

*From Jan, a previous guest and now team member  
(the name of her son used here has been changed for privacy reasons)*

John, our son, (who was 20 years old at the time) served a very short sentence - 2 months, however from the time that he was 16, he was a troubled boy.

He began to drink, smoke dope and eventually to inject speed. Our experience with living with a substance abuser is a very common one: there were arguments, thefts, violence, damage to our house and furniture, numerous appearances in court before a magistrate. This was the pattern of our lives and it was an absolute nightmare.

There was a total break down of trust and family relationships and it became necessary to have him move out. John was living in a sleazy boarding house, personally living in squalid conditions.

His arrest was the result of his non-compliance with a community service order, and even though his sentence was very short, it was still absolutely devastating for us (especially as my husband and I were both teachers). It was very difficult to live with the shame of having a son who was a substance abuser and who fed his addictions by stealing from his family and others. It was difficult to tell colleagues what was happening, and we felt very isolated.

After his release, my son's behaviour could only be described as bizarre. We tried to get him into a rehab program, but he left after a week, and he was living on the streets and sleeping in trains or hostels if he could get a bed. He was arrested again in late January XXXX, given 3 months and very shortly after being taken to the prison, he was moved into the hospital and diagnosed with schizophrenia. His mental illness is chronic and along with his substance use, has resulted in further arrests and court appearances. He has spent long periods in remand, but has not been sentenced to any further time at this stage, as the cases have been dealt with very compassionately by magistrates and judges.

It was impossible for me to verbalise what I experienced at the KO weekend at the time, and I still find it hard to describe how overwhelming that weekend was, but it definitely was the beginning of our family's healing and restoration.

After being a guest, I was asked to join the KO team and have so far served on a number of teams since in various locations.

I am totally committed to Kairos and Kairos Outside, as I have seen the miracles of changed lives that happen when broken people experience God's love through Kairos.