

# Lynette

## What were your circumstances prior to coming to the Coalition?

I spent quite a bit of time couch surfing between several friends who would allow me to. Besides not having my own place, it was difficult to remain out of the personal lives and drama of those I was staying with and remaining neutral. It was also very difficult to maintain my own identity and dignity throughout this process.

## How long did you stay at the Food & Care Coalition and in what ways did this impact you?

The first word that comes to mind – SAFE. Physically, I was removed from those who would cause me harm; safe emotionally as I had a reprieve and opportunity to construct a new life rather than just surviving each day. I also had time to regroup from what I had lost and work towards success. I stayed for 4 months prior to getting into my own place. My fellow residents and the staff both treated me with respect. I would describe it as “compassion without pity.”

## Where are you now – what has changed since you left?

It took me a couple of months to adjust to being on my own. Looking back, I can't believe how far I've come since I first checked in at the Coalition. I have purpose to my life, I feel productive again, and I enjoy having my own individual identity. The process of decorating my new place and re-establishing my personal identity isn't something I will take for granted anymore. I hadn't realized how much of this I had lost during the time I was homeless. There were many who performed kind acts that did not go unappreciated. The staff took us for a movie and gave us a gift card to get our own treats; there was Thanksgiving dinner at Molly's Restaurant and Christmas Eve dinner at Magleby's – just two of the many businesses that reached out with compassion and were part of the experience created by the Coalition. These experiences helped me to feel normal and worthy of re-entering society as opposed to that feeling of being invisible.

**Thank you to all the volunteers, donors, staff, and client who made this success story possible!**



“To anyone in my situation, there is more compassion and understanding and programs at your disposal – take advantage of them. I experienced some loving, humanitarian oriented people who really cared about me which was very touching”.

- Lynette