

# Mark's Story


My name is Mark and at 16 years old, I was working as many hours as I could at McDonald's to pay rent and put food on the table for my mom, my brothers and me.

One night, I found my mom asleep on the floor and drugs on the table. To protect my little brothers, I packed us up and rushed to my grandma's house. But between my brothers, cousins and other family members, her house was too full. I knew I couldn't stay.

With nowhere to turn to, I took a chance and moved to New York City to live with my grandfather. But after a few months, he became convinced that I was doing drugs like my mom and dad. I begged and pleaded that he believe me or drug test me to prove that I wasn't using. He asked that I pack up and leave.

I slept on park benches, if I slept at all. Tired of life on the streets, I found an adult men's shelter. It was a scary place because there were a lot of drugs and violence. An older resident there told me about Covenant House. He said it was a shelter for young people like me.

At Covenant House my dream of going to college and studying aeronautical engineering is closer than ever.



"I am one story of hundreds here, and on behalf of all of those young people choosing a better life I say: thank you for allowing us to chase our dreams."