



From “attitude” to gratitude

Today, Kenya Brown is one grateful young lady.

But that wasn't the Kenya who arrived at the Sparrow's Nest in April 2008. “I was real negative,” states the 22-year-old. “I was sarcastic. I was rude. I didn't care about the other ladies here.” Nor did she have a good relationship with her mother, who'd adopted her when she was 2.

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I'd be lost.”*

“Mom always provided,” Kenya recalls, “but we never had a good connection like a parent and child should. I couldn't tell her things because she'd respond with cussing, fighting, and verbal abuse.”

In fact, that's why Kenya came to the Nest: her mom kicked her out and she had nowhere else to go. That was April 2008, but Kenya left the Nest a few weeks later to work at Cedar Point. When she returned to Toledo months later, she tried living with her mom again. But by February 2009, tensions between them flared and her mother asked her to leave after Kenya drank a can of soda without asking her permission. Her mom asked her back the next day, but Kenya realized the arrangement wouldn't work. She also knew it wasn't all her mother's fault.

“I didn't want to follow her rules,” she explains. “I knew I had to change. I wasn't in school. I was unemployed. I really wasn't trying to do anything with my life. So I decided to leave on my own and come back to the Nest for a change.”

And change she did.

“In *Ready For Life*, I learned about dealing with anger, and not letting what you've been through keep you from accomplishing other goals,”

the now-cheerful young woman comments. “I learned not to be afraid to ask for help.” She especially needed help overcoming depression and loneliness.

She credits God with taking her depression away. “I asked God for forgiveness, and I have a real good relationship with Him now,” observes Kenya, who goes to a Bible study most days and attends Grace Temple.

During her stay at the Nest, Kenya obtained her driver's license, and took the State Tested Nurses Aide exam so she could earn money while attending Owens Community College. She's majoring in social work, but thinks she might switch to become a CPA.

In early July, Kenya took the next step in her new life when she left the Sparrow's Nest and moved into an apartment found with the help of FOCUS. She's also taking steps to repair her relationship with her mother. Above all, she's grateful.

“I want to thank Cherry Street donors for all the things they have done for us at the Sparrow's Nest,” she says with a smile. “I encourage them to keep on helping people like me. Without the Nest, I'd be lost. I'm a better person because of this place.”

Like so many of our guests, Kenya sought safe shelter and care at the Sparrow's Nest, not because of addiction or debilitating mental illness, but as a result of devastating life circumstances. Although more and more women in our community are finding themselves homeless and without hope, you—our faithful donors—make it possible for them to build a new life at the Sparrow's Nest.