



# WOMEN IN CHARGE

independence through healing, education and support

Fall 2020

## We Have a New Home!

Time was running out. Our building in U. City would no longer be heated and summer was coming to an end. Fortunately a friend of Women In Charge, Eric Friedman, recommended we call Union Avenue Christian Church.

UACC has a small but vibrant congregation, that is willing to share its luxury of space in the lovely old church on Union just north of Delmar. The facility houses the Union Avenue Opera, the National Benevolent Association, an art gallery, the Zen meditation group and others.

Our new location provides great access to public transportation, and it is located close to The People's Clinic and other agencies that may be useful to our participants.

Our new address is:  
733 Union Blvd. Rm 208  
St. Louis, MO 63108.



*Our new classroom.*

## Sadie's Story

I am 17. I have been out of school since I was a freshman and was in and out of rehab. I didn't care about anything except doing drugs - I was in a really bad place before I got pregnant; I really got depressed and drugs made me feel better even though it made my whole situation worse. But when I got preg-

nant, it made me want to get my life together and get my HiSET so I could be a good role model for my son. I talk a lot about this in therapy.

I was super not confident about how I could perform going back to school, and the teachers at Women In Charge helped me realize that it's not as difficult as

*Cont'd on Pg. 3*

## *Our Mission Statement*

***Women In Charge heals the spirit, builds confidence, and educates women in need so that they may provide a better life for themselves and their children.***

We offer Adult Education and Literacy instruction, HiSET preparation, individual and group counseling, career counseling, parent mentoring, yoga and computer classes. The program is free of charge. A free on-site children's program is available to participants. September through May, hours are: Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 2:30 PM. Covid hours are: Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 to 12:30PM.

# Thank You So Much to All Who Supported Us in 2020!

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*Our deepest apologies to anyone we missed!*

*Sadie's Story: Cont'd from page 1*

I thought it would be. That has made me a lot more confident in myself and given me the ambition to pursue more education after I pass the HiSET. If it were not for me getting pregnant, I would just be getting high and hurting other people.

When I was in elementary school, I was in the gifted program but then my family fell apart from addiction. My dad was an alcoholic and my mom was also an alcoholic. I started becoming anxious, my mental health went down and that's kind of when my issues started. I almost didn't pass 5<sup>th</sup> grade because my mom couldn't wake up to take me and my little brother to school. So my grandma would take us. I would have panic attacks and I would call my grandma in the middle of the night when my mom was all messed up. She would act nuts when she drank; she was a completely different person. Grandma would pick me up and take me to her house. She and my aunt got tired of doing that. I felt like I was a burden on everybody.

I was in and out of mental health facilities when I was in middle school. I was suicidal and self-harming and so I turned to drugs – hurting myself in a different way. My parents changed a lot and I never felt stable or safe. My whole life was just chaos.

I found out I was pregnant in April when I turned 17. I actually didn't think I was pregnant. My mom thought I was so she made me buy a pregnancy test because I was getting sick and late. I knew it would be really difficult to throw away a cap of fentanyl so I went in the bathroom, did my

bump of fentanyl and then took the test. I immediately regretted snorting it. I felt guilty. Then it was positive and I was scared to tell my mother. When I told my mom she thought I was ruining my life and that I should have an abortion. She doesn't realize that I would be dead or in jail if I didn't get pregnant. I did not care about my life at all, was reckless, and lived for the thrill of getting high and all the illegal things that surrounded it. The drugs I was doing - mixing them - nobody knew what I was taking so they wouldn't know what to do if I overdosed, whether to Narcan me or not.

I didn't even pray until I started having problems with the pregnancy. For a while the doctors were worried about the baby's heart and that was one of the scariest experiences of my life. It brought me back to praying and talking to God as I had not done in years. I just had to stop and give it back to God because I could not deal with it. Now the baby's heart is great. He is healthy.

Before the pregnancy, I didn't feel like I had anything to live for, but I knew I couldn't give my child the type of life I had when I was a kid. I knew I wanted to break the cycle of addiction in my family. Most adolescent rehabs are money traps. I could not hurt this innocent baby that did not ask to be here pumped full of drugs. So I just stopped cold turkey. I did my last bump of fentanyl before I took a pregnancy test. I haven't touched anything since then.

I stare at the ultrasound all day. I have never loved anything more than myself, except this baby. The baby is due in December.

## **Yes, We Are Open But what about Covid?**

With masks in place, thermometer ready to go, daily disinfecting on the schedule, we made the tricky call to reopen. We have a small, but dedicated group of students who still very much want help in passing the HiSET and moving forward in their lives. With so much else going awry, we did not want to abandon them.

In a nod to Covid, we end our day at 12:30 so we are not having a community lunch. We felt that level of maskless togetherness was probably not wise. We still celebrate birthdays, how could we not?

We do follow community guidelines, and will close again if required to do so.

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Our new home—Union Avenue Christian Church has roots dating back to 1837, but officially began with a merger in 1902. The sanctuary was completed in 1908. The church has a long, proud history of being a community resource. We are so grateful to join them.

  
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