



Peace is Worth the Chance: **CHARITY'S STORY OF HOPE**

A LITTLE MORE THAN 5 YEARS AGO, I FELT ONLY PAIN, DESPERATION, AND HOPELESSNESS.

I could not manage life, myself, my emotions, or relationships of any kind. Today, I am very grateful for having that experience because it motivates me to continue to find deeper levels of an existence that I never dreamed was possible. My life is a testament to the transformative power of recovery, faith, and service – and I continue to strive toward growth, purpose, and giving back each day.

I met Charity while I was an intern at the women's Extension, and we connected right away. She was open, genuine, and truly willing to do the work to get sober. Over the years, I've had the privilege of watching her grow and give back to the recovery community—especially to the women's Extension—through sponsorship and simply showing up for events and supporting others.

She is truly a miracle, and I feel honored to have witnessed her transformation over the years.

— **Danielle Lopresti**
Extension Alumna



Before I got to The Extension, my life was a blur. I knew something wasn't right, but I don't think I fully recognized the extent of what I was going through. My whole life I had pretended to be okay for everybody else's comfort. Unfortunately, it was my son who was bearing the brunt of my decisions. I didn't

have a phone for a while, and he had to track me down through Facebook just to find out what state I was in. I know now that I was emotionally unavailable throughout his whole life. I may have been present, but I was never really there for him. At one point, during the last year or so in

— *continued on page 2*

My counselor was so patient
and so unrattled and so
consistent in her character...
And that consistency
started to build *trust.*



my addiction, he told me that he couldn't deal with me anymore, and I had no choice but to respect his decision. I understood it for me, but I didn't like that he was having to make this decision for his own life. That was the beginning of the end for me.

On April 8, 2021, I was dropped off at The Extension by the Barrow County Sheriff's Office to start a journey that the judge strongly suggested I give a try. I had tried before but could not be fully honest with myself and continued to relapse. During my first few weeks at The Extension, I kept thinking that I was going to bust out and go back to where I knew I had hidden my last stash.



After a few months of treatment, I started to feel many new things. One of those was connection, then a sense of safety started to grow, and it seemed as if a new world opened up for me. I can't say it was any one person or moment, but I think the most impactful thing was the consistency. I know now how powerful consistency is. My counselor was so patient and so unrattled and so consistent in her character. If she said something, she always backed it up. And it wasn't even directed specifically at me; it was just something I witnessed in her. And that consistency started to build trust. It snowballed into these little, monumental moments.

My family has a history of addiction, and both of my parents were in the military, and I learned in one of my classes the similarities between people in addiction and in the military. I also learned that up to 60% of substance use disorders could be developed from genetics. I started

to have these "aha" moments and it all began to come together; I could see how I got here.

I finally realized that I truly wanted a better way of living and wanted to be a better person for those who loved me.

I think the difference was that in the past I was ONLY getting sober because somebody else wanted me to, and I would eventually relapse. But this time, I was totally secluded from all my family and able to focus on myself. My son and I's relationship was strained at best when I first got there. It was hard for him to trust that this time would work, and he had every right to feel that way. The rest of my family was supportive, but they had also been through this with me before. It was a moment where I had to decide for myself, "Can I really do this?" That's the great thing about The Extension, being 12 months, it gives you time to integrate what you learn. So, once you go into the world, you know how to make sobriety work with real life.

My favorite lesson that I learned at The Extension is being on time. Growing up, we were always late for everything. I made me incredibly anxious and embarrassed everywhere we went. I would get detention for being late to school when I couldn't even drive. I carried that anxiety with me, and I'm such a strong co-dependent that I always cared more about other people than I did myself. So, when I learned at The Extension that being late is disrespecting another person's time, I definitely didn't want to do that.

I also found out that I'm a total control freak. I'm the oldest of my sisters, so I would always help them do everything. I would formulate their lives for them, but I was told that by doing that, I was stealing their journey. That's exactly opposite of what I was trying to do. I was trying to help them with their journey. With my son, I've learned that he has to walk through his own journey; he has to make his own decisions just like I did. There's a lot of

...up to 60% of substance use
disorders could be developed
from genetics. I started to have
"aha" moments
I could see how I got here.



things going on inside of him that he doesn't know how to name yet. That's what I think growing up is, learning how to name those things and how to deal with them.

We each have our own roads to walk. And as I embraced my spirituality, I discovered the power of giving back. Helping others who are struggling, sharing my story, and providing support have become integral parts of my journey. I love to go and sit with the women at The Extension and witness their journey. Seeing the light come on for each of the ladies there brings me so much joy. I'm passionate about inspiring hope and fostering healing in those facing challenges similar to mine. I continue to learn more about myself and grow in ways that did not seem possible just several years ago.

I learned in treatment that drugs were never actually my problem, they were my solution. And they worked for me for a while, but it was never going to last. It took me a while to understand that my choices were impacting people around me. During the holidays, there was a Christmas Party at The Extension, and I was able to bring my sister. She got to meet my sponsor and my network. When we left the party she told me, "The whole time I just wanted to stand up in the middle of the room and say thank you for bringing my sister back!"

Today, I am proud to be a part of a community that I feel supported in and can support in return. I work as a paralegal, alongside a dedicated criminal defense and personal injury attorney. My work allows me to advocate for justice and support clients during their most difficult times, fulfilling my desire to make a positive impact. I continue to stay involved with The Extension and give back to the place that gave me everything. My relationship with my son and the rest of my family continues to grow and heal in new ways and they can now trust ME to be consistent and intentional.

There will never be a way to know for sure how recovery will work for you. There's no crystal ball that can assure you you're going to be ok. But if there's any possibility that you could allow yourself to feel happiness and peace even just for a moment, then it's worth it. Why not give yourself that chance?



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

BACK TO BASICS!

Visit our Amazon list to see what we need most:



ONLINE:

Use the QR code to find our Amazon List



IN YOUR OFFICE:

Marketing Team: Twin sized sheets
Finance Team: Twin sized blankets



AT YOUR CHURCH:

Families A-L: Breakfast foods (grits, oatmeal, cereal)

Families M-Z: Dinner foods (pasta, box meals, canned goods)

Email Betsy@theextension.org
or call 678-410-7520

THANK YOU



FOR FEATURING THE EXTENSION!

Reporter Maria Guzman hosted 4 live segments from our Men's Campus.

[Click here to watch the segments on our Facebook page!](#)

Make a donation to The Extension:

SUPPORT SOBRIETY



Click the link below to make a donation!

theextension.org



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 the information below.

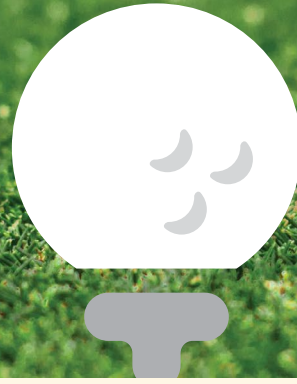
[The Extension](https://theextension.org) | 1507 Church Street Extension | P.O. Box 793 | Marietta, GA 30061 | 770-590-9075

Shelley Elder, Board Chair
Kim Gresh, Vice Chair
Amy Adams, Secretary

Tammy Guelfo, Treasurer
Tyler M. Driver, Executive Director

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 recovery. Give us a call at 770-590-9075.

ON THE BALL



THIS SPRING WE HELD OUR ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT AT WHAT HAS QUICKLY BECOME A FAN FAVORITE: TOPGOLF! It's great to have the best of both worlds and enjoy the spring weather with a constant cool breeze from the fans and bayside service keeping the ice-cold drinks coming!

We also brought back our Silent Auction! With over 40 items to bid on, we had everything from Braves tickets and Falcons memorabilia to concert tickets and Bogg Bags to gift cards from iconic Atlanta restaurants including Mary Mac's Tea Room! There was truly something for everyone, and our bidders showed out!

This year's tournament would not have been possible without our title sponsors CorkHoward Construction, SA White Oil, and Cobb EMC! Thank you for supporting us as we continue to grow! We also have to thank the incredible committee of volunteers who helped us make this our biggest tournament yet! With over 20 teams and 100 players, we were able to reach farther and share our mission with new audiences!

But above all, we have to thank our players who went all out with their costumes and energy! The competition for the Highest Score and Best Dressed was HOT! We are incredibly grateful for everyone who poured their time and resources into this event, and we can't wait to take On The Ball to the next level! You don't want to miss out next year!



MY NAME IS SHAWN MCKINNEY.

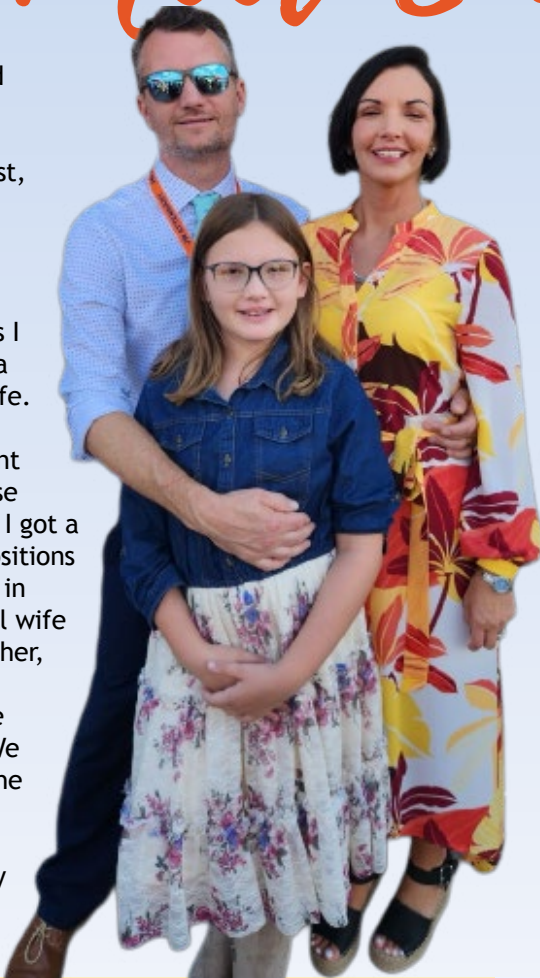
I was born in February 1978 and raised in Marietta, Georgia, and I am the owner and operator of Handyman McKinney's L.L.C.

I arrived at The Extension on September 1st, 2017. Broken from a life of bad choices. The Extension was the answer to a lot of desperate prayers. I began to learn about myself, why I lived the way I did and how to change, to never live that way again. As I started to rebuild my life, I began to feel a new belief that I could do more with my life.

That has become a reality in many different ways. I worked the 12 steps, I applied these spiritual principles in my everyday affairs, I got a home group and many different service positions over the years. I started my own company in 2019. I got married in 2018 to my beautiful wife Tarah. We have a beautiful daughter together, Micah (9) and 2 step sons, Tyler (22) and Kaiden (18). We are all very close. My wife and I were baptized in our faith in 2021. We are active in our congregation and study the Bible regularly together as a family.

My wife and I are both active in the recovery community. Tarah is an Alumni of Ridgeview herself and holds a service commitment.

Meet Shawn



In my business, I employ men from the Extension as well. I run my company like I run my life, with *honesty, integrity, and willingness.*

I helped start and run a men's AA meeting that has tripled in size. I also am currently the president of The Alumni Association at The Extension. I have been committed to The Extension. I do service work, not as a burden but with a joyful attitude. I have been a part of the Sunday night Gratitude Meeting for about 6 years straight. Working with the guys at The Extension is definitely a highlight of my life. I sponsor guys constantly.

In my business, I employ men from the Extension as well. I run my company like I run my life, with honesty, integrity, and willingness. I enjoy making beautiful spaces for people and their families. All in all, I give praise where praise is due, to God Himself. He always opens doors for me to walk through to better myself and the people around me.



I began to feel
a new belief that
I could do more with my life.





COBB EMC

WE ALL KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR, and situated just across the street from our Men's Campus, few do so better than Cobb EMC.



From allowing us to use their parking lot as overflow for our transition ceremonies so our residents can invite their families and alumni can show their support in droves, to donating dozens of tablets and phones, elevating our standard of care by allowing our staff to document in real time, Cobb EMC has supported The Extension consistently and generously.

In April, Cobb EMC and Gas South hosted the ladies of The Extension for brunch. In a room full of incredible professional women, we had the opportunity to come together to support and uplift one another. We heard from an amazing panel of ladies including some of our incredible alumni, and our residents at the ladies' campus had professional headshots taken to help them find local full-time jobs. The shared energy of the room was palpable as women from seemingly different worlds realized the truth that we all have far more in common than differences.

At the end of the event, Mike K Whittle provided a beautiful array of flowers and each person got to take home a bouquet of their own creation. As they created their bouquets, the laughter and hugs shared made it clear this was a different group of women than who had entered that morning. Each person had been changed, softened, and strengthened. This event would not have held the camaraderie, community, or compassion that it did without the efforts of Cobb EMC.

Through years of consistent support, Cobb EMC has become a vital partner to our mission of recovery, and the Extension is undoubtedly a more efficient and more compassionate organization because of it.

Thank you Cobb EMC!



OUR ALUMNI DON'T JUST SURVIVE, THEY *thrive!*

We send surveys to clients for up to 2 years after they transition to see how they're doing. Of clients who completed the program, they say...



98.3%
are still employed



98.1%
are still sober



99.5%
have stable housing



96.1%
have better relationships
with their families





the
EXTENSION

The solution for homelessness & addiction

P.O. Box 793
Marietta, GA 30061

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Marietta, GA
Permit No. 780



.87¢

OF EVERY
DOLLAR DONATED
saves lives, rebuilds
families, and impacts
generations to come!