

# REACHING OUT

EFFECTING CHANGE ONE PERSON AT A TIME



H U N T I N G T O N   B E A C H   P O L I C E   D E P A R T M E N T

## ONE FAMILY'S TRANSFORMATION

2018



It was a knock on the window that would change their lives. Officers Ricci and Chichester were on patrol in the early morning hours, undertaking enforcement regarding illegally parked vehicles. Little did they know when they knocked on the covered window, they were waking a mother and her young son who had been living in their truck for six months. In the vehicle parked next to them was Dad, also asleep. The last thing the officers expected to find that morning was a family whom they had never encountered.

Jason and Samantha wound up in their vehicles as a result of poor decision making, misfortune and addiction. Fortunately, their son was so young, he did not realize the situation was unusual. He thought the family was camping and his parents did their best to keep the situation “normal” for him. As Samantha tells it, “Our cars were kept clean and my son was washed daily. We wore pajamas to bed at night and had a morning routine. We celebrated holidays and birthdays while living in our vehicles.” To the average observer, they simply appeared to be a family enjoying the park.

That morning in 2018, everything changed. Officers have big hearts when it comes to kids. After hearing the knock on her window, Samantha informed the officers that she had her four-year-old son in the truck with her. Officer Ricci replied, “That changes everything.”

The phone calls and planning began. Donations were collected for motel funds pending shelter. Orange County Rescue Mission had space available, but the two vehicles had to be sold because they could not be stored. “The officers arranged an interview, drove us down and vouched for us. I could not believe how quickly things happened,” says Jason.

Once in, it was no walk in the park. “On day three, we wanted leave. We were not used to the structure or the demands on our time. Thank God we had no options - we had to stay. It took a while for us to accept that we needed to work hard to change our lives.” says Samantha.

Jason and Samantha maintained a busy schedule that included education, meetings, counseling and worship. As Jason explains it, “This is a back to work, faith-based program.” He adds, “You have to want something different and then surrender to something better. Everything you did before didn’t work, so close your mouth and open your ears and do what they say. It might just work.”

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HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Jason and Samantha are nearing the end of their stay at Orange County Rescue Mission and periodically check-in with the officers. They renewed their marital vows and are looking forward to their future with confidence. Samantha’s enthusiasm is palpable when she says, “I finished my GED and Jason completed his OSHA 30 training for workplace safety. He is working full-time and I am looking for a job.” When asked what type of job she wants, Samantha says, “I can do any kind of office work - accounting, payroll, phones, you name it. Let me know if you have any leads.” She is currently in the market for an affordable car to make it all happen, and she is confident she can do it.

Pondering the effort she and Jason have dedicated to improving themselves over the last two years, Samantha says, “We are ready. We were really fortunate to be at the Rescue Mission. Who knows where we would be if we didn’t meet the officers?” Officer Chichester deflects the credit, “It is because the OC Rescue Mission has been so available to the HBPD, that we can help get motivated people off the street.”



Recent expressions of gratitude from sheltered clients



*We just want to express our gratitude to you guys! You helped us out when no one else would and for that we will forever be grateful! We'll never back to Las Vegas, NV and I must admit its still a bit of a struggle, but at least we are off the streets, and in our place. Thank you again for everything.*  
*With Love*

*We can't thank you enough..*

*“I feel so safe now. You have no idea how much I thank you for the assistance. I have no idea what will happen after this, but I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I will be in touch with you. God bless.”*

Hi Lisa:

This hotel is absolutely beautiful. Everyone here has been helpful and kind. Officer Mungle was tremendously helpful and thoughtful to me. I will write a complimentary letter to the Huntington Beach Police Department expressing my gratitude and appreciation for the kindness that Officer Mungle has shown me today.

I thank you Lisa for this opportunity you provided for me to escape the frightening experience of being alone on that beach with everything being stolen from me.

Thank you again Lisa for helping me at a time of extreme need for safety and nourishment in my life.

Let me know if there is anything I can do for you or your lifesaving organization.

Best Regards