

# MOM JENNIFER

Jennifer has a lot to celebrate each April – most notably, 2022 marks five full years of sobriety for her. “As a recovering heroin addict, getting my five-year chip is a big accomplishment!” Jennifer exclaimed. Another April milestone she is celebrating is her daughter’s fourth birthday. “She is my wildflower, she is my reason for everything,” she said.

Life wasn’t always this optimistic for Jennifer, though. In 2017, Jennifer was only one year out of rehab for a heroin addiction. She was figuring out what her life should look like as a sober 31-year-old when she found out she was pregnant. “I was using drugs my whole life. I was selfish. When I found out I was pregnant, I was worried I wouldn’t be able to take care of a baby,” she said.

Jennifer was living with her aunt while in recovery and knew she would be raising the baby herself. Jennifer remembers, “My aunt held my hand and took me to the doctor to figure out my next step.



NFP nurse Dwan (left) partnered with Jennifer (right) and visited her until her daughter Charley (middle) turned two.

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It was there that the doctor told me about Nurse-Family Partnership ® (NFP) and I signed up right away.” Jennifer was then paired with nurse Dwan at the Prisma Health Nurse-Family Partnership in Greenville, South Carolina.

During Jennifer’s pregnancy, nurse Dwan visited her at her aunt’s home to share resources, perform health checks, and partnered with her to uncover her strengths to build the life she wanted for herself and her coming child. Jennifer said, “It was really exciting to have Dwan visit because I never knew what having a baby entailed. I learned a lot from Nurse-Family Partnership and I had a lot of support from Dwan.”

Likewise, nurse Dwan enjoyed visiting Jennifer. “When I first met Jennifer, she was just coming out of recovery from a drug addiction. She was so determined to do everything she could to have a healthy baby. She was engaged with the guidance I provided and she continued going to her recovery classes.”

In April 2018, Jennifer welcomed her daughter Charlotte – lovingly nicknamed Charley – after a healthy 40-week pregnancy. Dwan visited Jennifer at the hospital and then followed up with an in-home visit once the new family was back home.



NOW I PROVIDE A PLACE FOR WOMEN TO COME STRAIGHT FROM JAIL AND GIVE THEM CLOTHES, LINENS AND FOOD. I WANT TO HELP PEOPLE.

Like most first-time moms, Jennifer navigated through challenges of being a new mom. “I tried breastfeeding Charley, but she had some problems latching. I had hepatitis C from my prior drug use and even though I was taking medication for it, I was so worried that I would bleed while nursing Charley and that she would get hepatitis C, too,” Jennifer said. Nurse Dwan helped Jennifer determine what made her most comfortable and confident in feeding her baby. Ultimately Jennifer pumped breastmilk for Charley which relieved some of her stress.

Jennifer found joy in caring for her newborn and was grateful that Charley slept well and learned how to self-soothe. “I believe that God gave me Charley,” Jennifer said. “I was ready to stay sober, but she was my driving force. I wanted to raise my baby in a happy home.”



Charlotte (Charley) is a happy and healthy four-year-old.



Jennifer is now an ordained minister and leads a recovery home for women.

It was during this time that Jennifer met her future husband. “We started dating when Charley was only two months old,” she said. Nurse Dwan remembers the positive impact of Jennifer finding love, too. “She met her husband, and they got their own home and had good jobs,” she said.

Since graduating from Nurse-Family Partnership in 2020, Jennifer continued to set goals and achieve them. She became an ordained minister in the same church she grew up in. Next, she opened a recovery home called the Alabaster House that accommodates up to 21 women. “When I went to rehab, I had no clothes and no money. The rehab didn’t even offer blankets or food. Now I provide a place for women to come straight from jail and give them clothes, linens and food. I want to help people,” she said.

“She is a success story – going through recovery to where she is now – it’s amazing,” said nurse Dwan.

Jennifer and her husband have been married for three years now. Their anniversary? It’s also celebrated in April.

*Photos by Julie Turner Photography in Clemson, SC*