



City of Angels

Children of
Addictions



Paulie's Story

This story is from Paul K. Tessein Sr., co-founder of City of Angels NJ, Inc.

I was introduced to alcohol at age eight when my grandfather gave me my first sip of beer. I fell in love with it and knew that I had acquired a taste for alcohol. I remember, I couldn't wait to go to my grandparents to get the little nip of Rolling Rock.

At the age of 11 I experienced a traumatic event. A family friend hurt me in a way that would change my life for many years. Having to deal with the horrible pain that consumed my young mind, I didn't know how to make it stop. Drunk by the age of 13, I turned to alcohol to deal with the pain and emotion of what I was experiencing. With each drink it hurt a little less. From that point on I was hooked and alcohol began to take over my life. Drinking was all I thought about. I remember drinking vodka from my parent's cabinet and replacing it with water.

Sports had been very big part of my life, especially soccer. I traveled all over playing soccer. I made All State by my sopho-

more and junior years.

By my senior year I was all but locked up for All American but quit because of my alcohol addiction. Instead of going off to college I went to work for my father in construction. My life had taken a turn that I never expected.

The consequences of my addiction were felt by everyone around me. The impact it had on my family was devastating. I had fantastic parents. They loved, cared and nurtured me. One event will be etched in my memory forever. I was 18-years-old, drunk and injured from a bar fight. I called my brother for help and expected him to come with a friend but instead he brought my father. My father took me in the car and pulled over and told me that I was killing him! He grabbed me and said "Paulie you are going to be the death of me!" I didn't say a word.

I will never forget the look of disappointment on his face as he scolded me for how my life was going. Later that night the unthinkable happened. My father passed away due to a heart at-

tack. His last words rang true, my actions killed him

The guilt associated with my father's death sent me into a tailspin where alcohol wasn't enough to handle the pain anymore. Alcohol and drugs again became my comfort. This continued for the next five years. I was angry and it showed in my self destructive behavior. I knew I was killing myself.

This abusive behavior continued until I finally didn't care any more. I was at the end of my rope and wanted to die. With a gun to my head, I sat there contemplating whether or not to pull the trigger. Not knowing what to do, I dialed 0. When the operator answered and asked "what is the nature of your emergency?" I responded, "I'm dying." She asked for my location and said she would send an ambulance but I told her that she didn't understand. I had to explain that I was an alcoholic and that I was going to die as a result of abusing alcohol and drugs.

The woman stayed on the phone with me and directed me to get help. She gave me a list of treatment facilities. I called the first place on the list but there were no beds available so I called the next place on the list and was fortunate to get a bed at the Carrier Foundation.

When I got off the phone, I got down on my knees and prayed to God for the first time in five years. I asked God to take this obsession away from me and help me get through this. I told God that if he helped me, I would be forever indebted. I promised that, for the rest of my life, I would do his bidding and help others struggling with addiction.

March 20 of that year was my first day without a drink of alcohol and also five years to the day my dad died and the start of my 28 days learning about who I was and what made me do the things I did.

During that time I wanted to stay clean and never use again. They taught me how to do that but told me unless I followed a 12-step program and found a sponsor and made meetings I would never stay clean. When I was discharged from Carrier I began the start of my life. I went back to work and became a good employee. I became a good father and friend. I was 11 months clean when I had my first test in my sobriety. I was

run over by a truck where I suffered a very bad head injury that would keep me from work for two years and now have a seizure disorder. By the grace of God and the miracle of the 12-step fellowship I was able to get through that low point in my life. I was able to get through those few years without relying on alcohol or any kind of drugs. Staying clean has brought me many gifts and has allowed me to a very humble man today.

I remember a conversation with a friend of mine in 2003 when he asked me if there was anything that would ever make me drink or use drugs again. I sat there for a moment and told him yes! I think if I was told I ever had cancer I would say lets go for it! Life takes you on an interesting journey and you never know what will happen next.

In May 2005, I had major back surgery and had rods, screws and cages placed in my spine. It was a painful experience and after the surgery the doctors unhooked the IV and the pain was unbearable. I wasn't nervous about taking medication I was nervous about using narcotics again.

After battling back from this injury life took another unexpected twist. In December 2005, I found a strange lump in my neck. I decided it would be best if I went to see a doctor about the lump in my neck. The doctor examined me and I could see the look on his face and knew it wasn't going to be good. He said to me you have cancer in your thyroid and lymph nodes and need to see a surgeon.

After my successful surgery I had the opportunity to turn to pain medications that are highly addictive. I chose not to use those pain medications. I had come too far and battled too hard to turn back to medications that were not good for me.

Today, I am still clean, sober and working my 12-step program. Throughout my 22 years of sobriety I have helped everyone I could. I have dedicated my life to helping those who are in need. God is amazing and puts people in your life for a reason. My friend, and co-founder of City of Angels NJ, Inc, Joy Tozzi, has always been supportive of my efforts to help others. One day she told me that I reminded her of the angel in the movie "City of Angels." She talked about how selfless and non judgmental they were and

that they were there just to help. She suggested that I watch the movie. I watched the movie and it captured my soul instantly.

On June 30, 2008, my world was rocked by the death of K.C. Meara, my best friend's son. KC was a young beautiful boy who called me Uncle Paulie. KC struggled with alcohol and drug addiction and resulted with his death. I had the most wonderful talk with KC and his parents two weeks prior. KC and I shared so many stories and I learned more about him in those two hours and that conversation I will carry and cherish forever. He told me how he hated being the way he was and just wanted to be normal again. He told me how much he loved his mother. He told me how proud he was that his father became an elected official again. He said how much he loved his brother and sister but felt like he was letting them all down.

Knowing how KC felt I could only share with him my experience my strength and my hope as it was past onto me by others in the 12-step program. The last thing I said to KC before he departed to Florida was to please call me before you use because I will be the call to save your life and KC said to me: "Uncle Paulie I am going to help people like you some day! Do you think I will?" I grabbed him by his head and said to him of course I do KC. I will never forget that phone call as long as I shall live.

KC's death changed all of our lives. I told his father in a time when he was hurting so badly that KC's was not in vain because he is going to help so many people through his death.

Several months after KC's death, I was driving to New York on my way for a cancer check to Sloan-Kettering and I looked up to see a beautiful billboard of an Angel — it was amazing. At that moment God spoke to me and I knew we needed more to accomplish his work. It was then we started to take a more aggressive approach with creating an organization to help people with addiction. I want to say to anyone who may feel alone and scared that City Of Angels is here to help guide you to a better way without drugs and alcohol.

Sincerely,

Paul K Tessein Sr.
Co-Founder
City of Angels NJ, Inc.



ROCKFEST

<p>HEADLINING Sherry St. John <i>(www.SherryStJohn.com)</i></p>	<p>FEATURING Magician Matt Schick <i>(www.magicofmatt.com)</i></p>
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**The Solution
Cyclopean Seed
Scott Rednor
Driven
Walter Brookes
Rodney and Eva**

Date: Saturday, August 1st *(rain or shine)*
Time: 12:00 PM-7:00 PM
Where: Tall Cedars Grove
245 Sawmill Road, Hamilton, NJ 08620

**Tickets: \$15.00 per person
\$25.00 per couple
\$30.00 family (2 adults, 2 children)
\$5.00 each additional child
Children under 5 are free**

**For tickets contact: CashelSchmittinger@cityofangelsnj.org
or call (609) 910-4942**
Tickets can also be purchased at the door.
Alcohol is not permitted