



## Christopher Faircloth

Schenectady Community Action Program



Chris was born in Albany and moved to Schenectady around the age of 8, spending most of his life in the local area. Growing up had its challenging moments for Chris and he describes his young self as a “problem child” that was often in trouble and “not in a good place,” spending time in and out of several homes. These experiences set the stage for what he considers his biggest challenge in life: addiction.

In early 2015 Chris moved in with his significant other. However, the situation became problematic and the poor state of the relationship led to an addiction to drugs and alcohol. After coming to the realization of the severe negative impact that addiction was having on his life, Chris decided to get help. He responded by ending the relationship and moving out of the house to escape the situation. Without housing and struggling with addiction, Chris sought help from the Department of Social Services and spent time at Conifer Park to get treatment for his addiction before moving into a halfway house.

Chris understood that lack of housing was a significant barrier to successfully continuing his treatment and he was determined to find a good housing situation. “I was ready for something new and I knew SCAP could help me start the journey,” he says. After being referred to SCAP, he worked with our Supportive Housing team to address his need for housing. Courtney and Elishia assessed Chris’s situation and discovered that he was eligible for Shelter Plus Care, a federally funded program, which provides rental assistance and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness and struggling with substance abuse and/or mental illness.

The purpose of the program is to provide housing stability for homeless individuals and families so they can obtain greater self-sufficiency and decrease their risk of returning to homelessness.

SCAP was able to help Chris find good housing and he moved into his apartment in July 2016. In addition to providing ongoing case management, SCAP’s Supportive Housing Solutions team also provided Chris with crucial support services to reduce barriers so he could remain housed and focus on his treatment without interferences or setbacks. SCAP helped facilitate the building of a relationship between Chris and his new landlord; assisted with paying National Grid bills as well as cellphone bills. “SCAP has helped me so much...it has been a foundation for me,” he says.

In May 2017, Chris completed his CASAC Trainee Certificate (Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor) at the Addictions Care Center of Albany. He is currently employed by New Choices Recovery as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor, working primarily at the Community Residences to help support others in their battles with addiction. Chris is also working toward his CASAC Credential which requires 6000 hours of work experience to complete and would like to someday work as a case manager. As for future plans, it is clear he has his priorities straight: “Sobriety first and foremost,” he asserts, before continuing on to discuss the importance of stability and personal responsibility. “Clean and serene,” he says with a smile.