



BEYOND THE WALLS



Lindsey Sizemore

Lindsey Sizemore began her addiction to drugs and alcohol at the age of 13. Due to an unstable home life with an alcoholic mother, she was taken from her home at an early age and lived with friends to complete her high school education. The confusion, anger and pain she felt lead to an accidental overdose and a nearly fatal car crash three days before her high school graduation. She managed to graduate with honors in 2006, but says that she was “so highly medicated” that she has no memory of her graduation day.

Sizemore attempted to pursue an education at Kennesaw State University, but ended up dropping out. She says that she lost jobs, had no money, became homeless and severely addicted to opiates. She engaged in illegal activities to feed her addiction until she was ultimately arrested by the US Marshals in 2014.

“I went from nothing to [multiple felony charges] in a matter of minutes. I was only 24 years old,” said Sizemore.

On September 19, 2014, Sizemore was charged with 2 counts of Violation of the Dangerous Drug Act, with 6 years to serve on probation, concurrent to completing an RSAT (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program) program.

“I was powerless. I felt like a mistake. A few months following my arrest, my mother committed suicide on my birthday. It was the combination [of both events] that made me call out for help in a way I had never done before. I was willing to do anything to change my life.”

Sizemore was assigned to the RSAT at Lee Arrendale State Prison (LASP) in October of 2014. Along with attending the RSAT program, Sizemore also took a Customer Service and Computer Technology class.

“I was able to learn about writing resumes and familiarized myself with basic computer skills so that I could be prepared to go out and look for a job upon my release. It was in adapting to a structured schedule, including waking up early, going to class, studying, taking tests, and having a job as a coordinator of the dorm, that I learned leadership skills and how to prioritize,” says Sizemore.

On July 30, 2015, Sizemore graduated from the RSAT program at LASP and



SIZEMORE SHARING HER RECOVERY STORY WITH OTHERS

was released. She will remain on unsupervised probation until February 2020.

Within one year of being released from LASP, Sizemore became a Certified Peer Specialist of Addictive Disease (CPS-AD). She then became employed at the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network as an Outreach Coordinator for a program called the RESPECT Institute of Georgia. She now supports individuals all over the State of Georgia in sharing their recovery stories to different audiences such as hospitals, universities, community service boards, etc.

“I get to use all my lived experiences of my addiction and incarceration to educate and bring healing to communities on a daily basis. I’ve spoken at jails, prisons, schools, foster homes, rehabs, and even on the steps at the Georgia State Capitol on Addiction Awareness Day,” says Sizemore. “I would have never learned of these opportunities if Lee Arrendale State Prison had not put me with a Forensic Peer Mentor who stood beside me on the inside and the outside and who helped show me a new way of life.”

Sizemore says if she could offer advice to current offenders, she would say “You are enough! It is when you know that you are enough that you stop screaming and you start listening. You are more than a statistic. Be vulnerable and ask for help because you will be surprised at what you find not only inside yourself by this effort but also what an amazing support system you can find when doing this. Hard work will pay off, so stay the course. If I can do this, so can anyone else.”