

# Family Pathways Houston opens doors for single mother

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HOUSTON—Sitting in a Houston jail cell, Lindsay Larson realized things had reached an all-time low. A lifetime of drug and alcohol use had caught up with her after her arrest for a misdemeanor theft and possession of drug paraphilia.

None of her friends came to pay the \$250 bail, and her then 5-year-old son was left in the care of the friends who encouraged the behaviors that landed her in this cell.

In that cell, she met God, and her life never has been the same.

A month into her 63-day sentence, Larson heard women crying. Curious, she asked what was going on, and some of the women presented the gospel to her.

“My life changed instantly from that point on,” Larson said.

After her release from jail, she picked up her son, Fabian, and checked into a shelter, connected with a church and started building up a positive community around her.

“God had changed my life,” she said. “I was not scared about using (drugs), but I knew I couldn’t stay. I was fresh out of jail, and I had no clue what I was going to do. I had been sober for two months, but I knew I needed to know more, and there was more stuff I needed to figure out.”

Larson went to a couple of transitional homes in her quest to turn her life around. She enrolled in school, taking classes for occupational therapy while also working full time. She found the demands of school, work and

caring for her son overwhelming.

The transitional home required her to have a job and suggested she drop some of her classes to help balance her life. But for Larson, this was not feasible. Education was vital.

Soon after, she heard about Buckner Family Pathways. The program provides housing, child-care assistance and counseling to support single parents who are in school and trying to create better lives for their families.

“I think that’s one of the qualities of Lindsay’s that I found attractive,” said Cari Latimer, director of Buckner Family Pathways in Houston. “I admire her initiative and follow through. She’s motivated to her own success and changing of her life.”

“I’m extremely proud of myself and so thankful to the Buckner program,” Larson said. “It gives me the opportunity not to stress about my finances. I feel very safe where I live.”

Larson has a 3.8 grade-point average and has been inducted into two honor societies. She also is able to focus on her son, now 7, and give him the attention he needs to succeed in school and in relationships with others.

“I know I couldn’t do it by myself,” Larson said. “It’s God and God placing people and opportunities in my life. I work hard, but I also know that I’m blessed with things like this.

“And I’m proud of myself for being ready when the opportunity presents itself. I know life has ups and downs. There’s trials and tribulations. But God has shown me the tools and people and ways so that I do not have to go back to a life of drugs. God has given me freedom.”