



## MEET HERMAN SOTO

A native of Brea, Herman Soto has been sober since November 10, 2015. It's an achievement he's grateful for and one he doesn't take for granted.

"I liked to do my own thing from an early age, and also enjoyed getting away with things," says Herman. "I grew up around a lot of parties and music, and would sip on beers that I opened for relatives. Around the age of 12, I started drinking with my dad, and my older brother also partied. By the time I was in junior high, I started smoking pot and doing meth. Partying was normal for my friends and me – it was a goal."

Then, Herman got to the point where life wasn't one big party anymore.

In his mid-20s, Herman was arrested for both possession of meth and for committing fraud. He was in and out of jail for about the next nine years, working at times but never able to hold a job long-term. Never homeless, he was always able to stay at his parents' home when he was not in jail – but they also encouraged him to face his problems and find a way to deal with them. In 2011, he detoxed at Woodglen Recovery Junction, and started turning his life around. He got off probation and parole, and even started a loan modification business. Then, two years in, he started drinking again.

Within a few months, Herman was back on probation and parole. He went into another program in 2014, but continued to drink and also started doing meth again.

In 2015, Herman was referred to the Drug Court program, which included receiving treatment at Woodglen. "The program provided the structure I needed," says Herman. He made his first serious commitment to AA, started being of service, participated in panels, and more. "The Drug Court program changed my perspective and made all the difference," he explains. He's also been working in sales and marketing, currently for the Express Marketing Group.

Herman met his wife Roxi through the recovery community; they have been married since 2022. Together, they are committed to their mutual faith in God, being pet parents to their dog Cookie, and taking an annual vacation. (They took Roxi's daughter to Oahu earlier this year, the first time in Hawaii for any of them; a seven-day cruise is next.) Their social life revolves around friends from recovery, including a monthly poker game they host, an annual Friendsgiving event at their home (a tradition since 2021), and a Christmas party with a white elephant gift exchange. Herman enjoys his role as stepdad to Roxi's two children, graciously helping out financially whenever he can.

Herman has known Action Alliance Foundation's Founder George Folk since 2011, crossing paths at men's retreats and other recovery activities. After playing a key role in AAF's first annual Octsoberfest (he coordinated the event's food and beverage and was grill master extraordinaire, alongside his AA sponsee), Herman was asked to serve on the AAF board in late 2023. He readily accepted. "I'm glad to be part of something bigger through my board role," he explains. "I'm following in George's footsteps by giving back however I can."