



**AIDS
WALK
LOS ANGELES**

Presented by

The Hilton Family

OCT. 19, 2008



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TEAM
TODAY!**

Project New Hope's Story of Success

Brian learned he was positive in 1990, at the age of 22. Brian says that learning he was positive caused "a devastating spiral effect" in his life. His life became a roller coaster careening between periods of homelessness and stability. He could rapidly go from working at a good job in customer service, to using drugs and living on the streets. Prior to coming to Project New Hope, Brian had been homeless several times, been jailed, had gone through four rehab programs, and was close to death on several occasions. He encountered 35 different institutions as a result of his drug and alcohol use.

Brian's life changed when he entered a local rehab program that focused on both his HIV status and his substance abuse. The program referred Brian to Project New Hope, and he spent several months living in our Benton-Dallas House in Lawndale while working on his sobriety. At the same time, he enrolled in Project New Hope's computer training class. After a stint in an SRO (single-room occupancy unit), Brian was able to move into a Project New Hope apartment in San Pedro.

"My jaw just dropped when I saw it," he said. "The SRO was in the heart of Skid Row. It was a room with a sink. There was a shared kitchen, which meant that I ate a lot of meals out." Brian's new place is a full one-bedroom apartment, and he

loves its eleven windows and its kitchen. Since moving in, Brian said he has gained weight and his health has improved significantly, in large part because he can cook nutritionally. He says he now looks forward to seeing his doctor, because he keeps getting good news about his health.

Brian recently celebrated one year of sobriety. He credits the support he has received, particularly from fellow clients, in his success so far. "A lot of people at PNH have the same issues – with HIV and substance abuse – and the clients support each other," Brian says. Brian is currently enrolled at Los Angeles Community College, and plans to return to work in a customer relation's position.

CLIENT PROFILE

Rob Castillo

Born in LA in 1961 and raised in Angelino Heights, Rob Castillo, is the fifth child in a family of 12 siblings, his father from Texas, his mother from Guadalajara, Mexico. Upon completing Belmont High School, Rob attended Los Angeles Community College (LACC) where he took courses in psychology, English, and theater. At age 22, Rob suffered severe injuries in a car accident that required painful surgery and hospitalization. To pay the exorbitant hospital bills, Rob was forced to leave school and tend bar. In October 1986, Rob, the only gay son in his family, met his current life partner, Ken. Together they saved enough money to buy a house in Rosemead. In July of 1995, Rob tested HIV positive. He continued to work hospitality in Pasadena, but in January 2002, Rob was again the victim of a hit-and-run auto accident that left him temporarily paralyzed. Sole financial supporter for their household, Ken was unfortunately laid off from work as well. Unable to pay the bills, Rob and Ken decided to sell their home to avoid foreclosure, and they moved into an apartment in Atwater Village.

After extensive and costly rehabilitation complicated by advanced HIV, Rob was placed on disability, but he was eager to return to a more normal life. In spring of 2003, Rob began computer courses at the Project New Hope (PNH) Learning Center. "After the accident I needed a lot of help. I saw a flyer on the computer skills course at PNH Learning Center. I have always been computer illiterate, I really need to brush up my skills, and I have always been interested in graphic design. It has been nothing but good. I love it. I get so much support. It's nice I can relate to so many things here with the other students-- we all have the same HIV status. Where I used to hide taking my meds at work, here I can sit in the middle of class and take a handful of pills without anyone flinching. I get personal, focused attention from PNH."

Rob is not currently living in a PNH facility, and he is hoping suitable housing becomes available. Once Rob completes his graphic design course work with PNH, he hopes to get an Associates degree, and, perhaps later, return to school for a Bachelors degree.



LAGUNA SENIOR APARTMENTS

The Laguna is conveniently located in the heart of Silver Lake at Sunset Junction. Newly completed in 2007, the building provides a variety of 1 and 2 bedroom floor plans at affordable rents for income-qualifying seniors. The four-story building includes elevator access to all floors and the parking garage, and is accessible from both Sunset Boulevard and Myra Avenue. Full featured units, extensive common areas, a laundry room and computer center, and outdoor patios are provided for you to enjoy! For the comfort of all residents, The Laguna is a smoke-free living environment and no pets are allowed.



Homes, Opportunities, Placement and Education

CLIENT PROFILE

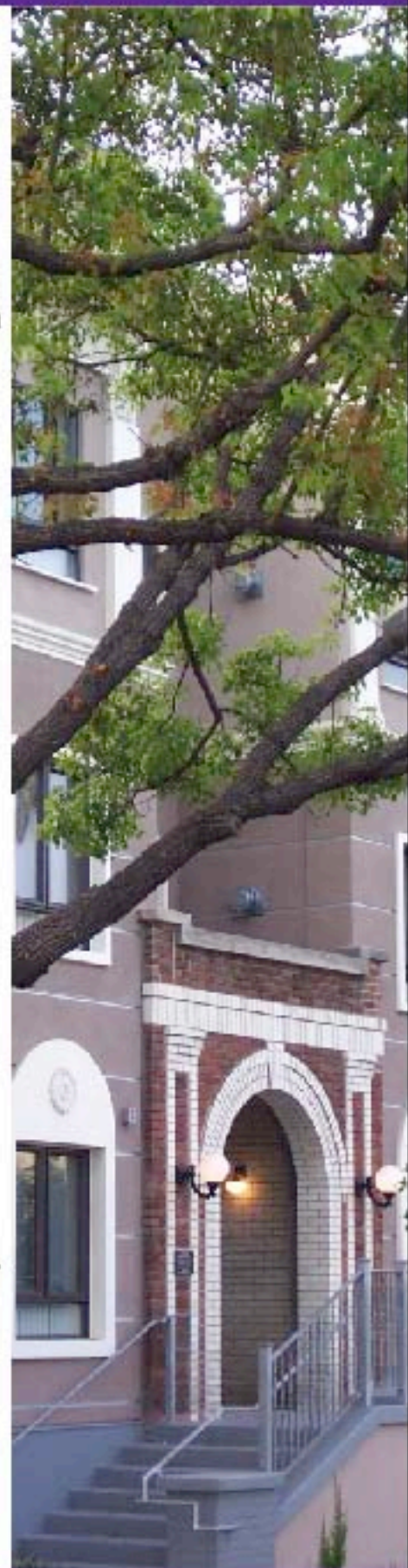
Trini Rodriguez

Born in Puerto Rico in 1953, Trini Rodriguez moved to Jersey City, NJ, when she was 4 years old where she grew up with her family. In January 1999, Trini became very ill, and she was placed on disability due to advanced HIV. Trini wanted to move from the harsh cold of New Jersey to the warmer, sunnier climate in southern California. After lengthy planning, Trini arrived in LA in January 2001, but she discovered all too late that her planned living situation would not be supportive of her health needs. Trini sought assistance from a local AIDS service organization and was then referred to Project New Hope (PNH) for housing and job training.

"A lot of times people think that if you live in supportive housing you must have been displaced because of drugs or whatever. But in truth, for some of us, it is because of life circumstances complicated by HIV. Housing is first -- it needs to be the priority. Without it, you don't have anywhere to put your meds!" explained Trini about her desperate plight upon arriving in LA. In June of 2002 PNH placed Trini in the PNH Hoover Apartments. "PNH takes care of the apartments. I am impressed with the way they keep the facilities clean, and how they have community rooms, and all that special stuff; you just don't get that anywhere."

Trini completed a Bachelor's degree in English at the Jersey City State College, as well as completed three years towards a Masters degree in linguistics from Rutgers. Today, Trini is eager to return to school to earn a Masters in Social Work, perhaps from UCLA. Moving towards her goal, in August 2003, Trini graduated from the Project New Hope Computer Learning Course. "I needed to learn computer skills, which I never had, so that I can return to work and eventually back to school. [PNH] Learning Center has been really flexible and supportive of my problems. If I have a doctors appointment or need to travel for family, PNH is really understanding of my situation."

In March 2003, Trini took guardianship of her seven-year old granddaughter, Saeeda, living in Delaware. PNH was immediately responsive, providing Trini in April 2003 a two-bedroom residence at the Rick Weiss New Hope Apartments in Santa Monica, where Saeeda now attends a local grade school. "The whole bureaucracy is just not there at Project New Hope -- it is an open door policy. It is a grassroots, down-home feeling. There is a sense of security for me here. I don't have to hide my HIV status. If I get sick or have to go into hospital, it's cool. I don't have to go through any explanations. I don't have to be threatened by my landlord. It really has given me 'New Hope.' Those who support PNH need to know that they are helping to fund something really special."



HOPE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The face of HIV/AIDS has changed, but the needs of the people who are impacted by the disease have not. We are constantly combating the notion that HIV/AIDS is no longer a threat to our nation or community – People have begun to “tune out”. Please join Project New Hope in improving the lives of those in our community living with this disease! More than 54,000 women, men and children in Los Angeles are trying to cope each and every day living their lives with HIV/AIDS. A significant number have been homeless most of their lives, or have used their entire savings to live with this disease and have been living on the streets.

Project New Hope is a tax exempt organization under Internal Revenue Service Act Section 501(c)(3). All donations are 100% tax-deductible.

Project New Hope does not sell or share your information with any outside parties. [Click here to view our privacy policy.](#)



Project New Hope promotes a full continuum of supportive housing and employment options to low income individuals and families with HIV/AIDS. We are dedicated to providing permanent affordable housing and computer training to individuals with HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles. Our services assist people with HIV/AIDS who also face the challenges of homelessness, and mental illness. PNH remains the largest operator of housing for people living with AIDS in Los Angeles County and the only AIDS service organization that provides a full continuum of care and employment training in the State of California.

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