

# ENHANCED SERVICES FACILITIES: A Resident's Story



Enhanced services facilities, or ESFs, are small, community-based residential homes for up to 16 individuals who have long-term care and behavioral needs. Residents benefit from support and services from trained caregivers and other professional staff, but don't need the type of care offered in an institutional setting or behavioral health facility. Individuals may choose to live in an ESF after they are deemed stable enough to leave the state hospital. Facilities determine whether they can safely meet the needs of the residents who they admit into the home.

## ENHANCED SERVICES FACILITIES IN ACTION

### VANCOUVER ESF RESIDENT FINDS STRENGTH THROUGH FAMILY

Through her family, Jenny, a Home and Community Services Client living in Vancouver, has found the strength to tackle her mental health and substance use issues.

Jenny grew up in Battle Ground, near Vancouver, with her parents and a brother and sister. Her brother and sister still live in the Vancouver area, along with Jenny's 11 nieces and nephews who range in age from 2 to 18.

"They mean everything to me," Jenny said of her nieces and nephews, who she refers to as "my kids." She visits her family and her two dogs, who currently live with her sister, every weekend. Jenny spends the time catching up and playing soccer and basketball with her nephews.

Jenny's parents also lived in the area until they both died two years ago. Her mom was, and still is, her rock, and Jenny said she is still coming to terms with her mother's death.

"I just really miss my mom," she said. "She did everything for those kids. She taught them so much stuff, to bake, to do a little bit of gardening. She was just a really good grandma and mom. Whenever I don't feel good, I just have to think of her."

Jenny's family keep her grounded and serve as a reminder of why she's working so hard on her health. After she was laid off on her birthday one year, she had what she describes as a "complete breakdown." Her parents sent her to Eastern State Hospital, where she stayed for 3 months. In the years following, Jenny sought further mental health treatment and treatment for her drug abuse.

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Jenny was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, which has the symptoms of schizophrenia and mood disorder. She described feeling like the government was watching her and hearing voices 24 hours a day, while also experiencing extreme anxiety.



Two years ago, after a stay at Western State Hospital, Jenny went to live at Orchard Highlands Enhanced Services Facility in Vancouver. Enhanced services facilities are a relatively new category of licensed residential facility in Washington state and they are intended to provide care for individuals like Jenny, who need assistance with personal care and behavioral health and who also want to live in a community setting.

Through hard work, therapy and medication, Jenny feels like she has improved a lot. She took up crochet as a way to deal with her anxiety – it was either that or pace and smoke, she said. One year, she crocheted 50 hats that she gave to her nieces and nephews. She focused on improving her health and wellness, and found that socializing helped her with her symptoms.

“It was chaos inside my mind,” Jenny said. “That’s gotten better, a lot better.”

These days, Jenny has settled into life at Orchard Highlands. She works about 15 hours a week at Taco Bell, where she does dishes, fries chips and takes out the garbage. She is hoping to improve on her high school Spanish so she can talk with her Spanish-speaking co-workers.

She is also setting goals for the future, both in the short term and the long term. She wants to start crocheting again and plans to go kayaking in the Deschutes River this summer. She used to jet ski, but decided to try kayaking instead, since it’s better for the environment. She would like to quit smoking.

In the longer term, Jenny hopes someday she can work with people who have had similar struggles to her own. She’s not in a rush, though.

“I think it’s going to be a while before I take that first step,” she said. “This place is supposed to get you used to being in society again.”

When reflecting on the progress she has made, there’s one person Jenny wishes she could talk with, and that’s her mom. If they could have one last conversation, Jenny said she would tell her, “I’m off drugs, I’ve been going to church, I have a job and I’m happy. Most of all, she just wants me to be happy.”

## IN HER WORDS

If Jenny could tell her mom one thing, it would be this: “I’m off drugs, I’ve been going to church, I have a job and I’m happy. Most of all, she just wants me to be happy.”