



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.

Parents Anonymous® of Oregon, a program of Morrison Child and Family Services, delivers family strengthening and child abuse prevention services to parents who are currently in treatment for substance abuse, in the process of reunifying with their children. These parents have completed treatment and have had involvement with both the child welfare and criminal justice systems.

Abuse and chronic addiction are often self-perpetuating, consuming one generation and moving on to the next. Susan** was not the first person in her family to experience abuse and addiction. At 16, she left her abusive home and was soon addicted to meth and pregnant. She lost her child to the welfare system and by 18 was pregnant again from a 54 year old drug dealer. Susan stopped using during her pregnancy but started again after giving birth. When Susan's son was eight months old he was hospitalized for ingesting meth. For the second time, Susan lost custody of her child, but this time she started addiction treatment. Initially successful, Susan soon lapsed as she had not dealt with the underlying personal issues of her drug use. She had a third child, and for the third time, she had her child taken by child welfare.

It costs almost \$2000/month to keep a child in foster care which is almost \$24,000 a year. On average, it costs \$1209 to mentor a parent through addiction to a successful and lasting recovery and reunification with their children. Parents Anonymous potentially saves thousands in foster care, treatment costs and costs to the community.

This time, something changed for Susan and she decided to do treatment for herself with the realization that she could either fight her addictions and stay drug free or that she would lose her children forever. She began treatment for a second time and attended a Parents Anonymous Support Group with other parents involved in the child welfare system. At the group, Susan learned about the Parent Mentor program at Morrison. She proactively asked for a referral to the program and was assigned to Cynthia who had successfully overcome obstacles similar to her own. Cynthia helped Susan with the decision to do "the next right thing," which is a mantra of recovery. She assisted Susan in attending support groups, 12 step meetings, developing safety plans to prevent a relapse, improving her relationship with her case worker and working on a plan of returning Susan's children to her care. With Cynthia's support and experience, Susan was able to focus on what was best for the children which required her to change her behaviors, recognize unhealthy relationships in her life and build healthy support systems.

Today Susan has one year of recovery, is advancing in her employment and her children are returning to her from foster care. Susan credits the support she received from her Parent Mentor and other support programs for her success. Susan states that, "I wouldn't be who I am today without DHS being involved in my life and the strong women who were sent to me, like my Parent Mentor." Susan deserves credit for the strength of her convictions and the ability to achieve her goals. Susan now dreams of being an attorney for Child Welfare. She wants to be the parent voice wherever it is needed and to help other families become whole again.

Susan is the president of her Oxford House (a clean and sober house) and is the chapter secretary for her County Oxford Housing.

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