

A Sobering Journey



This is the heart-wrenching story of a middle-aged woman in the throes of alcoholism. When we met Ms. Doe, she was on the verge of eviction and so inebriated, she had very little memory. She couldn't even remember how she landed in such a desperate state.

Ms. Doe faced many challenges—looming eviction, no support of family or friends, very little memory, heavy drinking, and reliance on the 911 system for support—but despite her dire situation, there was a glimmer of hope. When asked, Ms. Doe was able to communicate that she wanted help. She said from the start she wanted to get sober and start putting her life back together.

It wasn't until our third meeting that Ms. Doe was able to provide useful information about her situation. As case managers, we were desperate for clues so we could start figuring out how to help.

During more sober moments, Ms. Doe was able to tell us that she had been living off her savings, which ran out several months earlier. Due to alcoholism, she lost track of time, stopped paying bills, and stopped caring for herself. She admitted that she had given up. As with most people dealing with addiction, she had succumbed to life's stressors.

Ms. Doe was referred to the [Redmond Fire Station 11 Mobile Integrated Health Team](#) that included Dana Yost, Liz Downs, Jim Moran, Eric Dubee, Andrew Volkening, and me, Nancy Tillman (in other words, two medics, three emergency medical technicians, and one case manager). We sprang into action and started to connect her to the resources we hoped would get her back on track.

The resources we utilized included the [Catholic Community Services Tenant Law Center](#), the [Housing Justice Project](#), [Adult Protective Services](#), an [Asian Counseling and Referral Services](#) chemical dependency counselor, [Sea Mar Turning Point Adult Treatment Center](#), and [Jan and Peter's Place Women's Shelter](#).

There were setbacks along the way. We tried unsuccessfully to help Ms. Doe avoid eviction but pressed on. With the assistance of a chemical dependency counselor, Ms. Doe entered and successfully completed rehab for alcoholism. Six months ago, she transitioned to Jan and Peter's Place Women's Shelter and has remained sober. Now she works part-time and is slowly but surely putting the pieces of her life puzzle back together.

Prior to her eviction, two emergency medical technicians (Jim Moran and Eric Dubee) helped Ms. Doe obtain some of her personal belongings from her apartment and assisted with housing her vehicle at one of the Redmond fire stations until she was ready for it. They returned it to her recently.



Five members of the Redmond Fire Station 11 Mobile Integrated Health Team.

There were highs and lows for Ms. Doe during her journey. Thankfully, she pleasantly accepted our team's recommendations along the way. Because she wanted help, it was easier for us to provide her with the assistance she needed. Today, Ms. Doe is sober and thriving.

Contributor Nancy Tillman is a case manager with Aging and Disability Services—the Area Agency on Aging for Seattle-King County. Nancy spends much of her time working with first responders—especially medics and fire fighters—who have identified older individuals who would benefit from services that support healthy aging and independence.

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