



NASHVILLE
CARES

FIGHTING TO END HIV/AIDS

**"I thought I was
invincible."**

Greg's story

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"I thought I was invincible."

by Debbie Barnett

It was 1991. Greg had heard about AIDS but really didn't understand just how serious the disease was at the time. He also assumed it was only affecting men who had sex with men so he figured he wasn't at risk. He had no idea that using an old needle he found under a bed would change the course of his life forever.

His father was a heroin addict. It was all Greg had ever known as a child, so he didn't really understand how toxic his home life had been until his mother finally packed the kids up and moved away. Unfortunately, much of the emotional damage had been done and before he knew it, Greg found himself following in his father's footsteps.

For years, he was in and out of rehab and recovery programs. Although Greg was aware that he was HIV positive, he didn't give it much thought. He was busy focusing on the drugs he craved and not the medicine he needed. "I thought I was in decent shape and that I didn't need the medication," Greg told us. "I really thought I was invincible."

During a period of sobriety, Greg took a job at a rehab facility and that's when a lightbulb went on. "I felt like God had put me there," Greg said. "It's when I realized my calling to become a drug counselor."



It was then that Greg started to get serious about addiction recovery and managing his HIV illness. Determined to overcome, he continued trying to get better. But with a series of up and down victories and failures – he was feeling hopeless. "That's when my cousin brought me to Nashville CARES," recalled Greg. "They helped change my life. They basically told me, 'either you want help... or you don't.' That's when I really woke up."

"I've come to realize that the three worst words you can say are, 'I got this'," Greg explains. "It should always be 'we got this' – God didn't create superheroes who are invincible. He created humans who need other humans to get through this life together."

It's been 10 years since Greg first came to Nashville CARES. It hasn't been easy – he has had some physical challenges – an aneurism, a stroke, and a spine separation. But at 62 years-old, he's still pushing through and not giving up. He's going to school to get his license to be a certified drug counselor. He's joined the YMCA and is working to improve his mobility and strength – he was even able to give away his walker to someone who needed it!

The journey to healing and wholeness continues for Greg. But the future looks bright. "In life, there will always be problems... you only get stuck in them if you don't ask for help," he assures us. "But don't worry... we got this!"



ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE LEMONADE CHALLENGE?



WILL YOU MATCH THE \$38.86 THAT HANNAH AND HER FRIENDS RAISED?

This summer, Hannah and a couple of friends set out to raise money for Nashville CARES. Hannah heard that many of the people Nashville CARES serves do not have homes. She couldn't stand the thought of that so she decided to do something to help.

Hannah grabbed a couple of friends and together they set up a lemonade stand. They spent the day selling cold cups of lemonade to passersby and by the end of the day they raised **\$38.86!**

Did you know that \$38.86 can provide one of our clients experiencing homelessness with a tent and other essentials that can help protect them from the elements?

We are so moved by Hannah and her friends' efforts that we thought we'd put the challenge out to all of you! **Will you match the \$38.86 they raised?**

**YES! I WILL MATCH HANNAH AND
DONATE \$38.86 TODAY!**

**Of course, you can always donate more - any amount helps!*

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



A group from Postmates painting a client's house

Living in a humid climate, we all know how fast nature can take over our yard, or deteriorate our house.

Thanks to some of our volunteer community groups, this is not something our clients need to worry about! Some of our clients, either due to limited resources or mobility, are unable to fight back the inevitable grass growing and general house maintenance. We have some dedicated corporate, church, community and individual volunteers who mow lawns, paint houses, trim bushes, and haul junk. But we could always use more!

If you yourself, or a small group of friends, would love a quick way to be engaged with our clients, consider spending a few hours this summer making a client's house not just livable, but a clean, comfortable home!

email volunteer@nashvillecares.org for more information.

SPECIAL EVENTS

We are excited to announce some BIG changes to our annual AIDS Walk. The 28th Annual Nashville AIDS Walk is on Saturday, October 5th at Public Square Park from 9am-1pm. This year's event will feature musical entertainment on the main stage, a ticketed brunch with Bloody Marys and Mimosas and an enhanced kid's zone area. Together with Good Neighbor Festivals we have planned an event that the entire community will be excited to attend.

After much consideration, we have also decided to eliminate the 5K run and focus on the walk. We will walk in solidarity to remember those we have lost, acknowledge those living with HIV, and demonstrate our hope for an HIV free world to come. We will also celebrate all of the work we have done TOGETHER to help end the epidemic.

Registration for the Nashville AIDS Walk is now open. Form a team today and help us raise funds to support the mission of Nashville CARES. [The Nashville AIDS Walk is a great event for your company,](#) civic group, sorority or fraternity to get involved. Visit nashvilleaidswalk.com to register your team today. Sponsorship and vendor booth opportunities are also available. Email us at events@nashvillecares.org for more information.

