

Crystal Hodge



Crystal Hodge is a beautiful, young, vibrant woman with a big personality. She is one of those people that, when they enter a room, you become aware of their presence. For herself, Crystal is driven toward something better. When Crystal first came to live at Sojourn House with her infant son, she was the victim of domestic violence, which left them homeless. Tearfully, Crystal explained her situation, “The father of my son was abusive in every way; emotionally and physically.” I tried to make it work; I left and went back to him several times. One night he tried to kill me. I managed to escape our apartment and call the police. That is when I finally realized it wasn’t going to stop. My son needed stability, security and love, not violence and chaos. That’s when I ended up at Sojourn House.”

As a child, Crystal’s mother and father both died from complications of HIV/AIDS. She was raised by her grandparents who Crystal describes as strict and old-school. She grew up with them in Puerto Rico and in the Bronx. Her grandparents worked hard to be able to put Crystal and her three siblings through private high school. Crystal graduated as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), but, she wanted more from life; something better. So she enrolled in nursing school. She had dreams of becoming a nurse and working with people with AIDS and drug addiction.

It was during nursing school that Crystal met the father of her son. The romance soon turned to violence, and as the abuse got worse, her life seemed to be falling apart. With the demands of the abusive relationship, working, and raising a child, Crystal wasn’t able to complete her education. Her dream to become a nurse was fading further and further away. Also, Crystal had become estranged from her siblings.

At Sojourn House, Crystal learned about SCAP’s employment services and the opportunity to regain her CNA through our HPOG program. With the support SCAP provided Crystal and her son, today they are thriving on their own. Crystal has completed the HPOG program, regained her CNA and is now working in a healthcare facility. She has her own two-bedroom apartment for her and her son. She loves her work, but she said she isn’t done yet; she wants something better. She plans to return to school and pursue a degree that will allow her to fulfill her dream of opening a non-profit to help people with HIV/AIDS and drug addiction.

Most of all, Crystal is relieved to be able to go to sleep in peace and not live with constant chaos. She said, “It is good to get the devil off your back. I enjoy my work and I love my son. I want to live my life to the fullest.”

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