



OICH – Gideon's Story

I had no name for four days, until my grandmother gave me a name. I had a heart and kidney operation when I was two month old because my mother drank and did drugs when she was pregnant with me, so I was in the hospital for five years on and off, I would have to go to Montreal. I believe I was not held too much 'cause I have trouble when somebody touches me. When I was six or seven my sisters, that are three years older, made me smoke cigarettes so I would not tell on them, but my mother found out and she started giving me cigarettes at that age, but she did not want my sisters to smoke.

This is around the time fathers start teaching their kids how to hunt and survive on the land, but my parents were separated and my mother's boyfriend is the worst hunter I have ever met, I am 24 now and I have never seen him shoot an animal Just missing the animal.

I would go to the dentist alone, my mother would not take me.

I was not like the other kids because of the operation so I was made fun of by the other kids, I would breath heavily even when I was staying still.

I moved back to my father when I was 7 or 8 years old; my father did not expect me to go live with him but my mother did not want to take care of me.

I got into fights every day 'cause I was from another town, I didn't tell my father that it was happening every day.

I did well in school, my father was the shop teacher and his now wife the grade 5 and 6 teacher.

To me my relation with my father wasn't enough for me. I remember him playing with other kids a lot. He was busy most of the time. Middle of grade 8 I ran away to my mother, 'cause I didn't like the way my father and girlfriend raising me, they wanted me to be perfect, I was at the top of my classes, got As and Bs but I found school to be boring, it wasn't challenging enough, and getting into fights almost everyday was hard on me cause I didn't have any friends outside of school or my friends were my father and girlfriend friends kids I just didn't find them interesting I was glad but I wasn't happy.

When I moved back to my mother I got worse cause I started taking marihuana and drinking staying up all night then my father called or my mother just sent me back at 14 years old. I stayed at my dad's for a few weeks they I just left with what I was wearing, staying at apartment buildings boiler room.

I started baby sitting so I could have something to eat every day. I was getting \$ 20 a day plus a free breakfast and lunch, I would buy a pack of cigarettes and I would find somebody to spit for weed. I would wear the same clothes for months one pair; it took me 3 or 4 months till I would go get my clothes from my father's place, he would not ask it I was alright. I would just take my clothes and leave right away. I was hanging around with my cousin who is five years older and she was drinking every day and I would get invited to go to the legion and bar, we would steal almost every day so we could drink. A lot of people ask if I ws her bodyguard cause we would be together everyday, at sixteen we had one bed nothing else and her other friend would stay with us and party every day, but I 'd have to get up at six in the morning to baby sit and I would, but I would sleep for an hour or less because of partying so the



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person I baby sat for I moved in with him then I was there 24/7, the baby got so attached to me she would start crying if I left the apartment instead of wanting to be with her father.

17 or 18 years old I moved back to my mother so I could be close to my grandmother even though my relationship with my mother is bad, if I did not come back home one night I would lose my bedroom. I got my first job at 19 as a stock boy. It taught me a lot, how to organize, but I was still sleeping only a few hours a week cause me and my cousins hanging out but it was a one way friendship cause I would give them things and they wouldn't give me back and I would fight with them a lot.

20 or 21 I moved back to my father but I only stay a few days then I would couch surf then I got into a place that helps young people and they got me a room for 100 dollars a month.

I got my 2 job staying there as an assistant cabinet maker, I liked the job but I would have to walk there mornings, back home for lunch then back there, back home and it wasn't close, but I got depressed and decide to go to Ottawa 2004. I got a place when I got here but I moved out after 2 months then I was homeless sleeping outside and at the shelters, drinking every day. I didn't need any money I could get alcohol and drugs for free. In 2005 then I came back to the capital of the territory cause my grandmother passed away but I didn't make it cause I had to go to my mother's, but if I did I don't know what I would do I was so angry at my mother and relatives cause I knew how they treated my grandmother. I cared about my grandmother but I was scared cause I have almost killed somebody before and I might if I see my mother.

2005 I got another job as an apprentice electrician but as usual I got depressed and moved back to Ottawa after working for 3 months, I was homeless drinking everyday. I was homeless cause it's hard being in OW they don't give enough money to last the whole month for food and other stuff so staying at a shelter is easy cause we do not need to buy food.

I have tried to change my lifestyle but was hard I needed something to eat but I didn't want to go to eat at the shelter cause I know everybody and they would want me to drink and it's hard to make friend that don't drink cause I'm an alcoholic. Last year I black out and somehow fractured my foot and pelvis and broke my wrist. After that I started to think differently but I would still drink but not as much, but it's hard to get on the right track cause I'm and alcoholic, cause of my depression (self induce mood disorder). It's hard to live on welfare cause there is not enough time to buy food for the whole month and the food banks don't give enough so I will have to go to the shelters to eat and would see my old drinking friends, the thing that's harder is making new friends.

There is a lot that are missing cause I wanted to forget the bad things that happened to me.

I have been homeless in Ottawa for 2 and a half years, sleeping outside in the winters and summer. Sleeping outside in the winter is very hard I would find a vent that's letting hot air out so I can stay warm or break into a apartment building and sleep at the top floor stair case. Getting food to eat is easy when I was downtown I would just go to the shelters or the dropin centers that serve meals, when I slept in the Westend or somewhere far from downtown I would not eat for 3 to 4 days sometime cause my friends are on OW, being on OW is very hard there is not enough money to buy food for the whole month and going to the food banks they don't give food that will last a week. I didn't want to stay at shelters because of the smell, being in a room with 4 to 12 people, some who don't wash for weeks, and



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most people who stay at the shelters are crack heads. They aren't the best people to get along with. Staying outside was alright but I would have to get up early so when people are going back to work wouldn't see me sleeping there, when people saw me sleeping in places they would call the cops then I would have to find a new place to sleep. It very hard to find places to sleep where I would not bother people, I would always clean up my mess so people would not notice somebody sleeping there.

I'm an alcoholic I don't have any trouble getting alcohol I'll drink everyday In the parks with people, the cops nows we are drinking there but only if they see something or somebody complain they would talk to us, even the people who cleans the parks didn't call the cops because we would clean up every thing when we were done drinking.

I have tried to get jobs but didn't get any offers, probably because of how Id look all my cloths look old, I don't have that many clothes cause I don't want to carry to many bags and if I left them at my friends they would start wearing them or somebody else would take them. Its very hard finding people who I can trust. Its very hard not to be homeless because of how much I would get out of OW, and its hard to get new friends and try to change my life style cause I would have to go eat at the shelters and I'll see my drinking friend. I would say no but they would always talk me into drinking cause I have been drinking sence I was fourteen and I didn't do anything else, that it another story.

I suffer from depression and I have been diagnosed (self induce mood disorder) I have a hard time keeping my jobs because of my depression, I drink because of my depression I now its not the right thing to do but drinking makes my body feel different and I forget for a while that I'm depressed.