



JESSE'S STORY

For Jesse, like so many people navigating both mental health and substance-use challenges, the path to stability and recovery has never been a straight line—nor has his time with Tasks, which has included three different stays at the Tasks Unlimited Training Center (TUTC). As he puts it, **“Being patient with this process can be trying.”**

IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE BROKEN

When Jesse first came to the TUTC two and a half years ago, he says he was unwilling to accept that he had post-traumatic stress disorder and saw admitting to anxiety as a sign of weakness. Further, he says his years of substance use had masked many of his mental health symptoms, so confronting them was unfamiliar.

Jesse credits Tasks with helping him gain a new perspective on mental illness and substance use, recalling his early therapy conversations with a Tasks team member, Eryn. Using drugs, he realized, “was a maladaptive way of dealing with what was going on in my life. If it wasn't for Tasks, I probably would have never really accepted that I had PTSD.” When Eryn and Jesse talked through how his PTSD was showing up as suicidal ideation, “She allowed me to allow myself to say, **‘This doesn't mean you're broken, this doesn't mean you're not a whole person.’**”

Along with PTSD, Jesse discovered he had acute panic disorder and major depressive disorder—which can be caused by post-acute withdrawal syndrome. “I like the dual diagnosis part of that, the fact that Tasks helps with both

[mental illness and substance use],” says Jesse. He cites his relationship with Tasks Chemical Health Coordinator Mark as pivotal, due to Mark's lived experience with substance use challenges. “Mark, I love that guy,” shares Jesse. “He's been through it, you can tell that he's lived that life. Having someone who knows what recovery looks like...you're [more likely] to listen to them.”

BRANCHING OUT ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Beyond therapy, Jesse has found other new tools and coping skills, including practicing EMDR therapy and calibrating the right regimen for his SSRI medication. “Tasks encourages people to branch out and try different therapies...” he reflects. “Every time I've been at Tasks, there's always been a learning experience.”

Jesse has also thrived in Tasks' art classes and other holistic activities. He's taken photography on three occasions, learning more intricate skills each time. “I've started using aperture, different shutter speeds,” Jesse says. “It's a lot of fun, I love those classes.” He's got an eye for it: two of his photos were included in the 2023 calendar featuring photographers in the class. Alongside other Tasks participants, Jesse also contributed to the mosaic recently completed and displayed at Tasks Unlimited Training Center. The group named the piece “Path to Enlightenment,” with the mosaic depicting and exploring mental health recovery as a journey from dark to light.

GIVING BACK THROUGH PEER SUPPORT

Now living at Tasks' St. Louis Park Lodge, Jesse has discovered another skillset on his recovery journey: peer support. Knowing Jesse's deep understanding of navigating both mental illness and substance use, a staff member suggested that Jesse be a peer support resource for a lodge member who had a relapse. “By knowing what symptoms to look for, what behaviors to look for,” Jesse has helped direct fellow Tasks participants to treatment centers where they get the support they need.

Now sober for two and a half years—since his first stay at TUTC—Jesse credits Tasks with striking the right balance of support and self-determination. “Tasks finds a happy medium of helping people out with certain things that allow you to branch out into the community or look into [different] therapies,” he reflects, “but also not holding your hand all the time. Tasks is only going to work for you as hard as you're going to work for you.”



THE MOSAIC

On March 29, 2023, a group of people different in many ways but all with a shared experience of living with mental illness, came together at Tasks Unlimited Training Center (TUTC), an intensive residential services program. As they chatted, a piece of art was being hung on the wall over the mantel. The group of people were participants in the 6-week Mosaic Art Residency taught by Teaching Artist Mica Lee Anders, part of an ongoing collaboration between Tasks Unlimited and COMPAS to bring opportunities for artistic learning and expression to Tasks clients. They had gathered for the official unveiling of the mosaic which they had created together and named "Path to Enlightenment."

At first the group planned a collaborative mosaic that would be the tabletop of an entrance table at the TUTC. But as the project evolved all agreed that it deserved a more prominent place. The piece represents the challenges of having a mental illness, but also hope: the left side of the mosaic is dark with clouds but there is a bridge and a path to the sunny side.

As one participant said: "mental health is a journey from dark to light and sometimes back again." Many commented on how much they enjoyed the conversation, camaraderie and sense of community that came from being in the

residency. Everyone could point to an element they worked on, but together it formed a beautiful whole. Going forward the mosaic will hang in the main living room area of the TUTC, where many more will come to find hope, learn coping skills, and gain support to make their own way to the sunny side.

Tasks Unlimited Training Center, a 9-bed licensed Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS) provider, offers education and skill-building in mental health management, in-house psychiatric services, substance use recovery support, and a cooperative peer-supported living environment which builds basic living skills like cooking and transportation navigation while fostering community and social connections. For more information, please contact: 612.767.2060 or email admissions@tasksunlimited.org.

Pictured, left to right: Adonis, Bob, Brenda, Jesse, Mike, Joe, Michele (Tasks Wellness Coordinator), Mica (Teaching Artist).
Not pictured: Erin, Ben.



Arts activities are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

WHAT ARE TASKS CLIENTS DOING IN THEIR FREE TIME?

BUPONE is an avid gardener and likes to care for indoor plants. Having recently moved from his own apartment into a Tasks Lodge, he is looking forward to planting a garden in his new backyard.



GREG just returned from the United States Tennis Association NTRP National Championships, which took place in Orlando, Florida. He played four matches in three days and got to celebrate his birthday as a bonus!



CANDI is taking her cat, Pixie, to the vet. She is a very proud pet owner. Her yearly Christmas cards include photos of her and Pixie.

KYLE has dreamed of building a boat since the 8th grade and is close to achieving that goal. He has been working on his PocketShip design sailboat, made of mahogany and fitted with solar panel and lights, for six years and hopes to take it for a maiden voyage this summer.



MATT likes to read, alternating between fiction and non-fiction. He is a founding member of the Tasks Book Club. Matt is currently reading Ordinary Grace by William Kent Krueger.



TASHA likes to create nail art in her free time when she is not working as a Peer Specialist at the NOOC.

RAY enjoys taking his twin teenage sons cross-country skiing on the shore. In the summer, they enjoy learning new skateboarding tricks together.

About contributors: All are longtime employees of Tasks Unlimited in supported employment positions. Some also live in a Tasks Lodge.





IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...PROGRAM UPDATES FROM TASKS!

TASKS RESOURCE CENTER

Located next to Tasks' headquarters, this welcoming space gives people facing mental health challenges new ways to access mental wellness support. The Resource Center is open five days a week, providing group and one-to-one resources navigation and support. Visitors can also find resources to reach their employment, housing, and other goals. For more information:

612.767.2060 | admissions@tasksunlimited.org

NOOC

Tasks' Northeast Outreach & Opportunity Center (NOOC) has moved to a new space at Mill City Church Commons to offer more accessible drop-in services for people experiencing homelessness. Our new location is right on the 11 bus line and is within walking distance of Neighborhood Health Source, which hosts a clinic where NOOC visitors can access primary health care services. For more information:

612.756.6606 | dmc dew@tasksunlimited.org

EXPANDED COUNSELING SERVICES

Tasks' counseling services now reach more people. Tasks' licensed therapists are available to anyone seeking mental health counseling, whether or not they are taking part in other Tasks' programming. This expansion opens doors to mental health support to more people—at a time when mental health needs continue to rise across our communities. For more information:

612.767.2053 | counseling@tasksunlimited.org



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Follow us online or sign-up on our website to receive updates, information about upcoming events, and opportunities to become more involved with the work and mission of Tasks Unlimited!

Guided by the Fairweather Model, Tasks Unlimited provides supported employment, housing and recovery services to create opportunities for people with mental illness so they can achieve their full potential. ***Tasks Unlimited is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.***

