



Holly Sutton and son, Trevor Jefferson County

Five years ago I was a *homeless, hopeless junkie* fighting a 14 year meth addiction as well as alcoholism, pills, cocaine, and whatever I could use to get high. I was a single mother dragging my son from hotel to hotel, from living at the dealer's house to living on the streets. Often I'd go to casinos to get us out of the cold – sleeping in the stairwells and stealing the leftover food from room service trays so we could eat. I was out of control; absolutely lost.

From the time I was old enough to remember, I was living in a home full of physical and mental abuse. Three times in my life I attempted suicide. The last time, in 1997, I was dead when they found me. My body had already completely shut down and I was in a coma for 12 days.

I went to jail (again) in September of 2006 and got out in December. My son was living with his Dad since I had gone to jail. I was broke, homeless, and hopeless. With God's hand in my life, I swore I wasn't going to touch the drugs ever again, but that promise only lasted about 3 days. I got high for about 2 weeks until God spoke to my heart so loud telling me this was not his plan for me. So, in January 2007, I called so many places trying to get into rehab and, finally, I got in.

My clean date is January 17, 2007, and for that I am so grateful. I moved to Arkansas with my son in September 2007 to be close to family. Since then we have joined a church and I've held down a state job for nearly 4 years.

After making these life changes, I decided that it was time for me to take the next step and further my education. I knew that in order to make a better life for my son and myself I would need to go to school. I wanted to show my son as well as myself that getting an education is

important. I started out taking one 3 hour course a semester. My son was in the 4th grade at the time. I took a class one night a week and after about a year and a half I moved from one class a semester to two.

I was searching the web for scholarships and came across the **Single Parent Scholarship Fund**. I found out that in order to qualify for this scholarship in my county, I would have to be enrolled in at least 9 hours a semester. So that I could apply for the scholarship, with hesitation, I did. I took one class on my lunch, one at night and one online. I had never taken an online class and was scared, but I am proud to say that I successfully completed 9 hours and maintained a 4.0 GPA. ***I was so happy!***

The next semester I enrolled in 12 hours and then 15 the semester after that. I am striving to accomplish my goal of graduating top of my class and in less time than I had initially thought. With the encouragement of the Single Parent Scholarship Committee to pursue taking more hours and the encouragement and rewards for striving to have the highest GPA, I am now an advanced junior, with honors.

I feel **empowered** in my life by going to college and receiving my degree. I have goals and plans for my life. My son is proud of his mom and I **love** being a mother. I have recently *bought a home and am solely supporting my family*. I plan to enter the master's program in criminal justice as soon as I have completed my undergraduate degree, with a goal to teach criminal justice at the college level. I know with determination and hard work that goal will become a reality. I thank the **Single Parent Scholarship Fund** for helping to make my college endeavor successful and for the **encouragement** and **financial support** I've been given.