

Shannon Lundin White

Kerry J. Bickford, VOICES Editor

While writing this piece about Shannon Lundin White for this month's newsletter, I read her words in "I am Not Anonymous," (2015). It is an inspiring story - but it doesn't stop there. It only gets better.

Shannon has been in recovery since she was 25 years old (2004) — when the disease of addiction, as she put it, "brought me to my knees." "Everyone around me was dying but I really should have been the one to die. I have a big God," said Shannon, "and He showed me my purpose."

Her mother took temporary custody of her only daughter at the time (Laneigh) and prayed for her while Shannon entered treatment in May of 2004. She transitioned into the Meridian House soon after, where, according to her, "I was a sneaky, manipulative liar and I was the most challenging resident they (Meridian) had ever worked with up to that point." But after 15 months of behavior modification therapy, sitting with herself and facing her demons - she was determined to graduate, which she did - in 2005.

After Meridian House, she lived in a sober home and did some community service hours at Rosie's Place in compliance with court-mandated restitution. She was hired by the Charlestown Coalition where she worked for fourteen years, eventually becoming the Program Manager of Addiction and Recovery Services. She helped build "unbreakable networks of support" when COVID 19 created barriers for people with addiction in 2020. Together, with other community stakeholders, they built relationships and resources, developed appropriate levels of care, and designed wrap-around services for people who needed them.

Shannon remembers and honors so many friends from childhood in her outreach, including Izzy, Licka, Paul, Joe, Charlene, Alex, and Brian. More recently she has lost dear friends Mikey D, Chris and Mike P., and before that her best friend, Jill, in 2015, and lifetime friend and father of her two oldest daughters, "Timmy" in 2016, who was preceded by his brother (Matt) and sister (Kelly) over a period of 13 years. Shannon was close to all of them, eulogizing several at their services. She still carries their pictures, memories, and a commitment to sobriety as she continues her own personal journey. "God spared me for a reason," says Shannon, who has now been in recovery for 17 years and has spent every single one of them paying it forward.

She is quick to point out that she could not have done this without the love, support, and prayers of her mother, who died shortly before Shannon gave birth to her second child, Oliviah. But she continued to feel her mother's presence and moved forward, eventually marrying Mark White in 2017 and adding twin daughters to her growing family of girls.

"When I found out I was having two more girls, I was overwhelmed, but then I realized that God chose to give me all girls because He needed a strong woman to raise up more strong women.

All I ever wanted to be was a good mother, and I am the one who is truly blessed because I get to be Laneigh, Oliviah, Tatum, and Brynn's mother."

These days, Shannon has taken on another new role - as the Director of Recovery and Community Engagement at Chapters Recovery Center in Danvers. She and Smokey Cain, her former colleague at the Charlestown Coalition, co-facilitate a support group for The Sun Will Rise Foundation, where she provides peer support and comfort to others, like her, who have lost loved ones to overdose. She is a devoted daughter, wife, friend, and mother, but she is so much more than this.: "I rely on my personal relationship with Jesus to help others," Shannon said. Her determination, grit, and spirituality remind me of something I read that goes like this:

"I love when people who have been through hell walk out of the flames carrying buckets for those still consumed by the fire." (Stephanie Sparkles)
I honestly couldn't have said it any better than that.