

Good afternoon!

My name is Scotty Mays and I am a person in long term recovery. What that means is that I have not had a drink or a drug since January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The disease of addiction was instilled in me at a very young age before I ever put a drink or a drug inside of me. My childhood consisted of divorce, abuse, and ultimately unruliness as a child. At age 12 I had my first drink while I was in a group home for troubled kids. From that point on I drank off and on while abusing drugs such as marijuana, crack cocaine, and LSD. That madness continued into my adulthood. In 2001 I had to have knee surgery. I was prescribed prescription pain killers and for the next 16 years I was having a love affair with prescription drugs as my alcoholism continued to get worse. I became even more manipulative, more of a liar, more of a thief. I could not stop using prescription pain killers because they made me feel "normal" and they kept me from getting sick. The stranglehold these pills had on me was insane. My use escalated from Vicodin, to Percocet's, to Oxycontin, and ultimately Methadone. I had endless supplies (at least I thought) because my supplier and biggest enabler was a family member. She thought she was helping, but in reality, she was loving me to death.

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 was the last drop of alcohol I have had. Alcohol landed me in the county jail and that was my wakeup call (at least I thought.) Even though I had stopped drinking my prescription drug abuse got much worse. So bad that eventually my supplier stopped supplying me. I caused my family to lose our home, I lost numerous jobs. My life was centered around waking up, chasing the drug dealers, and getting "my fix" for the day. Only to return the next day to repeat the cycle of insanity. I was flirting with the idea of heroin in December of 2015. But on a cold day a few days after Christmas, I received a phone call from someone that told me a good friend of mine was found dead in his home due to a drug overdose consisting of heroin along with some Xanax and other substances in his body. Was this my wakeup call? I would like to thank yes, but my addiction carried me through into January of 2016.

January 9<sup>th</sup> 2016 I had enough. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I was not only destroying myself, But I was directly destroying family and friends that loved me. My only solution was suicide. I walked to a local park and was getting ready to hang myself from a rafter at an isolated shelter. Right before the attempt was made my phone rang. It was from a friend I hadn't spoken with in a few months. He proceeded to tell me that I was on his mind and he wanted to know if I would like to go to church with him. I was taken back by this considering I am a strong believer in God and I was not that naïve to realize there was a Higher Power trying to get my attention. So, I accepted and he picked me up. I sat in that church and cried like a baby through the whole service. I knew I needed to finally take that step and make a change. A couple nights later (Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup> 2016) I was attending a community drug coalition meeting in Germantown (my hometown) Ohio. I remember standing up in front of 200 plus people and crying out for help. Captain Mike Brem was speaking that night on behalf of the Montgomery County Sheriffs drug task force. He told me to see him after the meeting where he then gave me a phone number to call for help. At this point I was willing to do whatever it took. I called the number and the lady that answered was Lori Erion. Lori is the founder of FOA (Families Of Addicts) a nonprofit organization that advocates recovery and helps families of addicts and addicts find the help they need to begin the recovery process. She flooded me with a plethora of resources. Every place I called I was getting turned away because of no insurance. The window is very small for someone reaching out for help. Lack of insurance of any kind is the determining factor if you live or die and that is

scary. The last treatment center I called was it. If this did not work then I was giving up. It was January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The gentleman that answered the Phone was Richard Confer for Recovery Works Healing center in Dayton Ohio. He told me to come in for an assessment and they would help me get the insurance I needed. He did just that. Not only did he do that, but he also put me on the Vivitrol injection and 6 months of intensive outpatient treatment. My life has not been the same since. In a few days on Friday October 13<sup>th</sup>, I will have 21 months of continuous sobriety. I attend recovery meetings daily and work a very strong recovery program.

Today I am an Alumni Coordinator for Lumiere Healing Centers out of West Chester Ohio. Working in a treatment center today is the best job I have ever had. I get to go to work. I get to share my experience, strength, and hope. I truly am a HOPE DEALER today. I also am blessed to do stand-up comedy, a passion I have always had. Last but not least I am a recovery advocate for FOA (Families of Addiction), I have currently finished classes and awaiting my license for Chemical Dependency Counselor Assistant. I travel to communities and events to offer hope and strength to others who are struggling. I plant mustard seeds of hope. When they say there is a light at the end of the tunnel? That is me and many others holding that light of hope. I will continue to be the hand of hope that helps pull people out of the ashes of Hell we call addiction. I will continue to be a Hope Dealer! One Day At A Time.

Thank you

Scotty Mays