other people in sobriety throughout Omaha and the community as a result of going to that meeting and others.

I feel like UNO is a good track to help further support for those in recovery. With the opening of our Recovery Community space, there is a place for people to hang out in an environment supportive of recovery. We are working to start other meetings on campus at other times beyond just the noon meetings. There are resources and professional help available to those who are in need of them. Others in the Omaha

recovery fellowship are available to help those in need at any time. I feel that continuing to grow these resources will only help more students in recovery.

Helping others on campus has contributed to my recovery on campus in that it has allowed me to get out of myself and to help others in addiction. Sometimes, it has happened where I will be talking with someone after class and drug use will come up, and if appropriate I can tell them about my experience and why and how I don't use drugs anymore, and to let them know there is a solution if they are open to it.

Many of the students I know, I know them from the meeting but often have not been able to make it to the meeting because of conflicting class/work schedules, others I know from other meetings in the community and see them on campus and or if I meet someone at a meeting out in the community and they're a student here I usually try to let them know about the meeting if they don't know about it, sometimes it doesn't work with their schedule or other times they come and check it out!