“I have so much more than I expected. I am grateful every second.”

Tyrone

CCC TURNINGPOINTS: ACHIEVING HIS DREAM

A home. A family. A career. For some, these goals define the American Dream. For Tyrone, all he wanted was “to walk down the street with a life.”

Tyrone’s childhood in Pasadena, Calif. was relatively stable and secure, but he made some bad choices that landed him in juvenile detention by age 14. He fell deeper into drug use and revolved in and out of incarceration. But during his last stint, he began to study the laws of attraction and positive thinking, which he says turned his life around. When he left prison for the last time, he spent his $124 on a ticket to Portland in search of a fresh start.

Tyrone walked through the doors of Central City Concern (CCC) Recovery Center and his life changed forever. The counselors there got him into alcohol-and drug-free supportive housing and the Recovery Mentor Program, where mentors use their lived experience to help others in recovery. He finished CCC’s Community Volunteer Corps’ 80-hour program that gives newly recovering people opportunities to assist local nonprofits and prepare them for the work force. Shortly after he got a job at the Dollar Tree.

“I wore my Dollar Tree shirt on my days off,” Tyrone says. “I wanted people to know I had a job.” He picked up additional part-time work at PGE Park concessions as well as CCC, developing management, reception and custodial skills along the way.

A year later, Tyrone got a permanent position as an assistant case manager with CCC; two years later he took a job with Transitions Projects. While there, his peers nominated him for Willamette Week’s prestigious Skidmore Prize, given to a young person working in a nonprofit who has made a significant impact in the community and sets an example for us all. He won. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]
Fast forward to now. Tyrone is nine years clean and back working at CCC as a case manager for the Integrated Health and Recovery Treatment team. He is a single dad to 3-year-old Meshach, about a year away from his bachelor’s degree in health care administration with his eye on getting an MBA, and bought a house. He is also exploring his creative side through photography and writing a book.

“I’m self-sufficient,” says Tyrone, and he has achieved his dream of having a life. “I have so much more than I expected. I am grateful every second.”