

STUDENT'S TESTIMONIES

Testimony by Karlene

I was born in Seattle, WA in September 1961 into a normal middle class family. I was the fourth of five children. My oldest brother died three days after he was born, so I only had



three siblings while I was growing up. I was born with a disability condition called “club feet.”. The doctors told my parents that I would never be able to walk. By the grace of God I have always been able to walk. Although I have had pain, and problems with my feet, I cannot be told I can’t walk.

My family was highly judgmental with high values. The myths that they believed were 1) people on welfare are lazy bums that don’t try hard enough, 2) homeless people are ignorant and lazy, and 3) women who have children out of wedlock are bad, cheap, and easy women. We were taught never to go on welfare, never to be homeless, never to have children out of wedlock because that would bring shame to our family.

In August 1972 when I was seven years old my family moved to Bellevue, WA. My parents had been married for 23 years. My mom divorced my dad because he was an alcoholic, and he had sexual addictions. My mom begged my dad to get help for his alcohol and sexual addiction. My dad refused to go

for treatments. Later in 2008 my dad died of alcohol poisoning at the age of 75.

After the divorce my mom took on the responsibilities of a single mom with 3 children to raise by herself. My mom had always been a homemaker while she was married to my dad, but now she had to find a job to support her family. She sent herself to a training at Lake Washington Vocational Technical School. She finished her training, and received a certificate as a Unit Clerk. Mom got a job at Harborview Hospital as a Unit Clerk for the Emergency Room. Mom worked there for 10 years, and then she found a job at Group Health Hospital in Central Supply, as an Operating Room Technician where she stayed until she retired.

As I grew up I had many complications. I had trouble as a student because I found that I had learning disabilities. I am an audio learner, learning by listening. I graduated from Sammamish High School in June 1980. I started fall quarter at Bellevue College. I wasn’t serious about going to college. I dropped out of school. I got involved in a relationship with an American military G.I. I had a son. I lost my way. I broke every rule and values that I had been taught by my middle class family. I brought shame to my family like the Prodigal Son. After 3 years of living together that relationship came to an end because the American G.I., man of my dream, the man I had a baby with, was a very violent man. He had served as a Specialist with a Deadly Weapon in the Army. We never married so I took my baby and left my abuser forever. I stayed in a YWCA safe home. At that time I got a second chance to go back to school. Unfortunately the funding ran out, and I had to stop going to school again. When my son was old enough to start Kindergarten I searched for every resource I could find to finish my education. In 2010 I lost my job of 17 years in retail. I

applied for Unemployment, and because I was on Unemployment, I qualified to go back to college. I went back to Bellevue College, and finally was able to finish my education. It took me 32 years, but I finally graduated with two degrees from Bellevue College in 2012. I have always been determined, and I don't give up easily. I had to fight to win all the fights and I did win.

But my story isn't over yet. After I finally graduated from Bellevue College, I have been longing to continue my education to receive my Bachelor's degree, so I can become more self-sufficient in today's society. I want a better life. But in April of 2014, the lease to the beautiful apartment that I was renting (in South Park, WA) for \$ 850.00 per month had run out. The management increased the rent to 1,300 per month. If I wanted to stay in my dream apartment I would have had to pay the \$450 dollar increase. I could not afford the increase, and I had no alternative or, time to find a place to live. It was at that time, two years ago, that I became homeless, and I have been since then. I work as a care-giver but my earning isn't enough to afford an apartment. So I am in and out of my car and my client's home. I know that getting my education will help me get a better job and permanent housing that I so eagerly wish for.

In order to achieve all these I fight with many things; I fight with my unstable living situation; I fight with my short finances; I fight with myself to keep my own commitments. But I am sure I will win the fight with help from God and caring others.

I met Pastor Jean Kim one night at the Friday dinner of the Nest Mission in Edmonds. Because I am homeless I came for dinner. Pastor Kim had a booth set up with flyers. I picked up a flyer which said "Do you want to enhance your education? We will help." My heart leaped because it has been my dream for a

long time to go back to school and finish my education. I had been praying to God to find a way for me to finish my education, but because I didn't have the money, and I didn't know where to go to get started, I spoke with Pastor Kim to help me go back to school so that I might be able to better myself, and get a better paying job to lift me out of poverty. Pastor Kim took me under her wing with love. By encouragement and support Pastor Kim has challenged, empowered, and mentored me to get back into school. She came to the library and spent hours with me trying to open a Federal Student Aid application so I could receive financial aid. One day she went with me to Central Washington University to apply for the admission. She even paid the application fee for me. Pastor Kim has been a great asset to me, I am indebted to her for all she has done for me. My biggest accomplishment will be that I graduate from Central Washington University with my Bachelor's degree in the criminal Justice Program, and on that day Pastor Kim will be at my graduation cheering me on.

I find myself in the shoes of so many people in the Bible, especially Mary Magdalene who had overcome her multiple difficulties through Jesus Christ our savior — and she became the most faithful disciple. I, too, will overcome my hardships through Christ Jesus my Lord and will serve him as she did. I WILL NEVER GIVE UP! I love this verse also, because it reminds me of all Christ has done for me.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6, [NRSV]).

Testimony by Gary

I am Gary Streitler. I am glad to share a little



bit of my past, present, and future goals. I was born in San Bernardino, California, on November 19, 1967, into a middle class military family. My Dad, mother

and I moved to Seattle WA, when I was two years of age. I am the youngest out of 4 boys and two girls. Most of my siblings are still in California

I grew up mostly with my half-brother, Rick Velez, who is Puerto Rican. His dad still lives in St. Thomas. When I almost graduated from Bremerton High school I dropped out. Later, I got a GED from Edmonds Community College in 2000.

I grew up mostly with my mother after I was 18 years old, when my dad passed away from lung cancer due to asbestosis, a chronic lung disease caused by inhaling asbestos fibers. My mother, on the other hand, was an astrologist for 18 years till 1989 when she passed away. They were married for 22 yrs. However, mom did not put up with my dad's drinking and weed smoking. So she divorced him.

I accepted the Lord into my heart when I was 21 years of age, and I am still on fire for the Lord. After my mother passed, I moved to my brother's house, where he owns a refrigeration company. I continued to abuse alcohol and marijuana. I screwed up and ended up in the penitentiary. I got out and started doing ok,

but I became homeless and was back into the same old trouble. I have a pretty big rap sheet from the past and do not ever want to go back to doing criminal behavior again.

Then I met Pastor Jean Kim at the Trinity Saturday breakfast. Bless her heart! When we first met I was just pretty excited at her really warm welcome in mentoring people to pursue education and to make a difference in someone's life, because, Lord knows, pastor Kim has! Her foundation is, for sure, God sent. In order to achieve my personal goals I have to stop procrastinating, and make commitments and mean what I say, and say what I mean.

I am making healthier decisions now that my head is clear from alcohol and marijuana. I want and deserve a better future for myself. I can and will succeed. I feel I have a purpose and direction in life. I want to make an investment in myself and get a higher education and make a difference in the community. I am putting into the community what I took out.

At present, I am pursuing the field of horticulture at Edmonds Community College, as my future profession, beginning in the fall quarter, 2016. I want to be a living testimony to myself and others that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I want to make this happen. I am in my mid forty's, and I am not getting any younger. I need lots of prayers. I will continue to work with Rev. Jean Kim of the Foundation. I like Ps. 139 because it gives me the strength and courage that I need to fight this good fight:

Ps. 139: 1-24: ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. ³ You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴

Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁷ Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. ¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

God knows me and has been everywhere I have been, when I was doing some bad things. But I can't repeat the same thing anymore because God sees and knows all my doing. I can't get away from God. So I determine to stay with this wonderful God and do better, so my life will be better. Would you watch it?

Testimony by Julie

I am a 56 year old woman who is on and off crutches and walkers: I broke my back in a car accident Oct 13, 1979, when I was 19. I was left paralyzed for four months, broke five ribs, and had numerous cuts and gashes needing surgery. After my initial recovery, the State sent me to school for office administration so as not to be too taxing on



my back, in which they fused seven vertebrae. I finished 1 ½ years, then got married, and had three kids (two of them twins).

I started back in college in 1993, at Everett Community College for Criminal Justice. I missed graduation by 6 credits. I then started working at car dealerships in customer service.

My severe medical problems began around 2009. I had 2 more vertebrae fused together and then fell and broke my wrist. My hips started giving me painful problems leading to immobility. After both full hip replacements, I felt it was time to go back to school for Law or Law Enforcement. But I continue to suffer with a bladder problem, caused by the nerve damage from the hip replacement surgery.

In the midst of all this painful living, with help from God and Pastor Jean Kim of the Homeless Education Foundation, I ended up enrolling in Edmonds Community College for para-legal law and pre-law. In the midst of my enjoyment with study my bladder got infected and I was in and out of intensive care at Edmonds Swedish Hospital. I had to stop school temporarily but I continue to keep my dream in the criminal justice system. And again, I am now

diagnosed with ascetic necrosis, which is a bone degenerative disease in my right ankle. I envision surgery this summer, and a return back to pre-law studies in the fall. I have 51 credits from criminal-justice that apply toward the para-legal degree. That degree will be transferrable toward a 4-year degree in Criminal Justice at Central Washington University.

Those who read my stories might feel dizzy, and also see that I am fighting with many obstacles and interruptions, including

medical issues. Keeping myself in school itself is a fight. I will keep fighting and eventually will win the fight and get back in school in the fall quarter.

But what keeps me going? When I am in the dumps, Pastor Kim comes around and gives me hope and encouragement. Hope, encouragement with God's Love and promises is my perfect recipe for success. Jean provides me with these tactics and keeps me in God's realm with hope, spirit and love. That constant encouragement keeps me going toward the goal. I know I will achieve my aspirations. One way of fighting with all of my pains is keeping hopes, and looking up instead of looking down on my painful body.

I can relate to the story of Job in the Bible who went through so much pain and loss of everything he once owned. He sure had hope in God by saying, *'As for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause.* (Job 5: 7-8).

Like Job, I walk along with my troubles, and keep my hope in God, and walk with friends like the Jean Kim Foundation, and will win the good fight.

Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshipped. He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD (Job 1:20-21).

Testimony by Cherie

My name is Cherie Renken. I am a 60-year-old, disabled widow.



I am currently homeless and have been for the past few months. I am also enrolled in an online university to get my Bachelor's degree in Psychology. Let me tell you a little bit of how I've gotten to be where I am today.

I come from a small family. Just my parents, my little brother and myself. We were not rich but we were comfortable and my brother and I never wanted for anything. Well, of course we WANTED, who doesn't? But, what we did have, we WORKED for! No hand-outs here! I don't remember how many shirts and dresses I ironed just to go to the Saturday matinee. Don't even ask me what all I had to do for my horse!! I never realized until much later in my life how blessed my brother and I were to have been brought up in a loving, caring and nurturing home. With both parents, family outings, chores and everything else that goes with a healthy upbringing. We never even knew what abuse was!

After leaving home, quitting school in the middle of my junior (eleventh) year to get married (brilliant move there wouldn't you say?) I was ready to settle down and start raising my own little "storybook" family. But, as Fate would have it, that particular life's path was not the road for me. We got divorced before our first anniversary and for the first time in my life, I ventured out on my own! I had the time of my life! --doing all kinds of fun and exciting things with no one to answer to or worry about. I still look back sometimes and smile. I was blessed again by managing to live through that wild period without anything horrible happening to me. I finally did meet the man of my dreams! He stole my heart, married me and gave me the most precious gift of all! --my baby girl! Things were going great for us. I couldn't have been any happier. I was a wife and mother, I worked nights as a

bartender, and, during the days and weekends, when I wasn't spending time with my daughter or helping my husband with our construction company, I was training and showing dogs! My life was completely full. I had never thought about going back and finishing school, learning a new career or just continuing my education, even as a second thought. That is,until the accident!

On my way home one night, I was involved in a terrible auto accident that put me in the hospital for the next two years! My life was drastically changed in an instant! Never to be the same again. I had to figure out how I was going to live my life now that everything I knew didn't really matter anymore. I had a LOT of new learning to do! After I was FINALLY released from the hospitals and on the road to recovery, (or so I thought) I did the ONE thing that I had sworn to myself I would NEVER allow myself to do.

I got addicted to pain-killers! My greatest fear had happened! I knew the dangers, how easily it could happen, that it takes an extremely strong person to be able to control the necessary pain medications without letting the drugs take control. I thought I had that strength, but I was too confident in myself and didn't take the correct steps to prevent that from happening. For more years than I care to remember, drugs have been the forefront, in my now "less than perfect" life. In and out of the hospitals, seeking more drugs, in and out of trouble with the police, in and out of jail, in PRISON! I lost my perfect life, my family, their trust and respect (but NEVER their love!), just about everything I cared about, my own self-respect, until finally, my hope.

My husband died a year and a half ago, to a heart infection due to drugs and alcohol. Since then, with the

help of some wonderful strangers who are now my best friends, a few old friends and my family, not to forget all the medical personnel who help people like me every day just because, "That's what we do." I have been off hard drugs, been nearly through methadone treatment and self-help programs, tapering off most of it, almost reaching my goal, and have finally begun rebuilding my life.

With determination, willingness, inner strength and the support of my friends and family I know that I will be able to hold my head up again and be proud of the person I know I can be. One person in particular has been a true inspiration and motivator for me. She is a dynamic woman with an infectious desire to see others do something with their lives, make something of themselves and become productive members of society. I mean if she can do what she does at her age and with such determination and gusto, who am I to give any less? Of course I'm speaking of the Pastor Jean Kim. Her seemingly gentle approach to people, whom she sees in need of direction in their lives, seems to be her true mission. Her questions about themselves reveal to her that, indeed, here is someone who is just watching life drift on by without making the most of it. Then she sets to providing them with the answers they need to begin to live life as it should be-to its FULLEST! And that begins with Education! If you don't know what you want to do with your life, she will see to it that you LEARN what it is you want.

I know this all to be true because this is how she "fixed" me. I knew what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, but I wasn't sure about how to get started. Once those issues were solved, I then needed the desire and motivation to keep on going even when the times seem too difficult. It is quite hard these days to come across someone who has worked as hard as Pastor Jean

has all her life and continue to work just as hard all these years later. I suppose maybe it gets easier, but I don't really know of anyone for whom it is "EASY" to get going on something. I think we all need someone behind us to give either that reassuring "you-can-do-this" pat on the back, or a "kick in the seat," to get going; and I know that Pastor Jean is just that person.

I can relate to the following story of bent-over woman:

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God (Luke 13: 10-13).

All my past troubles bent my back emotionally and spiritually. However, trusting in Jesus Christ my back can be straighten out and I can walk straight!!

Mike Weyerts (EDCC Pharmacy)



is so happy to be in the Edmonds Community College: He is proudly showing his new bike and his school ID card.

I have come a long way in the past 2-3 years. I went through a divorce, my children live away from me, I lost my job as an LPN, became homeless and have battled alcohol. I was very depressed. Then I met Rev. Jean Kim of JK Foundation for the Homeless Education at Friday night dinner at Maplewood Presbyterian Church. She strongly encouraged me to pursue my college

education further. So, I followed through with my application for Federal Student Aid by her recommendation. Before I knew it, I was already taking prerequisites and now I am studying toward a certification of pharmacy technician. She even helped me receive a bike. Thanks to Christine Brandt of Alderwood Community Church. It's a wonderful gift that enables me to go everywhere, to and from school and helps me to keep fit (exercise). I enjoy every minute of it. I owe a huge thanks to God and JK Foundation for changing my life.

VOICE FROM SHEPHERD'S VILLAGE



Tony (future BA student searching for a college and assume a role of volunteer manager for the village – a temporary tent housing for homeless students.



Life at Shepherds Village has been a challenge. About a year ago Rev Jean Kim asked me to design, estimate and build Shepherds Village. With Rev Jung's help along with many others we managed to get Rev Kim's dream built. Trials and a few errors we managed to survive one of Puget Sound's harshest winters. This project kept me multitasking on many levels. I am very proud we have a safe and secure place for all residents here. Stepping stone to ultimately overcome homeless situation but is

temporary. I have learned a lot myself and residents here as well. I take pride in building and maintaining Shepherds Village. I believe in my friend Rev Jean Kim's dream and am very happy to help facilitate this.

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Gary (EDCC AA program in Horticulture)

Since being in Shepherd's Village, I feel more secure and safe by having a shelter than being out there (streets). I enjoy for being a member of this community of people. This family-like-environment helps me communicate with others and enhance my social skill. It helps me more



focused on my study.

Donna (EDCC AA in

Social Service):

I am glad to have a roof over my head, a bed to sleep in.

I am glad to know each person living here.



.....

Karlene (NWU BA program in Psychology):

I feel blessed to have a roof over my head and my own bed to sleep in although it is a matt. I feel a community and a family *relationship*



here.

Testimony of Karlene Vazquez, a student at NWU in Criminal Justice.

My name is Karlene Vazquez, a student of Northwest University. I am coming before you today to convey how the JEAN KIM FOUNDATION has impacted my life. I met Dr. Jean Kim, one Friday night at the homeless dinner of the Nest Mission in Edmonds. It changed my life forever. Dr. Kim had a booth set up with pamphlets explaining how she could help to enhance your education. I took a pamphlet with me. It took a very long time to respond to the pamphlet.

One day I finally called Dr. Kim and ask her how she could help me. She told me that going back to college/university to further my career would lift me out of poverty, and lead me into a better paying job and eventually to permanent housing. I explained how I had already received my Associates of Arts degree in the Criminal Justice Program from Bellevue College in 2012, and I wanted to further my career as a Legal Advocate for battered victims, and that required my Bachelor's Degree. Dr. Kim went with me to the University to apply, she paid the application fee. Many nights Dr. Kim met me at the Lynnwood Library helping me apply for Student Financial Aid.

She was always by my side through all of it. Because of her tireless help I got accepted at Northwest University. Dr. Kim paid for my first trimester text books. Dr. Kim has taken me under her wing because she wants me to be successful. She has taken me out to dinners many times to make sure that I have nourishment. Dr. Kim has set up a tent city called Shepherd's Village. It is a temporary housing for homeless students. Dr. Kim invited me to live in Shepherd's Village. I lived there for three or four months, until I found permanent housing, August 1, 2017.

By encouragement, and support both financially and emotionally Dr. Kim has challenged, and empowered me. She has also mentored me through all my struggles. She has promised to walk with me up to the podium to receive my Bachelor's Degree on my day of graduation. Thank you.

1. Testimony by Mike Weyerts
(EDCC Pharmacy Tech)



I am Mike Weyerts, a student at Edmonds Community College studying to be a pharmacy technician. I am so happy to be in College. I am here this evening to say how Jean Kim

Foundation changed my life:

I have come a long way in the past 2-3 years. I went through a divorce, my children live away from me, I lost my job as an LPN, became homeless and have battled alcohol. I was very depressed.

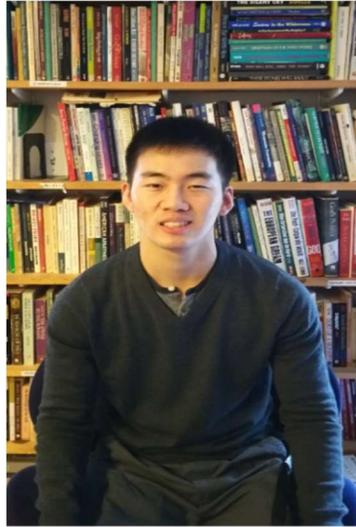
Then I met Rev. Jean Kim at Nest Mission's Friday night dinner at Maplewood Presbyterian Church. Until the day I enrolled to EDCC last Spring quarter, she walked with me for the whole year meeting me several times a week encouraging, supporting as well as challenging and confronting me about my alcoholism and frequent relapse. I frustrated and disappointed her a lot. However, her persistent love and care about me compelled her to write a wonderful supporting letter to the court for my DUI charges. Her wholehearted pledge to work with me led the court to deter a year jail term to a year probation. I was so grateful. It was grace of God.

While I was in probation she strongly encouraged me to pursue my college education further. So, I followed through with my application for Federal Student Aid by her recommendation. Before I knew it, I was already taking prerequisites and now I am studying toward a certification of pharmacy technician. She even helped me receive a bike, computer and paid some school fees and orca cards and many other little items. I owe a huge thanks to God and JK Foundation for changing my life. Thank you very much.

Testimony: I am a Tutor

Paul Kim

My name is Paul Kim. I studied Physiology at the University of Washington, and I am an aspiring dentist. My grandmother fights for the homeless more than any other person I know. She recently founded the Jean Kim



Foundation for the Homeless Education, which has opened doors for men and women to pursue an education that could not have otherwise.

I show up at the Lynnwood Library every Monday for two hours to tutor in subjects that range from algebra to English grammar to computer proficiency. Tutoring has been a rewarding experience for me. The other day, a student of mine took a GED social studies practice test online. The lowest score to pass is 145, and he received a 147 on this practice exam. His eyes lit up, knowing that he was and is capable of learning and achieving. Another student has been struggling with understanding why English grammar works the way it does, and I have also learned a few things about grammar along the way. However, once I fully understand each topic, it is not long before he masters each section and aces his tests in class.

I believe that nothing worth doing in life is easy. Since this experience has been worthwhile to me, it follows that it is also not easy at times. There are numerous instances in which a student will give up, discouraged and defeated. In these moments, I become

more than a tutor but also a mentor and friend. I cherish my relationships with these people and find joy in knowing that I am making a meaningful impact in their lives.

I am fortunate to have this opportunity – I get to give back to my community without a penny in return. I am also privileged in that I get to spend quality time with my grandma. I have gained wisdom and a clear example of how to carry out my life. “Living with no tomorrow,” is her way of saying to live out each day with what’s most important in mind. I’ve been able to realize what a meaningful life means to me, and tutoring every Monday is a part of my story. What matters most to you, and how are you expressing that today?