

Rodney Gibson



God, family, and treating others the way you want to be treated – these are the new priorities that 46-year old Rodney Gibson has embraced. “I have made choices to change peoples’ perceptions of me; I’m changing how they view me,” said Rodney.

Had you asked Rodney what was important in his life when he was younger, as well as what his principles were, it would seem as if you were talking to a completely different person. Rodney goes on to point out his lack of role models in Schenectady and how, during his time in California, his role models were uncles who were taken care of by their spouses versus providing for their family. When Rodney visited Schenectady as he got older, he began experimenting with drugs and alcohol. After a few years back in California, Rodney was persuaded to return to Schenectady due to a rift between his father and him. For a while, Rodney was keeping up appearances; he got his GED, got married, and started a family. Unfortunately, the lifestyle of drugs and alcohol continued to tempt Rodney. “No one could tell me what to do,” Rodney recalls. It was not until Rodney spent time in jail that he realized he could no longer “run the streets.”

When Rodney was released from jail he was facing a failed marriage and two kids who would not initially allow him back into their life. Rodney became homeless. His next steps were to try to get clean and to find permanent housing. He had heard about the Shelter Plus Care program of which SCAP and Schenectady Municipal Housing worked together to provide permanent housing and support for recovering and homeless addicts. Rodney was in the program for a while, but he relapsed and lost his housing for a second time. With the support of his counselor, as well as his case manager at SCAP, Rodney was allowed back in the program in 2012 and since then, he has consistently attended groups and individual sessions with his substance abuse counselor.

When asked how SCAP helped him, Rodney answered how they had provided many opportunities for him that he would not have had otherwise. This was especially true for Rodney when he needed back surgery and could not attend his recovery therapy sessions. A SCAP therapist met with Rodney in his home during this time, helping him maintain his sobriety. “When you have surgery, you learn who really is on your team” Rodney stated. He felt surprised by some of the people who rallied behind him, as well as those who chose not to remain supportive. Although his back is still a source of frustration, Rodney’s positive outlook allows him to keep his goals in mind for the future: “I want to get my license back and get a car.”

Gone are the days where Rodney could care less what others thought of him. Today, Rodney takes great pride in where he is now and the work he has done to get there. He hopes that others are able to recognize this as well. Rodney identifies SCAP as a truly supportive factor that has helped him put his life into perspective. Although each day holds its own challenges, Rodney is following his own advice, which is to never give up on your dreams or goals, and to stay away from mood-altering substances.