

THE PATH

The Place ignites the potential in youth to exit homelessness and create self-determined, fulfilled lives.



thePLACE
a former affiliate of Urban Peak

A Different World

Trafficked to Turnaround

Christmas day in 2013, Jadon woke up in what he calls “a totally different world.” The night before, his mother dropped him off at The Place (then Urban Peak Colorado Springs). Jadon, 18, told us what life was like leading up to that moment.

“I was a dumb, crazy kid,” Jadon said. “I had a good family with my mom and step-dad. But I thought I could make my own decisions.” He describes feeling that his parents were very strict, and said he reacted with opposition. “I started skipping school. Partying. Drinking. I wanted to be part of a gang-lifestyle.”

Jadon was approached by someone who told him he could make \$5,000 a month selling books and magazines door-to-door. He said his parents warned him about the work. “My mom told me if I move out, I’m choosing to become a man. I can’t expect to come back and things to be the same.”

So Jadon started what he thought would be a great job earning a lot of money. Within a month, he understood that his boss was scamming to take advantage of young people like him, a bit naïve with dreams of



independence. “We were at a train station somewhere in California and they had given me \$5 in the evening so I could eat from of a vending machine.” That is when he called his mother, who purchased a ticket home for him.

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A Different World



family, everybody was smiling. The staff made me feel good even though I was in a bad place in my mind."

He wanted to take the employment path, so Jadon's case managers set him up with various jobs. "It seemed like I never had anything to show for the work in my paycheck. I was accepting that I wouldn't be anybody in life. But I was thankful to have a roof over my head."

The Place provided Jadon a Greyhound bus ticket to Tennessee to see his biological father, thinking he might find a life there. Jadon said he did not know what to expect, but what he found at his father's was not the kind of life he wanted. "I just knew I didn't want to be like

When he arrived at home, Jadon's mother gave him two weeks to gain employment. That failed and she brought him to The Place. On Christmas morning, "I woke up in a totally different world. The staff made it warm and welcoming. They gave me a Christmas box of presents. Even though it was not like sitting with

him. My stepdad is a hard-working man in the Air Force and kept the household together. He was a much better role model for me."

Jadon returned to The Place from Tennessee, motivated to finish high school. He entered GOAL Academy and graduated in 2015. By June 2016, he had saved some money and The Place helped him move into one of its apartment programs. Jadon credits Peggy, his case manager at The Place, with helping him create and stick to a plan and gain stability. "It was a big turnaround in one year. I was working at Comcast and was able to buy a car through a savings plan in the housing program."

**Ent is my career.
I love numbers
and teaching
others to save.**

Jadon is still working through bouts of depression. Now on his own, he still occasionally contacts his case manager just to talk. "Peggy has been good to work things out with," he said. "[The Place] saved my life by getting me into housing."

Earlier this year, Jadon took on a new position as a teller with Ent Credit Union. "Ent is my career. I love numbers and teaching others to save." Jadon is creating a self-determined, fulfilling life because The Place was there for him.

Volunteers Step Up

Even though our volunteers have been temporarily restricted access to the shelter, many are still coming forward to help us meet our basic needs.

Volunteers have stepped up, by bringing food to the shelter, or ordering dinner from local restaurants and having it delivered to the shelter. Additionally, some individuals have been supplying items from the posted list of needs on our website. Groups pooled resources to buy lunch and recreational equipment during this unusual time.

If you are a current volunteer, or have been one in the past, and would like to support The Place, please contact Sarah Obarski, sarah.obarski@theplacecos.org.

We are deeply grateful that you have continued to think of our clients at a time when so many are in need! Thank you for all of your kind and generous donations!



From the Desk of Shawna Kemppainen, Executive Director

Commitment Through Crisis

Walking the path to changed trajectories



I hope you read Jadon's story on page one. Through his vulnerable honesty, we get to see how changing the trajectory of our lives is possible. At some point in our journey, most of us fall, get in our own way, or have trouble show up, disguised as hope. For Jadon, his hope for fast financial independence made him susceptible to the lure of labor traffickers operating a magazine "sales" crew.

Peggy, Jadon's case manager, walked with him through decisions that showed what it might look like to have a career and a place of his own. Now, Jadon is successfully launching a career at Ent Credit Union, a company which also financially supports The Place.

Our priority is the safety and health of youth and staff.

Our specialized teams help young people experiencing homelessness to navigate housing, health, employment, education and emotional stability every day. **That did not stop because of COVID-19.**

The Coronavirus-caused physical distancing, business closures, need for abundant, extra and costly precautions have impacted much of our daily lives. For the youth we serve, it is one more obstacle they must overcome. I am so proud of our staff who are selflessly showing up to work every day providing the services that young people like Jadon need to make a better life for themselves.

Since early March, we have adjusted our staffing protocols to meet the needs of the current pandemic; created robust sanitation schedules and purchased extra equipment and supplies; put an isolation protocol in place with the help of the CU School of Medicine, Colorado Springs special team; set a plan and place if mass numbers of young people become ill; helped youth create productive and fun work plans while "staying home" at the shelter; and volunteers have shifted from working directly with our clients to providing key supplies and prepared meals.

Our priority is the safety and health of youth and staff. We are committed to continuing the life-saving services that young people need, which are now more critical than ever. Between March 1st and April 30th:

- 92 youth were supported via street outreach and drop in services
- 35 youth entered our shelter
- 7 youth moved into housing

You, and many other supporters, have helped keep our work functioning without missing a beat. Thank you for continuing to believe in our work and helping us tell many more stories like Jadon's.



423 East Cucharas St
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Return Service Requested

COMING
July 16, 2020



YES! We are still having the Off The Street breakfast — but it will be a little different this year. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!

**Table Captains, contact Courtney Deuser at
Courtney.Deuser@thplacecos.org**

**To learn more about sponsorship, contact Andy Petersen at
Andy.Petersen@theplacecos.org**

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