



ROAM Communities

Recovery through Ownership, Action & Management

Mental Health Support Services

ABN: 33214950898

Newsletter July 2006

I am often asked how people can end up homeless and mentally disordered so young? The story below illustrates the complexity of the answer:

James Story

"My father left when I was 2. I have no recollection of him and have never seen him since. My mother was a beautiful lady, who had a tormented soul. She had the biggest heart, everyone loved her, and she was an alcoholic running from the pain of her childhood. Things would be great for months on end and then the alcoholic binge would start, strange men and many a night looking through a smashed window.

10years old: When you are young, adults are like giants and are terrifying when they are smashing the place to bits. Again! Bandaging my mothers slashed wrists, after she had awoken me beating on my bedroom door in the middle of the night, blood everywhere. Or other times, Mum's in the bathroom pissed, is she going to the toilet or is she crying out for help again in her strange way. "What are you doing in there? Let me in." Her wrists a crazy criss-cross lattice work of scars, from her many attempts of saying I can't cope with the pain. Sometimes it was off to hospital. The neighbours had called the police, probably because of the hysterical shrieking of my mother.

14 years old: I'm with my first girlfriend. We are scrubbing the carpet with bleach. The blood stains run from the bathroom up the hallway to my bedroom door. There is dry blood around a stale wine glass. The house is eerily quiet today, from the drunken rampage of the night before. Everything is smashed. Again! I feel so ashamed. Won't somebody come and help.

15 years old. I'm working at McDonalds, when one night at work a friend calls and says my Mum is in hospital. I fly to Adelaide, walk into intensive care, my mother has burns to 80% of her body. One arm is amputated. She has been on fire, which she had lit in a drunken rage. Two months later she dies. My heart is broken. I am crushed.

This is when I meet my false friends, marijuana. I am enchanted and intoxicated. I go crazy, smoking pot, running away from agony and grief, I try suicide and end up in psychiatric care. Over two years I've smoked everything I could lay my hands on – inheritance, stealing from work, borrowed money, hocked goods, rent money, food money, anything I could use to feed my pain....."

Donations = Destinies

ROAM Communities is meets the challenge of trying to assist the lives of people like James every day. We are an official charity. If you would like to assist us in our important work you can make a tax-deductible donation by cheque or automatic payment using the details below :

PO Box 93, Potts Point, 1335, Sydney, NSW. or

Account Details

Bank: Commonwealth Bank
BSB – 062005

Account Name- ROAM COMMUNITIES
Account Number - 10577375

Best Wishes,

Toby Raeburn
ROAM Communities

Managing Director
Mobile: 0407608066