

GLOUCESTER HOUSE

ADDICTIONS REHABILITATION CENTRE

Igniting the potential of every individual

Brother's in Arms *A mother's story*



Watching your grown child gradually fall into the grip of drug addiction is one of the worst things a parent can go through. For me, this happened to both of my sons. Describing the last twenty years is near on impossible.

To capture this, I prefer an image to convey it; I am on a ship at sea, against dark battering winds and pelting rain. The ship is swaying from side to side. Almost vertical, powerful waves wash screaming people into the belly of the water. I would grip on with all my might willing the storm to subside and calm until the next storm appeared. My internal world was worse. My heart literally throbbed in pain watching them dissolve into the depths of drug depravity. I believed as I gave birth to them, then it was my fault. I became immersed in a deadly mind-set that took my sanity away. If I had been a better mum to them then this wouldn't have happened. That was my default setting. I tried to figure out what went wrong, I agonised over the past and how I'd raised them.

I lived in shame, guilt and denial. At first I thought I could sort them out. By parental talks and forever on a mission to say the right thing urging them to take my advice. It took a while to realize what I was dealing with. Drugs become their master, being totally loyal, to the point of living in madness. I became someone in the shadows, a nervous wreck. At times it felt like they had died, I felt such grief, especially when I knew they were robbing and cheating. I lived in dread of the day that they would be found dead in some filthy alley. Our family became affected no one knew how to handle it. We became fragmented. Most of the time I carried my sons' lives around in secret.

My husband, my mum and one good friend were there for me throughout. I would hear

friends chat about which ultra -healthy diet to give their kids or discuss their University choices while I had just watched my son being arrested at his family home by ten police officers and dogs (again). My grandchildren had numb faces and their hearts broken. Another low point was when my other son and his wife had lost any parental rights to their young son. I ached for their loss and my grandchild's loss. There was so much suffering.

Despite the darkness and despair there were shards of light. Pain changes you. It smashes your expectations. Who was I to expect a certain way of life. It made me accept what was happening. It forced me to my knees praying to God, begging Him to "save them, guide them, love them and make them men that serve You". I gained comfort and strength through God, He knew everything. I would accept whatever He willed. I also got help through counselling and a 12 step family programme. This helped me to cope and take the focus off them. I had to accept that I was powerless, they were grown men who could find their own way.

At different times my sons' have had the opportunity to go to Gloucester House rehabilitation centre. There were people there that I could trust, they knew and understood what we were going through. The work at GH is professional, highly skilled with many years of experience. My sons were in the company of the best. Watching them transform into the men that I admire, love and enjoy being with, is thanks to GH. My family is slowly healing. I now have a little peace in my heart growing one moment at a time.

Then...

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...and now

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