

Beans & Bread Success Story - *Bryan*



“I don’t know where I would be without Beans & Bread, probably dead or in jail,” stated Bryan. “The staff here is beautiful; they don’t turn their back on anyone.” Bryan added, “I watch everyday as they help the hundreds of people who come through the doors.”

Bryan was 24 when his life began to spiral out of control following the tragic loss of both of his parents. To cope with his pain, he turned to drugs and alcohol. *“I came here with nothing,”* he added, with an expression revealing the emotional stress of that difficult time. Bryan came to Beans & Bread without a job, without a place to live, and with a chronic medical disability that made it difficult for him to find steady employment.

Bryan is now working toward regaining housing through our recently expanded Home Connections program that places chronically homeless individuals in permanent housing. You can hear the excitement in his voice when he says *“I can’t wait to turn a key in my own door.”* Bryan is ecstatic about receiving his own apartment for the first time in years. He recently had surgery for his medical condition, and will soon be looking for a full-time job where he can, in his words, “continue to help people.”

While he recovers from his surgery, Bryan is a volunteer at Beans & Bread. *“Seeing people get the help they need and the smiles on children’s faces when their bellies are full...that’s why I volunteer at Beans & Bread,”* explains Bryan. Every morning, he arrives at Beans & Bread and starts unloading boxes of food, clothing and other donated items as he greets clients waiting in line for a hot meal. He lends a helping hand and an empathetic ear to anyone in need. *“I volunteer everyday because I want to give back to the program that gave me my life back. I know how important this place is when you’re out there, and nobody else cares.”*

Beans & Bread Success Story – Monte



For Monte, his tragedy occurred two years ago in a near fatal car crash. He survived, but with permanent disabilities and a completely different life ahead of him. The first thing you notice about 43-year-old Monte is the stiffness in his right arm and the drag of his left leg, remnants of that terrible accident. However, his warm smile quickly outshines these physical scars. “I’ll say this,” offers Monte. “The accident cured me of my old life. I wasn’t using it right before.”

After eight months of intensive recovery in several hospitals, Monte became homeless. One day, hungry and tired, he came to Beans & Bread for a hot meal.

As Monte became a regular guest at Beans & Bread, staff and volunteers recognized his determination to improve his life. This attitude helped Monte gain admission into our Frederick Ozanam House, a transitional housing program for men attached to Beans & Bread. As part of his community service requirement, Monte started volunteering at the Beans & Bread meal program. Monte grew to love the feeling that helping others gave him, and he continued to volunteer even after leaving Frederick Ozanam House to stay with family, and later receiving an apartment through St. Vincent de Paul’s Home Connections program.

Monte’s already wide smile broadens as he talks about this new apartment. “Sometimes I just sit at home and look out my window at the blue sky and just smile,” beams Monte. The friends Monte made through volunteering at Beans & Bread gave him kitchen items, rugs, and decorations to use in his new place and make it a true home.

To repay such generosity and despite his limited mobility, Monte takes two buses and the metro from his home in West Baltimore to get to Beans & Bread, where he continues to volunteer five days a week. He often arrives early and stays late to help with what ever needs to be done that day. Monte explains his motivation simply, “It’s nice to know you can make a difference in a person’s life.”