



SAFESTREETS

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Success Story: COET works with local partners to get pregnant teen into housing

EVERETT – *From time to time, we share streets reports and successes from our police, social worker and other City staff. Today's story comes from Everett Police.*

Mallory* has been a familiar face on Everett's streets for the past five years. The product of a difficult childhood and absentee parents, she had a baby at 14, who was raised by Mallory's aunt. She first became homeless when she was 15 years old, and dropped out of high school after she finished ninth grade.

At 15, Mallory started using methamphetamines, marijuana, and cigarettes. At age 17, she started using heroin and quit everything else.

When Everett Police's Community Outreach and Enforcement Team (COET) started contacting Mallory more frequently last summer, she and her boyfriend were living in a car. They stayed primarily in north Everett, often parking for the night in out-of-the-way parking lots.

"She was very resistant to us at first," said Kaitlyn Dowd, a law enforcement embedded social worker with Everett Police. "She would tell us to stop talking to them, and it took a very long time to build any trust."

Kaitlyn and COET persisted, checking in with the couple regularly and trying to provide support in small ways. In January, their efforts paid off. Mallory, now 19, found out she was pregnant. She flagged down an officer on the street and asked to be connected with Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn and the team kicked into action, with generous support and cooperation from local groups and service providers. With \$2,000 donated by Abundant Life Christian Fellowship, they secured a hotel for Mallory to live in until she could transition into housing. Mallory started on methadone treatment immediately, and found a job working at Safeway. In May, she moved into her own apartment through Housing Hope's service-supported homeless housing program.

In mid-August, Mallory gave birth to a healthy baby girl, who showed no withdrawal symptoms – a testament to her commitment to her treatment program.

Learn more:

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Kaitlyn reports that Mallory has participated fully in her methadone classes and is participating in a support group for mothers and babies. She meets with her Housing Hope caseworker once a week, and has started a GED program on site, where she can have her daughter with her while she learns.

For a young woman who spent most of her teen years on the streets, Kaitlyn says watching Mallory's transformation has been a powerful experience.

“Right now she is really focusing on setting boundaries with people, which is really hard for her, but she sees progress in herself each day,” said Kaitlyn. “She told me that she never wants to go through the experience of being homeless again.”

Mallory's journey is a clear reminder of how incredibly valuable a support system is for someone in recovery. Not only did she have the support of COET, the methadone program and Housing Hope, but she benefitted from a strong relationship with the Abundant Life congregation, and gets services from the YWCA in her home each week. Mallory has also received support along the way from the Everett Gospel Mission and the Everett Housing Authority, and is especially grateful to Krista from Cocoon House's U-turn program, who encouraged her and advocated alongside Kaitlyn to get her housing, treatment and services.

Kaitlyn continues to meet with Mallory every couple of weeks and uses the Safe Streets Flex Fund from time to time to help meet Mallory's basic needs, including diapers for her newborn.

For Mallory, nothing provides more motivation and inspiration than her daughter. “I was ready to grow up,” she told Kaitlyn.

She said she had been talking about being ready to get clean, get a place of her own, and find a job that could support her and eventually a family. When she found out she was pregnant, she knew she was ready to grow up and have the life she had been imagining. With the support of an entire community, she is now well on her way.

Learn about the [Everett Safe Streets Plan](#).

**Names have been changed to protect privacy.*

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