

## What Family Tree Has Done for Me

For most people when they think of a home they think of a roof and four walls. Although for me and my siblings it's different. Our home isn't a roof and four walls. Our home is our mom. It's our mom's arms in which she holds us and love that is always given.

For me and my siblings, our home isn't made up of a roof and four walls.

Our home is within our mom. Our brave, beautiful, courageous, worthy, kind, loving mom. Our mom, the person who has gone through so many unimaginable things, is still able to provide us a home within her bold and once broken heart.

When I was just a baby my mom had just gotten away from my domestically violent dad. My mom had then found herself homeless with 3 kids. She then went to Family Tree's House of Hope. She was lost and broken and eventually found herself in another abusive relationship. She then became pregnant with my sister and a week before she gave birth to her, she left. She had gone to her mom and stepdad in search of help, but they were just as equally as abusive. After giving birth to my sister, she went to Family Tree's Roots of Courage shelter where she found the help she was looking for. Within 30 days of being at the Roots of Courage shelter she was able to get back on her feet and not too long after she was able to buy an apartment for the first time in a long time. My mom had told me some stories about her life and how Family Tree changed her life for the better. She told me about the first apartment she got after going to the Roots of Courage shelter. She told me, "People provided me with furniture and things I needed and Family Tree provided me with a couch" she had also told me "The very first morning in that apartment I sat down at the table with my coffee and realized in that moment that.... I had made it". These words that were spoken by my mom made me realize just how much Family Tree changed our lives. Not only because Family Tree got us to where we are today but because Family Tree is the reason me and my mom are able to sit at our table every morning and drink a cup of coffee together.

Sometimes I think about what life would be like if we didn't leave, if we never went to House of Hope or the Roots of Courage and all I have thought every time is, I wouldn't be dancing, drawing, painting or doing any of the things I love. I wouldn't have met my best friend in the 2nd grade who's still best friends with me. I wouldn't have any of it. In other words, without Family Tree my life would be completely different.

In 2019, Family Tree renamed Women in Crisis, the domestic violence emergency shelter, to Roots of Courage. It was the perfect name for it because that shelter is where roots of courage were grown and where roots are to be grown. The name was perfect for the shelter because not only was it where my mom's roots of courage were regrown but mine were grown. I don't know exactly how but Family Tree's Roots of Courage shelter is where my roots of courage grew.

Family Tree had helped my mom but in turn was helping me as well. Family Tree in a way got my mom to state where she was able to help me through the worst, she was

able to help me with my trauma. Although she wouldn't have been able to help like she was if it weren't for Family Tree.

Family Tree has changed my life forever. Because of family Tree I have so many amazing opportunities waiting for me in my life. Family Tree is what I am grateful for. I am grateful for what Family Tree has done for my family and me. Without Family Tree we wouldn't be in such a great place. Without Family Tree I wouldn't be in such a great place.

Family Tree has helped my family so much as well as helped many other families. I believe Family Tree can break the cycle and help many more struggling women and children in crisis because I have seen them do it firsthand. I know Family Tree can break the cycle for the next generations to come.

In conclusion, Family Tree is a part of the reason we not only have a roof and four walls but it is also part of the reason why our family is where we are today. Why my mom's roots of courage were rebuilt and mine were grown. Family Tree is the reason my mom is so courageous and brave and beautiful, and why our cycle has broken.