



**“Everything I owned
was gone and I didn’t
know what to do.”**

- Dawn

COULEECAP HELPS WHEN LIFE CHANGES IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

Sometimes life can change in the blink of an eye. That was the reality that Dawn faced in 2014 when her boyfriend of six years passed away unexpectedly. The tragedy shook Dawn to her core and she lost her job. Dawn found herself depressed and unemployed in just one month. Still reeling from tragedy with no way to pay the rent, and knowing that local shelters would not allow her to bring in her only remaining companion, she and her cat, Jasper, found themselves homeless.

Dawn’s health suffered from her time on the streets and the stress of survival took its toll. With her belongings in a storage unit and winter approaching, it was more and more difficult for Dawn to take care of herself. But parting with Jasper was not an option. Jasper had been the one constant in her life through everything. “I felt abandoned, I needed Jasper. Every day was a trial – just to see if I could make it through another day.”

During the day, Dawn kept Jasper in the storage unit and visited frequently to feed and check on her friend. It was not long before Jasper’s presence was noticed and reported to the humane society. The cat went into a foster home, but Dawn did not know Jasper’s location. She was devastated by the loss of her companion.

After living in a tent for many months, Dawn received the news she had been waiting on. She was next in line for housing in Couleecap’s Housing First program. A Couleecap case manager helped her move into her new apartment and that night as it rained, Dawn remembers feeling thankful because she was inside, safe, and dry. For once, she was not in fear for her safety. While living outdoors, she had carried all her possessions and prescriptions in a backpack that was also her pillow each night. Now she did not have to be scared that her precious things would be stolen.

The best day of her life came a few days later when, with the help of her Couleecap case manager, Jasper came home. Now reunited with her companion, Dawn could attend to her health in a way she wasn’t able to when she was homeless. Dawn worked to control her diabetes and depression by taking her medications regularly. Dawn’s case manager helped her fill out paperwork documenting her disability, which was approved.

Dawn knows programs like Housing First are only possible because of generous and caring community partners. “You can change someone’s life and give them a new start. Without Couleecap I’d be dead, I would have taken my own life.”

Today Dawn’s physical and mental health continues to improve. Now with income, she can visit her mother in Black River Falls, something she had not been able to do while homeless, and she finds joy in the little things such as buying a cup of coffee for herself and taking care of Jasper. She is working with her Couleecap case manager on her long-term plans.

Dawn is just one of the hundreds of people whose lives are changed every year by Couleecap homeless programs. Couleecap is the only provider of long-term supportive housing in the Coulee Region and has over 30 years of experience serving people like Dawn. Your support enables this work.

Couleecap
your local community *action* program



A United Way member agency

A equal opportunity employer and service provider.

Auxiliary aids and services available upon request.

Our Mission

Couleecap fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency, economic development, and social justice. We are **People Helping People**, and every day our actions make a difference in the lives of people and families throughout the Coulee Region.