

MICHAEL

Before connecting with Action Alliance, Michael describes his life as a “hot mess.”

A former foster youth who began drinking in junior high, Michael initially considered himself a functioning alcoholic – he had gotten married and started a family, and was able to work every day. But after work, he would come home and drink until he passed out.

When his then-wife’s grandmother became ill, the family met, and decided that Michael was the best candidate to be her caregiver. The two became very close, and after she passed away, his addiction escalated further. He also experimented with crack and meth, among other drugs. While those were easier for him to walk away from, alcohol and marijuana had a firm grip.

During this time Michael’s marriage also ended, and he wasn’t able to find work. He knew that sobriety was the only way out – yet had difficulty finding a no-cost detox center. He finally found Charle Street in Costa Mesa, which took him in at no cost.

The first three days at Charle Street are particularly tough, since its detox program is not medically assisted – patients can have seizures, are dealing with DTs, etc. Fortunately, Michael met a young man, Tim, who helped him through these first few days. After making it through the three-day detox period, Michael cried out to God, questioning his life’s path. Just minutes later, Tim asked Michael to be by his side, and he died in Michael’s arms a short time later. God’s presence became evident to Michael during that experience, with Michael’s family members showing up to visit him unexpectedly within an hour of Tim’s passing.

Michael moved into an Action Alliance home from Charle Street in 2017, and is now a house manager. Although he hadn’t worked in years, he quickly found work at a bottling plant, initially hired as a fill-in. After showing an aptitude for and interest in learning how to operate the different types of bottling equipment at the plant, he is now a line lead supervisor, running a crew of 12. He’s also back in touch with his extended family.

“When I was an addict, I always relied on someone else,” explains Michael. “Now, I pay my own bills and am responsible for my own life. It’s so liberating! I used to be a follower – but now I lead my own life.”