

BFL TH Newsletter

barrier free living



Winter 2017

A word from our director LeShan Gaulman:

In the years that I have been in service at Barrier Free Living, I have seen many residents come through the door angry, frustrated, confused and scared. Although many of them do not admit the latter, they exhibit behaviors that alert me to approach each of them in a unique manner. I believe that each resident is a unique individual with distinct life circumstance that leads them to our program.

The resident population of Barrier Free Living-Transitional Housing has been diverse throughout the years. We provided services to residents from all walks of life and from all over the country and world. We have helped everyone from movie actors, bike messengers to beauty pageant contestants. We have provided services to residents from countries and cities in Central and South America, Africa, England, Russia and many cities and states across The United States, from Harlem, New York City to Hollywood, California.

With a diverse population under one roof and my dedication to providing quality services, I attempt to meet with every client upon their admission and I try to remain abreast of the status of each of their cases either through face to face conversations with them or through a conversation with their case manager. No matter their background, each one of residents is deserving of the quality services that Barrier Free Living and their partners have to offer. Although many of the residents may not always agree with the manner in which some services are delivered, I want them to know that I have their best interest in mind and their situation inspires me to come to the program to provide services that are respectful, empathic and dignified.

There is no perfect system and working in such a complex system as this one, I try to find balance in the work that I do in order to ensure that every client is receiving what they need and more. I try to perform at an optimal level on a daily basis and I strive to maintain, if not exceed, that level throughout my tenure at Barrier Free Living to ensure that every resident's temporary shelter stay is one that helps them regain the dignity that they may have lost along the rough and rugged roads of their lives. I hope that by the time each resident secures permanent housing, they would have been helped by the staff at Barrier Free Living to overcome or at least learned how to manage the areas of their lives that may have been problematic prior to them entering the system.

As the winter approaches and things may look hard know that there is light at the end of the tunnel and things will turn out good. Here's what some of our staff members and residents have to say about challenges.....



A word from some our staff members:

The clients and staff needs to reinforce a positive outlook, asking many questions to really understand the problem, think logically, mistakes happen, focus on the end game and if you don't find success, start over again. The client must be honest and realistic because the truth always appears one way or another-Rosalie Williams, Case Manager

During my short period of time at BFL it has shown me that too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.- Yesenea Esquivel, ICS MSW

I find it quite inspiring of how some of our residents overcome challenges. Regardless of their current situation, they push through and they don't give up. Now, I consider that true inspiration. - Jeanette Cajas, Administrative Assistant

I watch how our resident's overcome challenges and I am truly in awe. They work so hard to push themselves and overcome their life situations. They are so motivated to move past their disability and accomplish. – Sarah Jacobson, OTS

Getting to know the residents and the various challenges they face in their everyday life is inspiring and heartwarming. Working on their goals and assisting them is an experience not only for the residents, but also for me. – Janu Gurung, OTS



A word from some of our residents:



➤ As a child coming to the new land, not knowing the land, having all the odds against me, being discriminated by others of many races I overcame many challenges. I learnt how to survive. I learnt how to speak the language. I started working at a very young age. I would clean three buildings, 5 floors for \$15 a week. I would give the money to my mom who was a single parent to help her pay the bills. I got myself another job in the supermarket, earning a little more. I started growing and I would find a way of getting things done. Time passed I grew up and I always strived to be the best in my responsibilities. My work ethic was always beyond the expectation. I always was on a high level. I have many skills and later on in life I came in contact with a deadly bacterium and became paralyzed. The bacteria took control of me at first it was on the surface of my skin. While I was getting treated the bacteria got inside my body. Eventually, it got to my lower spine. It was very painful; the doctors had to remove two bones from my lower spine. The outcome of the operation was to be paralyzed. It was very hard to accept being paralyzed. I couldn't settle being bound to a wheelchair for the rest of my life. Being the type of person I always was, always getting things done and accomplishing beyond the call of duty, I pushed myself and I decided that I couldn't live in a wheelchair. So I motivated myself and prayed to God for strength and courage to give me the strength to overcome my incapacity. So, I started attacking my witnesses I started attacking my pain. I didn't let the pain cripple me; instead I took over the pain. I started exercising with a walker; it was difficult and hard but I didn't let that hold me back. It took months, it took years but I still kept going. At this point, I am able to walk several blocks without a wheelchair or without using a cane even though I have equilibrium and balance problems. I want to give a message to all those out there "do not be discouraged, do not give in, I know it's difficult but you can accomplish it , think if you do give in life will be harder in a wheelchair".- Hector X.

➤ To overcome challenges they must be looked at like obstacles rather roadblocks. An obstacle requires intelligence to get around, whereas a roadblock requires a second or third party to unblock. When exactly possible roadblocks or what looks like roadblocks at first, can be turned into an obstacle that one can go around to reach one's goals in everyday life of the disabled person as myself. When care is pressing you down a bit, rest if you must but please don't quit. Life is greater with its twists and turns as many of us learn, don't lose self in the silver tint in the cloud of doubt when you might have one had you stuck it out. Don't give up because the pace seems slow, when you may succeed with one more blow, with the higher self not the low.- Terell



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