

Success Story: Pamela LeBlanc

Homelessness was the last thing that Pam wanted after a difficult childhood. Pam says that while growing up in Atlanta, she always felt like the black sheep of her family. She grew up with a brother and four sisters under rough circumstances. After surviving an abusive home life and the death of her father, she left home. She traveled to Miami, back to Columbus, Georgia, and after a little while in Alabama, she decided to come home to Atlanta. Without her family to rely on, she instantly became homeless.



Pam slept on the streets for about three months. “It doesn’t feel right—it’s sad. I felt so depressed,” she says about her time being homeless. She struggled with sleeping in uncomfortable places, moving out of a night shelter into a day shelter during the day, and not being able to have a hot meal or a shower. She eventually found her way to the **24/7 Gateway Homeless Services Center**. After sleeping in overflow on the floor of the center, her case manager, Phil Hunter, helped her move to **City of Refuge**, into a transitional housing unit. From there, she began to rebuild.

Since Pam had obtained transitional housing and had a place to start putting her life back together, she began her search for a permanent place. She quickly found an apartment, but said that finding a place was not the end of the story. She needed utilities, furniture, and food. With help from Phil, Pam utilized the **Furniture Bank of Metro Atlanta**, food pantries, and other community services to set up her apartment. Today, as she reflects on her time being homeless, Pam states that her independent spirit and “going to church every Sunday” are what got her through the tough times, and helped her become herself again. Now she is settled and spending her free time volunteering at Georgia Tech football games selling concessions.

Pam states that her goals for the future are to get her GED, a better place to live, and despite her struggles in the past, she wants to help others. Pam hopes that she’ll one day meet someone to whom she can give a hand-up, too. She says, “It’s time to return the favor.”

This story was written using interviews conducted by Celebrating Success volunteers Gary Hiller of UPS Freight, Lynne Alston-Leonard of the Leonard Group, and Abigail Winkles of Georgia State University.

For more information about the Celebrating Success program, contact **Larry Silver** at 404.527.3553 or lsilver@unitedwayatlanta.org.