

## **MEET MARK**

Mark, a recent resident of Mariners Inn, just signed his first lease in a very long time on Jan. 19, 2016. He's hopeful that 2016 will be his strongest year yet. He wants to become a vegetarian and rejoin the world while learning to be a spectacular grandfather and father. Mark is a father of three boys and a grandfather to five children.

"This program has really helped me get back in focus with my life," he said.

At the age of 13, Mark became addicted to drugs. He remembers wanting to be independent and strong on his own at age 13.

"We want to be grown too fast," he said.

He got into the wrong crowd and kept finding trouble and it started to follow him, too.

Mark, now 56, has experienced a difficult and long road to recovery. He spent about 25 years total in and out of jail and he's done a lot he regrets. He came to Mariners Inn on April 6, 2015, looking for a way to get back to the life he knew he could find.

He's working on finding houseware items for his apartment while looking for a good job. He spends most of his time studying at Oakland Community College in both his classes and with his tutor. Mark plans on becoming a drug counselor with hopes to help people just like him find their way back to reality.

"I've got to do to do the right things for the right reasons," he said.

Mark said he struggles most with the new technology and knowledge retention.

"I know I have to work a little harder," he said.

Since Mark is clean and able to reflect more clearly on his past, he said he has some advice for youth today.

"That's what I've learned through life is don't be ashamed to ask for help."

Mark also wants people to know that not everything is just about you. He said he has spent too much time in his life being selfish and now it's time to live life on life's terms.

"Using drugs is a dead end thing," he said. "Do the right things, even when nobody is around."

*-Erica N. Rakowicz*