



Morrison's Miracles

Many of you already know that Morrison Child and Family Services does amazing work. Today we would like to share what we call "Morrison's Miracles" with you. These miracles occur daily but are difficult to discuss and subtle to recognize. We want to start sharing some of these moments with you so that you better understand the critical nature of the work we do and impart the success of our clients. Please share Morrison's Miracles with those you know who care about children and the overall health of families in our community.

*Counterpoint reaches out to youth who are displaying inappropriate sexual behavior as well as suffering from emotional or behavioral problems. For two decades the program has effectively helped children, adolescents and their families alter problem behavior around sexual issues. These children have not acquired the tools necessary to deal with stresses, sometimes extreme, that they have faced in their own lives. Using evidenced-based approaches like Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Morrison staff guide youth to think differently about their own experience and regulate their own emotions and behavior in a social context. From 2003 to 2008, one year out of the Counterpoint Day Treatment Program (CPDT), none of the youth who successfully completed the program were arrested for a new sexual offense and only 12% were arrested for a new non-sexual offense.**

Like many of the clients at CPDT, Christopher** had experienced a life of poverty, abuse and neglect. Constantly existing in survival mode, he had never known a real sense of safety. As a way to deal with his anger and sadness, and to try and make himself feel better, he abused alcohol and his younger cousins, which ultimately resulted in his incarceration. Arriving at Morrison from a correctional facility, Christopher looked brittle and institutionalized. He was angry and expected to steamroll those around him through intimidation. CPDT provided Christopher with a safe, supportive environment where he was allowed to be a teenager but was also required to adhere to appropriate boundaries.

It took time for Christopher to feel safe, trust others, and change his perceptions of his environment. CPDT program staff worked with him to learn appropriate social and coping skills. Christopher worked through personal trauma and allowed himself to feel a variety of feelings, not just anger, and in many cases, deep sadness. He learned that by appropriately voicing his feelings and opinions that he could be an active participant in his treatment. Christopher also developed constructive relationships with peers at CPDT.

As Christopher approached the end of his treatment program, he presented himself as a very different person than when he arrived. He openly and honestly took responsibility for his past and present actions. Christopher allowed himself to feel more vulnerable feelings and learned to feel empathy for other people (something that was not done for him as a child). He has a better sense of himself and his inherent value as a person. He believes he can be successful. He is seen by his peers as a positive leader and

someone they want to emulate. Having made accelerated progress with his education while at CPDT, Christopher is now looking forward to returning to his family and to high school. He has made a significant shift in his life direction. He is on a path to reject the statistics for youth who have served time. He is creating his own miracle.

** Morrison Child and Family Services Department of Evaluation; Program Evaluation Report 01-0-2003 – 06-30-2008; October 2008.*

***Names and certain events have been changed to maintain confidentiality and to protect the children and families we serve.*