

MEET LISA.

UNITED WE FIGHT.
UNITED WE WIN.

LIVE UNITED®

Lisa grew up in Galesville. She started using drugs and alcohol when she was just 11 years old, and by the time she turned 14, Lisa had tried heroin.

When she was 16, Lisa ran away from home and moved in with the family of the boy she was dating at the time. Substance abuse was prevalent at his house, but Lisa was welcome there, in part because she had access to doctor-prescribed pain medication for scoliosis.

When that relationship ended, Lisa became homeless. She couch-surfed until she was arrested just after turning 18. Lisa didn't like the life she was making for herself, but she lacked the resources and support to kick her addiction. On one occasion, Lisa consumed so much methamphetamine that she had a stroke. The jail and drug court sentences that followed were a turning point, and Lisa says her faith and walk with God are what saved her.

Lisa lived at Ruth House, an emergency shelter that supports homeless women who are transitioning from substance abuse treatment facilities, four times. Ruth House is a YWCA La Crosse program that is funded by

Great Rivers United Way.

Lisa initially entered Ruth House in September 2017, but – unfortunately – relapsed a short time later. Lisa admitted to her relapse and made the choice to begin treatment again. She returned to Ruth House in January 2018, committed to her sobriety.

Ruth House is a short-term program, and residents must have housing lined up prior to leaving. It was during this fourth stay at Ruth House that Lisa learned she was pregnant. Upon her 90-day 'graduation,' Lisa chose to move into Gerrard Hall, where she knew the child she was expecting would receive the best possible start to life.

Today, Lisa is 650+ days sober, and while believing you deserve a better life is a large part of sobriety, Lisa says she did it for her son, whom she named Jayden. She has a job, a vehicle, and a place for them to live. Lisa's future goals include going back to school – she is interested in becoming a counselor who works with people with PTSD and/or substance abuse disorders.

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

2.14 million
people ages 12 and
up had an opioid use
disorder in 2016. Of
them, 153,000 were
children ages 12-17.



Great Rivers United Way