



One Teen's Story of Transformation through Art

I came to Synergy 16 months ago. At the beginning of my junior year my mother and I had a disagreement and she kicked me out of the hotel room we were staying in at the time. I stayed with a friend of mine for a few months before I got into the transitional living program at Synergy. If it wasn't for Synergy, I really don't know where I would be today.



I've been participating in the art program for about a year now, and I mainly participate through my therapist. If I'm ever having an exceptionally rough week, I can walk into our session and say that I just want to paint that day, or I want to color, and she lets me take my emotions out through my art instead of talking. It's the easiest way for me to express myself.

Art therapy is the best type of therapy for me. Before the many problems in my life became prevalent, I would express myself through acting, drawing, painting and singing. The problems I was facing started to have more of an impact on my physical and mental health, especially when I hadn't yet been accepted into the transitional living program. I didn't have the energy to leave bed because my depression was worsening. I lost my passion for acting and for learning. I started to lose myself and forget the things that made me who I am. Before I was accepted into the program, I actually made a pretty big mistake and had to go to an adolescent ward. It was really hard for me to talk about what I had done and art therapy has helped me open up about that experience and helps me manage my anxiety and depression.

Synergy is a wonderful place. I've never been part of a community that is so accepting and understanding of all different types of individuals and is so tolerant of their flaws. Each client is treated by staff in ways that best help staff to communicate and get through to the client. Art is just one of the many ways they do it, along with exercise, video games, basketball, and just community activities that bring us together. I'm sad that my time in the transitional living program is coming to an end very soon, and I am going to miss the positive atmosphere that Synergy staff create with their presence. But I can truly say that it is all thanks to them that I am moving into my future with my shoulders back and my head high. I am so honored to have had these wonderful staff members as my mentors, friends and guardian angels.

News & Events



Last Call for Art Soup Tickets

Art Soup is THIS SUNDAY! It's not too late to **join us** and help make possible transformations like the one in the story above. We promise an evening of fun as you sample soup from restaurants around the community and enjoy a glass of wine, music and mingling in the vibrant art studio at Synergy Services' Youth Resiliency Center. You'll even get to take home a souvenir bowl created by a teen in the art therapy program. Check out this article in **Northland Lifestyle Magazine** that features Art Soup as a great way to give back.



Celebrating Kindness

The 29th annual Kindest Kansas Citian Awards Dinner is May 3 at the North Club at Arrowhead Stadium! We are excited to honor the **Carey & Todd Crossley family** and the **Jeanne & Byron Thompson family** for their extraordinary contributions to the community. Joining these families in the spotlight are the 20 winners of Kindest Kansas Citian awards along with the student that nominated them. **Join us** for this heartwarming evening as we celebrate these inspiring examples of kindness!



Rasta to the Rescue

This issue highlights art therapy, but at Synergy Services we utilize a wide variety of therapies to help clients heal from trauma. This story from **FOX4 News Kansas City** highlights the importance of pet therapy. Rasta the therapy dog belongs to Synergy's Director of Family Therapy, Jennifer Vernon, and brings comfort and courage to clients in the court setting and beyond.



A Coping Skill that Lasts a Lifetime

Do you know a pre-teen interested in learning about mindfulness? Our new Modern Mindfulness group meets on Tuesday nights from 5:00-6:00 at Synergy's Meier Center in Parkville. It is free to attend and participants may come once or as often as they'd like! **Email Emma Bailey** or call her at 816-505-4803 for more details.



Self Care Fosters Healing

Roxy Coursey and her Mary Kay team understand that for many of the women in our domestic violence shelter self care has taken a back seat to survival. Their annual donations of cosmetics and skin care products are a rare treat that help these survivors look and feel their best, and provide a boost on their path to recovery.



Donation Drive is a Big Win

A big thank you to Arthur's Lounge for their annual donation drive! Each year they host a private party on Super Bowl Sunday and collect donations for Synergy Services. Once again, these amazingly generous people scored big for the women and children in our shelters.

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