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Faith Brings Mother Out Of Addiction, Back To Her Child

By NELSON MORAIS Sun Contributor
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Anna Graham is shown with her daughter, Amelia.

Photo by Nelson Morais

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"Oh, oh, the mother and child reunion. Oh, is only a motion away. Oh, the mother and child reunion. Is only a moment away (way, way, way.)"

— Paul Simon, "A Mother and Child Reunion" On May 15, Anna Graham regained full custody of her little girl, Amelia.

It'll be for good, Anna says.

Amelia was born 21 months ago when her mother was only 24 weeks pregnant. Fortunately, the baby recovered from extensive ICU care and heart surgery, but Anna wasn't with her daughter long. Anna continued her dark dance with meth. Her baby went into foster care, and the two were separated.

Emotionally and physically beaten up by her addiction to meth, Anna entered a year-long recovery program for women in Greeneville 13 months ago called Recovering Hearts. She said she entered the drugs recovery ministry "because I was desperate for wanting a better life. I was tired of running.

"I was told I had to go into a program or lose my daughter. The Lord did it. That's only God. I never thought I'd be in a program one full year.

"At first, I never thought I'd see the day I'd have custody" of her daughter, Anna recalls. "I was in a really big mess. My husband (who was also addicted to meth) was sentenced to 15 years in prison (for abusing me). There were a lot of hurdles and emotional turmoil.

"If I'd known I was entering a faith-based program and have to memorize scriptures, I'd have told you to go to ----," she said bluntly, adding, "I'd never opened a Bible." While in the program, she attended church services seven days a week.

And she memorized scriptures. In fact, she now says she has a favorite verse, Psalm 139:14, which says in part, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

She almost didn't make it.

"At Recovering Hearts, I packed my stuff several times (and prepared to leave early) just because I'm a runner," she recalls.

One month into Recovering Hearts, Anna got saved. Unlike many born-again Christians, she doesn't remember the exact day she was reborn spiritually.

But she does remember the changes inside her.

"My heart, my mind, starting changing. Things didn't feel so heavy. There was a way out of the darkness I was trapped in," she said earlier this month.

What did she learn at Recovering Hearts?

"About Jesus," she says, a wide smile on her face.

She continued, "I learned what it's like to live in a community, and what unconditional love is, which I got from my support system."

That support system included her in-laws, the staff at Recovering Hearts, members of The Rock Church, and the Mosleys, including Recovering Hearts director Trevor Mosley.

Trevor looked on admiringly at Anna as she shared her story of reunion and recovery in an interview in The Rock's sanctuary.

Anna, who is now 27, began her drug life with an addiction to Adderall.

"I was hooked on Adderall. One day, I couldn't find any to take. A friend said, 'I have ice,'" which she took. "Later, I found out it was meth," she said.

She quickly became hooked on it, and her life spiraled downward, she recalled.

As Anna progressed in Recovering Hearts, a program similar to Teen Challenge, God began opening doors for her to see her daughter more frequently .

Anna may not know the exact day she was saved, but she knows how long Amelia has been in foster care: 560 days.

On Monday, the current visitation rules — limiting her to see her daughter on weekends and every other weekday – ends. Amelia will be spending every day and night with her mother.

Anna has been employed over 45 days with a call center company that allows her to take calls from her living room. That living room is in what Anna describes as “a little house” that she rents from a member of The Rock’s congregation.

While Anna recalled her journey from six years of addiction to meth, to an imminent permanent reunion, little Amelia ran her hands over a guitar on a stand in the sanctuary, and then later thumbed through a hymnal she had on the carpeted floor.

Today, after all she’s been through, Anna sees a silver lining in her dark days of addiction.

“I am very grateful for everything that happened, because without it, I wouldn’t have found God, and found out what it means to be a mom,” she says. She adds, she also treasures the many friends she has today.

“My dream is to help moms in the same situation (of drug addiction) who feel hopeless,” says Anna.

Adds Trevor, the director of Recovering Hearts, Anna’s journey is proof there’s hope for moms who battle addictions to be reunited with their children.

If you know of a female relative or friend with a drug addiction, consider sending her to Recovering Hearts, a ministry under the umbrella of the Holston United Methodist Home for Children. The phone number is 423-430-0116.

Paul Simon said it all: *"A mother and child reunion is only a motion away."*

Nelson Morais is the author of "From Homeless to Heaven" and a mentor to men participating in U-Turn For Christ, a faith-based drug and alcohol recovery program.