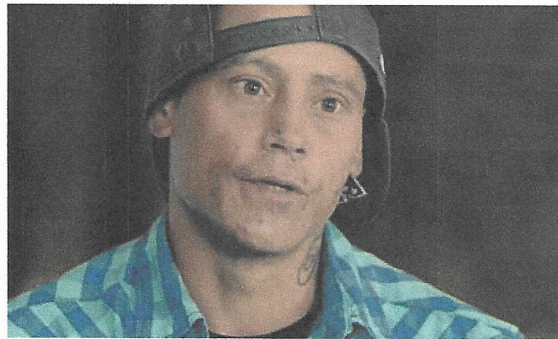


JOHNNY STORY

Reclaiming Fatherhood and Life from Heroin's Grip

In his 20's, Johnny's future looked bright. He reflects on a more than decade old run with success leading up to 2012. He exuded positivity and had a work ethic and outlook that made success look all but impossible. Johnny had struggled with drugs in the past. But, he had been off them for seven years. He was in a healthy relationship with his now ex-wife, had completed college and was known as a top music producer in the area.

they love me or not."



Then, he had a late relapse with drugs; this time it was hard drugs. Looking back at his life before taking hard drugs compared to what it had become. Heroin has become a full-blown addiction, and Johnny hasn't had contact with his son or daughter since just before 2013.

He knows what he has lost. He finds himself thinking about the simple things, such as what they are doing in school, what clothes they wear or remembering how his daughter's hair smelled when he would be with her. The seriousness and direness of heroin addiction is evident whenever Johnny speaks of it. He desperately wants his life back. He wants to see and spend time with his children. He wants to have a productive job in what he is passionate about. Heroin overrides all of that, however, only servicing itself, able to retrain his thoughts on what it needs - more heroin. Johnny's doctor recommended suboxone to treat his specific addiction. So far, it's working. Suboxone blocks the effects of heroin, effectively making it a null experience. After three months of sobriety, Johnny has been able to get a room of his own at an aftercare facility. It's a big step. He is in the process of getting his life back. He takes things day-by-day, and focuses on what he loves - music and his children. Johnny knows he's just starting the journey. His children are driving him to win his internal fight with addiction; toward the end of the program, Johnny states "there's two kids out there that probably wonder if I love them or not.

I wonder if they love me or not."

Anthony Colli

Lincoln, Rhode Island



My precious son, Anthony Colli, died on August 9, 2015. That day my heart was broken into a million pieces.

Anthony was an extremely intelligent young man, compassionate, and caring; he loved to help home the homeless by feeding them, giving them a drink and taking time to make them feel important. Anthony suffered from severe anxiety and depression from a young age and began to self-medicate in high school; his drug of choice was Xanax.

He abused his medication, abused alcohol, and had an issue with pain killers for a time.

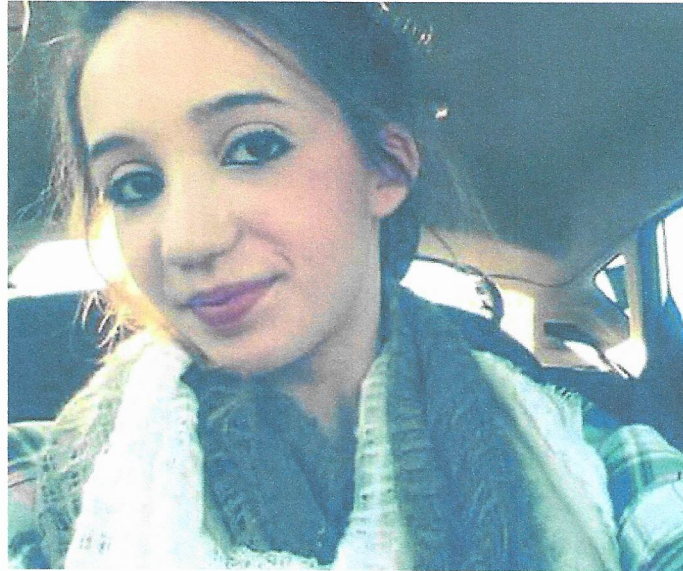
Anthony was put in a sober house where they took away his anti-anxiety medication, but being a person who suffered from severe anxiety, Anthony took it upon himself to find a drug that could make him feel better and found a drug called clonazepam, a synthetic benzodiazapine. This package was delivered to my mail box when Anthony came home from the sober house. I had no idea what this package was, only that Anthony said it was an herbal substance, Kava Kava to help with his anxiety. The next day, my son was dead. He is greatly missed by many and his legacy of love lives on. His teachers have said of Anthony, as have many others that, "there will never be another human being like Anthony."

The world lost a great young man the day he died and my heart is forever broken.

Story found on:
<https://www.192aday.org/>

Amber Marie Cleveland

Andover, MA



My only child, Amber, loved life. We were very close; she was my mini-me! Growing up, Amber was a shy child, but grew out of it as she got older. She had a heart of gold, and was always ready to help anyone who needed it. Amber loved animals. We always used to go to the Zoo together. Amber grew up with dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, crabs, and rats. About six months before she passed, Amber signed up to volunteer for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We went about five times before she passed. Amber started using prescription medications because of her illness, but began using heroin a few years ago when her father gave it to her in a capsule.

From then on, she was addicted. Amber's father had been in prison for several years, and when he was released, she wanted to be with him; so she and her boyfriend moved in with him. They all used drugs together, but Amber got into it harder. I later placed her in a methadone clinic, but she didn't stay long.

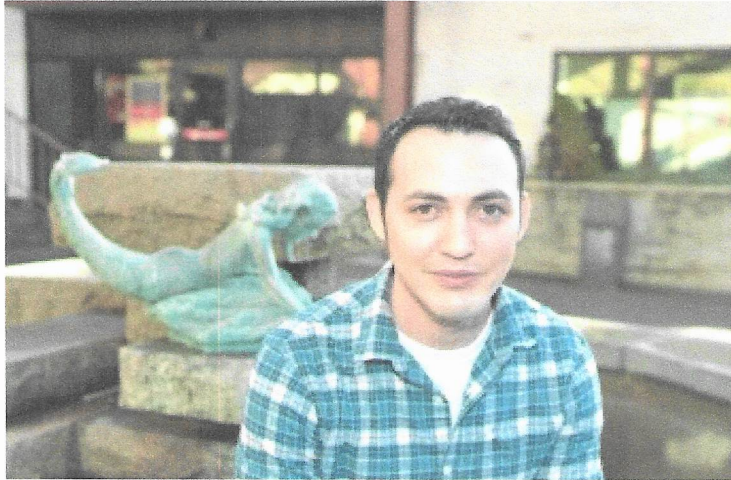
Eventually, the three of them had to move out so Amber and her boyfriend moved into a rooming house; I couldn't have her living with me while she was using. She was kicked out for a variety of reasons and ended up living under a bridge. Finally, as my boyfriend and I were looking for a new place, I told Amber that if she went to detox, we would invite her to live with us after she got clean. She agreed and we started looking for a place. When my boyfriend and I found a place, we left a couple of messages for Amber to let her know. But on August 24, 2016, while I was at work, I got the call.

My life was over, I just lost my whole world. Right now, as I'm planning my daughter's services, I'm continuing to grieve. Life will never be the same.

Story found on:
<https://www.192aday.org/>

Jonathan Goyer

East Providence, RI



My name is Jonathan Goyer. I am 31 years old and have experienced addiction to opiates since the age of 14. In 2004 I lost my father to an overdose, and in 2009, my brother as well. A few years ago my addiction led me to be arrested. I served a few months in jail and was offered the opportunity to be released into a 90 day residential treatment center. I graciously accepted this offer and completed that program. I continued my journey by moving into a recovery house. 6 weeks later, I relapsed on heroin and overdosed. If it weren't for a few circumstances, or coincidences, I don't believe I would be alive today. I happen to leave my bedroom door ajar and a resident happen to come home within minutes of my overdose. She ran downstairs to get the house manager who happened to have Narcan in the house.

2 doses were administered to me as I was still unconscious, waiting for an ambulance to arrive. Something happened to me over the next few hours while I was lying in a hospital bed.

I had a realization. A moment I would have otherwise never been afforded. There is a quote from recovery literature that reads "either we go on the best we can to the bitter ends--- jails, institutions or death; or find a new way to live". I had experienced all 3 at that moment. I HAD to find a new way to live. Unfortunately, the disease of addiction is not that accommodating and my mind naturally began racing to find a way to successfully get high again. Before those thoughts could develop into a plan, I had a few friends and my support network of peers that had been where I was, help me succeed. They empowered me to make a few good choices when I left the hospital. Since that day, June 17th 2013; I have not used drugs or alcohol. I have become excited about life again! Today I work 2 jobs, I have been able to accomplish many goals, including obtaining my driver's license again, paying off the financial debt I accrued during my active addiction, recently purchasing a home, and I have learned how to be a good son to the mother who has always stayed by my side. I am appointed as an expert adviser to our Governor's Overdose Prevention Taskforce, and pride myself on developing innovative strategies to address the addiction epidemic we face. I feel it is my duty as a person in long-term recovery to continue sharing my story in hopes of inspiring anyone suffering from addiction to seek help TODAY. Recovery is not only possible, it's probable! And it's worth every bit of effort it takes to achieve it."