

Success Stories

Since 1992, ACE has helped nearly 2,000 recovering homeless men and women find full-time employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency. Below are just a few of our graduates' personal success stories – please visit our website (www.acenewyork.org) for more vignettes on the New Yorkers we serve and their achievements.

RALPH

Ralph grew up in the rough parts of New York City and fell into a downward spiral of drugs and crime at a young age. When he came to ACE, he immediately felt at home and soon became one of our most visible and vocal participants – well loved by the ACE staff, his peers as well as people around the neighborhood. “I loved working, cleaning, feeling good about doing things again... I came here to improve myself,” Ralph explains. “It’s like a spiritual awakening.”

Today, Ralph is working full-time on the maintenance staff at a non-profit organization in the Bronx, and keeps in touch frequently with ACE through our aftercare program, *Project Stay*. His next goal is to become a motivational speaker, so that he can share his story and inspire others who are going through similar struggles.

JACQUELINE

Jacqueline was born into a good family with a bright future ahead of her – but when her twin sister suddenly passed away, her whole life fell apart. Devastated, Jacqueline fled reality by sinking deep into drug addiction. She spent seventeen years caught up in a vicious circle, cycling in and out of detox programs, and facing one obstacle after the other as she kept trying to find employment and stability. It was not until her counselor referred her to ACE that Jacqueline finally found success. Thanks to her enthusiasm and diligent work on the crew and in our classes, she quickly distinguished herself as one of ACE’s rising stars. When graduating from Project Comeback, she was honored with a Senior Crew Award for her impressive work ethic and inspiring attitude.

“I loved working, cleaning, feeling good about doing things again... It’s like a spiritual awakening.”

--RALPH

Today, Jacqueline is thriving in her job at a midtown restaurant and is thrilled to have so many positive influences in her life. One of her goals for the future is to move up at work and become a supervisor. Grateful of the opportunities she received at ACE, she is also planning to give back by working in a shelter, helping homeless people get their lives back on track and showing them that anything is possible if you work hard enough.

KELVIN

When Kelvin was arrested for selling crack cocaine in 2007, he thought he had hit rock bottom. Riddled with a painful history of crime, addiction and homelessness, he was ready to give up. But when he was referred to ACE, he finally found the motivation he needed to turn his life around. After successfully graduating from *Project Comeback*, Kelvin was hired as a Program Aide at a local homeless shelter. He was initially assigned the night shift, monitoring the facility from midnight to 8AM five nights a week, and thanks to his work morale and willingness to always go the extra mile to do a great job – an attitude he developed at ACE - he was soon promoted, getting extended responsibilities and a pay raise. Kelvin is active in ACE's aftercare program, Project Stay, and has taken advantage of our "hard skills" trainings to become certified as a Fire Safety Coordinator.

**"I wasn't just cleaning up
the streets, I was cleaning
up myself."**

--KELVIN

When asked how he feels about life today, he simply says, "I'm having a ball." He remains committed to sobriety and is forever grateful to ACE for giving him a second chance in life. "ACE gave me a chance to believe in myself and the opportunity to sweep the streets. But I wasn't just cleaning up the streets, I was cleaning up myself."