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## Former Recovery Client: It's Extraordinary, You're Fighting For People Who Feel Forgotten

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### Former Recovery Client: It's Extraordinary, You're Fighting For Peo...


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### Transcript:

**Vanessa:** I am so connected with all of you at this table, it's pretty amazing. I myself have rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. I also went to West Virginia University so this just shows, I've never met either one of them before, what a small world it is and how connected we are and how we're all in this together, everybody. And I think it's extraordinary what you're doing. You're fighting for people who feel forgotten and you're literally saving lives, you and Budsock and it's amazing. It literally is amazing. Ok sorry. I feel so strongly about it because I've lost so many people that I care about to this disease and this past year, I had the honor of speaking at the candlelight vigil and I actually lost somebody who was the person I started using with and it's a perfect example of the different paths that life can take us on. I've been clean for two and half years, I went through Integrity long-term, well first I used to curse you in my jail cell for giving me drug court but now you have saved my life and I want you to know that. And I praise you now, I think it's amazing. So I was sent to Integrity by Atlantic County drug court and I was there for five months and it was not an easy ride as you ladies know but I needed it. And thank God for that six months and I couldn't imagine being there any less time. At first, I thought six months was overwhelming, that's such a long time, but in the grand scheme of things, it's literally nothing because if I didn't spend that six months there I know I would have been dead. After that I-

**Governor Christie:** That's great. Lay that foundation, it's so important.

**Vanessa:** Ms. Shereen was my counselor, Ms. Marigold, Ms. Deanna, Ms. Dana, Ms. Trish – they, Ms. Shereen told me when I got there because I was broken that she was going to love me enough until I learned to love myself again. And she did, everybody did. And that is how I know that this is real, my foundation is real. When something comes up, I call them, I still have them. I go back and see the girls and have little speaker jams there and invite friends that

went through with us as well to talk to them and share some hope, because when I was in addiction I – I can't imagine getting any lower than I was. I was homeless, I was selling everything, doing every illegal thing, and if I can do it anybody can do it. I've been clean for two and a half years. After the long term treatment program I went to the halfway house, I got a job the first week I was there and I'm now a manager at my job, the same place that I started working at. And after the halfway house, I went to supportive housing, also offered by Integrity House, and I went to outpatient program that Integrity also offers as well, Ms. Robin runs that department. And without that all coercively working together I wouldn't be where I am, I now have my own apartment, I got my license back which is no easy feat because it gets suspended every time you have a drug charge which is very, very hard to come back from and by the grace of God and by the support of all the people that are sitting at this table, and your stories still inspire me, like when I hear it it's amazing how much we are all connected and all in this together. And I promise you if I can do it anyone can do it.

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