

Susan's Recovery Story:

A Journey of Rediscovery and Renewal

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Susan's Recovery Story: In Her Own Words

For much of my life, addiction overshadowed everything. I was a daughter, a friend, and a hairstylist who found joy in helping others feel beautiful. But behind every haircut and smile, I hid a growing struggle with substance use disorder—one that followed me from Delaware County to Philadelphia and eventually to Wilmington. I experienced periods of sobriety and hope, times when I believed I was finally turning a corner. But addiction kept pulling me back, eroding my spirit piece by piece.

Then came the pandemic. The world shut down, and so did my last threads of stability. The loneliness, fear, and chaos of COVID-19 pushed me to a devastating relapse. I fell deeper into addiction—this time using fentanyl laced with xylazine. It ravaged my body, leaving my legs covered in deep, infected wounds. I was starving, emotionally shattered, and spiritually hollow. I lost everything—my relationships, my career, and any vision I had for the future. I was surviving, but barely.

In 2022, I arrived at Saint Francis Hospital at what I believed was the end of my road. I was admitted in critical condition, wracked with pain, caught in the throes of withdrawal, and consumed by hopelessness. But something unexpected happened—a moment that changed everything. A nurse looked me in the eye and gently said, “Stay. Take care of your body.”

Those few words stirred something in me. For the first time in a long time, I felt seen. That spark of human connection became the start of something new.

I spent months in the ICU undergoing surgeries and intensive wound care. It was excruciating—physically, emotionally, spiritually. But in that painful stillness, something within me began to heal. The staff didn't just care for my wounds; they treated me like a person who mattered. Their compassion helped me reconnect with my own humanity. I stopped just surviving. I began to imagine what it might feel like to truly live.

That's when I found Limen Recovery + Wellness.

At Limen, I finally found space to breathe—to be still, safe, and seen. I stayed for over a year, immersing myself in therapy, community, and healing. The women there became my chosen family. Day by day, I rebuilt my foundation. I faced hard truths, made amends, forgave myself, and reclaimed the woman I thought I had lost.

Recovery isn't just about stopping the use of substances. It's about rediscovering who you really are. Limen gave me structure and hope—but more than anything, it gave me back to myself. I found my voice. I found purpose. I found strength.

Today, I'm an active member of a 12-step fellowship, and I've celebrated multiple years of continuous sobriety—something I never thought possible. I'm creating a life filled with

connection, service, and intention. I still face challenges, but now I have the tools, support, and faith to meet them head-on.

This journey has not been easy. But it has been beautiful. And I am forever grateful—for Saint Francis, for Limen, for Ashley, and for the second chance I was given.

A Partner in Healing: From the Perspective of Limen House Staff Person Ashley Reed

I first spoke to Susan while she was still at Saint Francis Hospital, preparing for discharge and searching for her next step. She was physically fragile and emotionally depleted, and she shared that she had already been turned away from numerous rehabilitation centers and housing programs due to her extensive medical needs.

Even through the phone, I could sense her desperation and deep desire for change. I knew we would need to make adjustments to our program to meet her unique medical and emotional needs. And we did. We admitted Susan and immediately began tailoring our support around her. This wasn't hard to do because Susan was ready. She was grateful, determined, and willing to do the work to rebuild her life.

I had the privilege of working with her one-on-one, supporting her physical recovery, her sobriety, her mental health, and—perhaps most profoundly—her spirit. During her time with us, Susan connected deeply with a 12-step fellowship. She got a sponsor and experienced her own spiritual awakening. She also began to give back, volunteering with Meals on Wheels, and we helped her secure disability support to provide some financial stability.

When she completed our program and moved on to live independently, she was no longer the same woman who had first called me. Saint Francis had helped heal her body—but at Limen, Susan healed her soul. Watching her journey has been one of the greatest honors of my career.

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