



We are Changing the Skyline of Elizabeth



THOSE OF YOU WHO UNDERSTAND THAT SENTENCE HAVE SEEN

A LOT OF CHANGES IN OUR COMMUNITY OVER THE YEARS. While

other buildings will surely be constructed in the community known as

Elizabeth and throughout the decades ahead, the greatest change will

happen inside our new building. The name of our capital campaign was

aptly named Building Solutions, as this new building is just a tool for the

solutions that will bring hope, healing and transformation to our clients

and our shared community.

Elizabeth is now home to a hub of sorts with the overarching goal to reduce suffering, and helping those we serve to thrive and make our community stronger. Competition in the nonprofit arena looks different than a Coke vs Pepsi thing. We certainly vie for the attention of the community, but in every other way, the organizations in our helping arts community support each other and are made stronger by each other. The Extension, like all non-profits, have a vested interest in the success of others. Maybe a positive outcome of the ravages of Covid for these groups is the connections that were strengthened during that time. During a period of transition and change, we met frequently, we lent support for parallel structure, were thought partners and each other's champion. The oneness of community. We continue to move forward together.



The Extension is in a period of transition as well. We are expanding to meet the needs of our clients, this community and the region. Our staff is reimagining. Our donors are stretching to lend philanthropic

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Laying the foundation.



Steel is delivered.



Foundation poured and stairwells in place.



Floors going in.

support. Our volunteers are being asked to accommodate shifts in our calendar so that our clients can complete all of their requirements. We are thriving in transition so that others can do the same.

At each crossroads we carefully, and sometimes exhaustively, consider the path forward. There are things that make The Extension more than a building, more than just another non-profit. When we conduct interviews with alumni, we ask - what kept you here when it was hard? The answer is heard repeatedly - "it's the people." The world's best volunteers. The brotherhood and sisterhood of each other. The Staff. All relationships built from doing hard things together.

Thriving is what we all get out of this, and hopefully in the process of meals, funding, conversations, donating pantry items or a coat; we feel the oneness that is the magic of The Extension community. It is what we gain when we put ourselves forward in service to others. There is absolutely no distinction between any of us at the point of connection. This is the singular way forward. That's what we do, and what we plan to continue to do. Whether serving a meal for 20, or for 80, it's a lift for sure. But one that we will meet the demands that we invited on ourselves. As long as we are grateful and do what we do together, our community and The Extension will continue to thrive.



Daniel Branham:

“MY LIFE HASN’T CHANGED; I’VE GOT A COMPLETELY NEW LIFE”

DANIEL BRANHAM GREW UP WITH STRICT PARENTS, AND WHEN HE TURNED 18 HE HAD THE REALIZATION

THAT MANY OF US DO: WE HAVE FREEDOM. Daniel decided to use his freedom and to start drinking and smoking marijuana. Marijuana was fine, but Daniel was interested in more. Cocaine, heroin, and ecstasy. You know, the hard stuff. He had been told his whole life how bad it all was, but this wasn’t bad, it was fun. Daniel’s girlfriend at the time had chronic back pain, so as the caring boyfriend he was, he found something for her too. They both got hooked on the painless bliss that opioids promise.



They seemed to be your average love birds. They got their own place, decided to get married, and soon learned they were pregnant. Any parent can tell you about the massive lifestyle change that comes with having a baby, and it was enough for Daniel and his wife to stop using heroin - at least for a while.

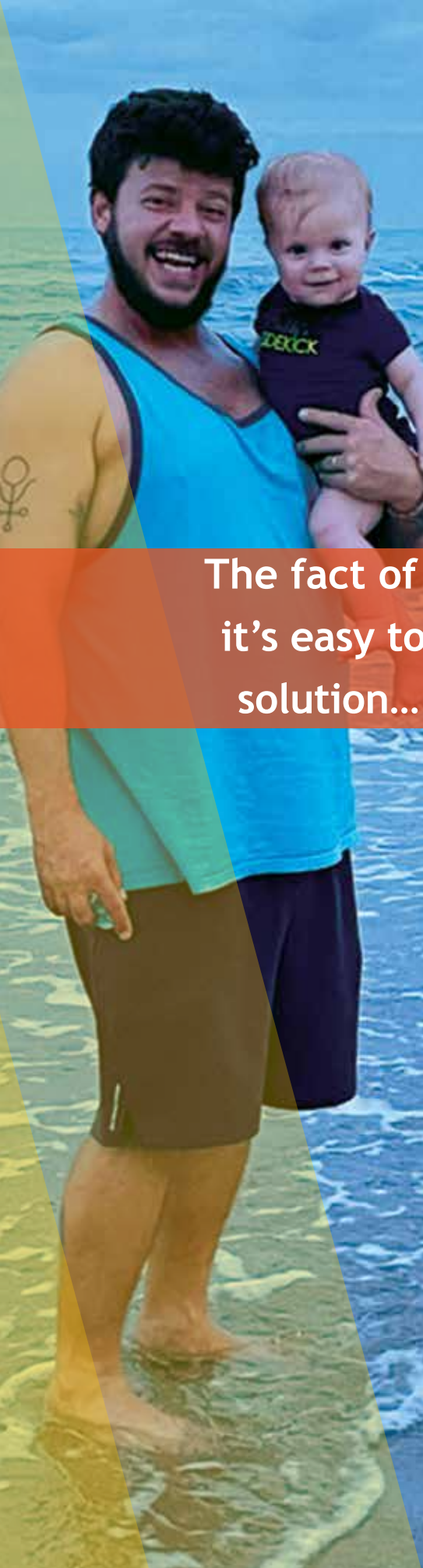
But the young family’s shot at a white-picket future didn’t last long. By the time their son turned 2, they were living in the car and shooting heroin again. Even through the haze of substance abuse, no parent wants to raise a toddler in the backseat, so they turned over custody of their son to Daniel’s mother. Daniel and his wife looked around. They found themselves childless, homeless, and desperate for a fix. They decided to go to one of their dealers and created a plan. They would keep an eye on his supply, and they would have a place to stay in his stash house.

One day in his newfound position as stash guard, he was on an errand for his dealer when a police

officer scanned his license plate, lighting up multiple warrants for parking tickets and subsequent failures to appear in court. Daniel was arrested and thrown into Wright Street Jail in Marietta, where he had no choice but to detox. Dazed, confused, and in and out of consciousness, he spent the following 14 days in a Douglas County jail.

After doing his time in jail in Marietta and Douglas County, Daniel was then transported to Atlanta City Jail to face the next two felonies and three misdemeanors on his record. It was there that a glimmer of hope shone through, they would clear his charges if he agreed to treatment. Daniel realized by now he was ready to be clean, so he agreed. When he got out of jail, he went back to the trap house. He had a wife to take care of, and he planned to convince her to get clean with him. When he got there, Daniel’s phone rang. It was alum of The Extension, “He spoke to me like a real person.” It made Daniel think, maybe there was a way that he could do this.

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The fact of the matter is in any situation in life, it's easy to point out the problem, but to have a solution... is a completely different thing.

And when he was ready, it was the alumna who drove Daniel to The Extension for his admissions interview where he was accepted that day.

When Daniel arrived, he was surrounded by people who knew what he was feeling and going through. He remembers his first Power Hour, which is not your regular meeting. It is guest speakers, testimonies, and a transition ceremony. Clients are able to draw energy, momentum, and motivation from the alumni.

he learned at The Extension and learn from it, not use from it. In the past he would have turned to heroin to self soothe, but now, he can face his problems head on. Daniel knows that drugs and alcohol are no longer solutions to his problems.

“Solution is key. The fact of the matter is in any situation in life, it’s easy to point out the problem, but to have a solution, to want a solution, or to accept a solution, is a completely different thing.”

He recalls the palpable energy that rises when people transition from The Extension back into the world. The brotherhood, he was beginning to understand, was exemplified by the first two brothers he met in recovery. Going through Power Hour, “they even came back to share with us their stories” of living sober. Talking with them reinforced to Daniel he could do this.

Fast forward to today, and his new life since his own transition. Daniel doesn’t crave or need alcohol and drugs anymore. He might think about them sometimes, but they no longer have power or purpose in his life. There are people who he can count on and people who count on him. He knows just because he is living sober doesn’t mean that he won’t still make mistakes, but the difference lives in being able to take what

Now, Daniel has a loving wife and kids who he gets to be a dad for. Although he doesn’t get to come back to The Extension often, Daniel says it’s important not just for the people going through recovery to know about it, but its important for everyone to hear the message of recovery. He spreads the message through his kids, as a baseball coach, and at his job. Daniel now uses gratitude as the lens for his life. It helps him filter through his emotions and approach them with care.

As any parent can attest to, everything comes back to his kids. He says he “tenth-steps” his kids all the time. Instead of telling his kids to “... do this or do that,” he comes alongside them and helps them find a solution. It’s been 6 years since his recovery journey started. Daniel knows that he’s been given a new life, and he doesn’t take it for granted.

Please post at your church or place of business. Thanks!

A Little Competition Goes a Long Way

Make collecting items for The Extension fun!



AT THE OFFICE:

Team Peanut Butter vs Team Jelly | Team Soap vs Team Deodorant



IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD:

Left Side of the Street: fill up your porch with toilet paper

Right Side of the street: fill up your porch with paper towels



AT YOUR CHURCH:

Challenge your small group to compete with another with

“Undie Sunday” new men/women’s underwear or

“Sock It to me Sunday” new men/women’s socks



*A complete list can be found at theextension.org

Email Betsy@theextension.org or call 678-410-7520

Make a donation to The Extension...SUPPORT SOBRIETY.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

I pledge \$ _____ per month quarter year

I would like to be sent a reminder of my pledge.

I would like someone from The Extension to contact me.

I made an online donation at www.theextension.org

Please mail to: The Extension, P.O. Box 793, Marietta, GA 30061

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Volunteers needed TO PREPARE AND SERVE DINNER & BREAKFAST.

It's Easy!

Just visit our website to view dates available: TheExtension.org/support-us/meals or you may also call 770-590-9075 or email mallory@theextension.org to volunteer!



The Extension is a non-profit, tax exempt organization as described in the internal revenue code in section 501(c) (3). The Extension, Inc. is governed by a volunteer board of directors.

Comments or questions about this newsletter or any of the functions of the Extension, Inc. are encouraged, please send correspondence to the information below.

The Extension | 1507 Church Street Extension
P.O. Box 793 | Marietta, GA 30061 | 770-590-9075

David Schwickerath, *Board Chair*

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A member of our staff or Board of Directors would love to come to speak to your group about issues related to homelessness, addiction and recovery. Give us a call at 770-590-9075.



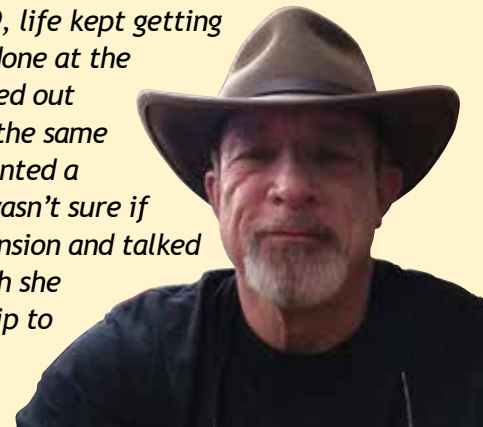
Hank Arnold & Eddie Lee

THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY AND THE RIPPLE EFFECT

THOSE IN RECOVERY KNOW HOW TIGHT KNIT THE COMMUNITY IS, and how vital it is to maintaining their long-term recovery. Support from people who know exactly what you're going through makes all the difference. Community bonds are the ties that hold people together when they feel at their lowest, we lean on one another and support each other. It's a bond so strong that it passes from one person to another, and we may never know how far and wide our impacts on one another go. But here's an example of just how important community is:

Hank Arnold is the founder of Coweta Force, a peer run recovery community organization. Hank will celebrate 13 years of sobriety this January, and since he started his recovery journey, he has been passionate about helping others in recovery find community, hope, and support. He knows that addiction is worse today than it ever has been before, and this motivates him to keep going in his mission to serve those in recovery. And sometimes that service includes a 116-mile roundtrip visit to bring a candidate hoping to be accepted into The Extension.

Alcohol was destroying me. In August of 2019, life kept getting worse. I had known Hank from work he had done at the Coweta jail while I was incarcerated. I reached out to him and said I needed help, but not from the same doors I had been in and out of for years. I wanted a year of help. It was the weekend and Hank wasn't sure if he could find anything. Hank called The Extension and talked to Ms. Stephanie who gave us hope. Although she couldn't guarantee a spot, Hank made the trip to carry me up there. It was just what I wanted and what I knew I needed.



“When people stay connected to service opportunities and communities that support their wellbeing, growth, and recovery, they're more likely to maintain long term recovery. And it's a lot cheaper to maintain recovery than to start using again, or to be arrested.”

To Hank, and to many others, community makes the difference: “Where else can you talk about it? How can you talk to anyone about crystal meth addiction? It was the recovery community, and it was people who weren't in recovery who believed in me. Who doesn't want to make someone else's life better? Who doesn't want to be a part of someone's comeback story?”

I've worked in construction all my life and in the last few years, I have been building movie sets for Tyler Perry, DC/Marvel, and game shows. I have a work family and I was coping with life well. Less than 6 months ago, the doctor discovered I had a blood clot in my left lower calf. After many surgeries, I remember waking up and my leg was gone. Drinking didn't even occur to me. I realized right then that life was going to change.

I was very emotional, I asked God "WHY?" I felt like God was telling me that I was going through a journey. Am I supposed to be a testimony? The outpouring of support from AA, work, the Extension, Coweta Force and my family and friends has been like nothing I could have imagined. My daughter worked from the hospital and never left my side. I knew "I'm not letting this hold me down."



"I work closely with The Extension, and I've seen tremendous outcomes."

— Hank Arnold

Hank knows the importance of building relationships with people. "I work closely with The Extension, and I've seen tremendous outcomes. Coweta Force's first staff member is an alumna of The Extension, and her time here has directly impacted the development of Coweta Force and every person she encounters daily." Hank says she regularly remembers the days when it was hardest to stay. On these days, she recalls the time she spent with Mrs. Wynema, and how she was challenged. It was the direction and support she experienced at The Extension that still influences her today.

"Because of the relationships that we've developed in our community, the last time I referred someone to The Extension, they had some charges on their record. But I was able to call the Assistant District Attorney on his cell phone and make the case for him. Because his charges were directly related to his substance abuse, and because he would be motivated to stick through The Extension, when he finally did go to court, he was only placed on probation."

The recovery community is close knit. They are careful about who they spend their time with and who gets to influence their life because they know the truth of the phrase "you are who you spend your time with."

I can never thank everyone enough for what they've done for me. If I can do it, you can too. — Eddie Lee

Hank had the opportunity to become friends with a couple going through recovery, and even after they moved, they asked Hank to come speak at their 5-year anniversary celebration, shown in the picture. Recovery ties are close, and the ripple effect is huge.



Hank Arnold pictured center.



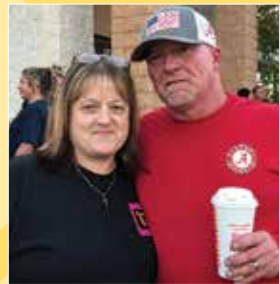
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Connection... IS THE OPPOSITE OF ADDICTION



Alumni Night

FALL 2022