

# MEET CHRIS.

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**C**hris grew up an only child in small-town Wisconsin. He was close with his grandparents, who cared for him when his mom and dad traveled for work.

To this day, Chris describes himself as shy and awkward. He began experimenting with drugs and alcohol when he started high school in an effort to connect with his peers. At first, this backfired, but by their senior year, Chris was one of the most popular kids in his class.

Chris says his family viewed his behavior as a phase, but it wasn't. He graduated in 1999 and moved to this area. In 2002, Chris took a customer service position in La Crosse. His drinking and drug use continued, but Chris was well-liked and good at his job. He was what you would call a functional addict.

Chris started using intravenous drugs around age 30. After nearly 10 years on the job, Chris went to work high for the first time and was voluntarily terminated after he got up and walked out. He tried and failed to hold temp positions, and when he was unable to maintain housing, he lived on the streets.

Chris recalls first hearing about United Way-funded partner the Salvation Army of La Crosse via media coverage and word of mouth. He stayed in the shelter on several occasions but was asked to leave because of continued drug and alcohol use.

Chris calls himself an "all or nothing" person, and when he was finally ready to make a change in his life, he did. In addition to the Salvation Army, United Way certified partners WAFER Food Pantry and Coulee Council on Addictions played a role in his recovery.

Chris has been sober for just over two years and is currently a house manager for Driftless Recovery Services. He is studying Human Services at Western Technical College and will transfer to a four-year college soon. Always looking for connection, Chris says one of the best parts of sobriety has been re-establishing a relationship with his grandma, who is now 93.

Every year, thousands of Great Rivers United Way donors choose to invest in the community we share. Will you join us?

**40-60%**

of addicts relapse within one year.

The longer someone remains sober, the less likely they are to relapse.



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