



Life growing up wasn't easy. I was raised by a single mom, and was frequently left alone at night with my sisters because my mom had to work. I became pregnant at age 16, and later raised two children and one stepson without child support all while attending school. In 1986, I received my M.A. in Education, Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. During my doctoral coursework, I suffered a major bout of depression. It was my first, but it would not be my last. Managing motherhood, school and work took its toll, and I felt extremely tired and often spent weeks in bed. I needed help!

The road to wellness is not always an easy, straight-forward path. I was hospitalized off and on for 8 years and tried taking my own life with alcohol and pills. My journey to healing and wellness began 17 years ago when I was introduced to an agency called Caminar. There, I received personalized and structured support in a warm and inviting environment. They helped me navigate through difficult times, kept me out of bed and helped me to rejoin the community by interacting with people. Now, I work as a contractor for the County of San Mateo and continue my road to recovery by participating in programs at Caminar and at the County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.

I find hope and inspiration in the following quote from Gurumayi Chidvilasananda:

"In everyone there is struggle between mind and the soul, there is a constant battle between darkness and light. Do not give up just because the struggle gets harder. It is this very struggle between the mind and the soul which allows you to overcome all troubles and obstacles."

-Pam, San Mateo

This project was supported by San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Office of Diversity and Equity, and funded by the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).

