

## **David C.**

David C. came to CLARE|MATRIX at the age of 23 from Chicago addicted to heroin. His mother, who was living in Los Angeles at the time, asked a colleague for help and a recommendation to get care for David. The colleague referred David and his mother to CLARE|MATRIX. After completing the program and on a path to recovery, David returned to Chicago where he went on to earn his Bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Illinois as well as a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Michigan. As part of his graduate thesis, David launched a program focusing on the experiences of youth and substance use disorders.

He now has more than 19 years of experience as a therapist, professor, clinical director, and substance use disorder expert. His extensive experience working with clients, students, families, clinicians, and communities includes more than 16 years in private practice with a focus on addiction, relapse prevention, and family therapies. Additionally, David has taught graduate-level courses in psychology, addiction, and mental health as an Adjunct Professor at Antioch University and Loyola University Chicago.

He has also served as the Clinical Manager of Outpatient Programs for Cliffside Malibu, the Vice President of Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders for Insight Behavioral Health, and the Clinical Director and Lead Therapist at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

David's life has come full-circle. He served as the Clinical Director at CLARE|MATRIX for two years and continues his work as a highly successful therapist.

## **Jayson L.**

Jayson L. was born in Shelby, Alabama. At the age of 16, he lost his mother and sister to cancer within a two-month period. He lived on his own at the age of 17 when he began to use opiates. During his senior year, he was a daily user but managed to graduate fourth in his class. He was accepted to the University of Montevallo in Alabama where his addiction continued to grow until he dropped-out after one semester. In the fall of 2014, along with a friend and with no plans or money, he came to Los Angeles where he began to experience homelessness near Hollywood High School. He spent the entirety of 2015 living without a home and a still-growing addiction.

He was arrested eight times and was living between jails, re-habilitation programs, and the streets. Arrested twice within 30 days for felonies, he was sentenced to a three-year prison term. At the time, CLARE|MATRIX had a criminal court program where the judge gave Jayson the option of going through and successfully completing the treatment program at CLARE|MATRIX instead of going to prison. Jayson took the opportunity and completed the program three-months early.

After leaving the CLARE|MATRIX program, Jayson held down two minimum wage jobs and enrolled in Santa Monica College. He stayed connected to CLARE|MATRIX through the alumni program attending events and helping others who were in the program. Because of his effectiveness as an alumni leader, Jayson was offered a job in the program and was promoted to the position of Employment Specialist where he worked as a liaison with the Los Angeles County Probation Department helping advise officials on options for individuals who were experiencing drug addictions. He became interested in marketing concepts as he shared information with these officials.

In September 2020, Jayson was accepted into the undergraduate business program at Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business and Management where he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in January 2022. Meeting the Business School's grade point average and curriculum requirements, he entered Pepperdine's Master's program in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing. Jayson currently serves CLARE | MATRIX as its Prevention Manager.

## **Odat E.**

Odat E. was living on the streets of Santa Monica addicted to both heroin and alcohol. She was without money or a home and had lost contact with her two daughters. She was born in Baltimore and raised in one of its most challenging neighborhoods. Her father was violent, often beating her mother, and he sexually abused her. She left at the age of 20, moving to Sacramento with an aunt and enrolling at Sacramento Community College where she began to audition and secure lead roles in local theatre plays. She survived on her wits. By this time, Odat had experimented with an array of substances before developing a full-blown heroin addiction. She developed a relationship, and she moved with her partner to Los Angeles. One evening, as she entered her bedroom, she found her partner had passed away from a severe epileptic seizure. She was again back on the street.

She came to CLARE | MATRIX because she heard that the organization provided free lunches and access to a shower facility. The woman who welcomed her to the facility was named Clare, and initially Odat thought she was the owner. She began to sit in on panels and presentations at the Santa Monica facility. She began to pay attention to those who were part of the program. She was struck by their kindness, compassion, and their genuine interest in her life. She went through the continuum of care program and began to live a sober life.

As she was completing the program, she began to collect recyclables so she could earn money. While in line at a recyclable center, she overheard a conversation about where to find recyclables of greater value. Odat began to visit storage facilities, construction and development sites, yard sales, and auction houses. She learned more about how the recycling markets functioned. Odat now owns a very successful recycling and reusables business that also auctions and sells cars, antiques, and construction goods. She recently moved into a new home. She continues to rebuild her relationship with her daughters. She reminds those who meet her that her name is also an acronym. "Odat" stands for **One Day At a Time**.

## **Christina M.**

Christina M. came to CALRE | MATRIX as a young mother experiencing homelessness and addiction. She had recently lost custody of her young son for the second time. Her life went between jail and substance use. She arrived at our admissions office with all of her belongings in one suitcase. Christina was aware of CLARE | MATRIX because her mother had at one time been a part of the staff when she was growing up. Christina lived not far from the CLARE | MATRIX facilities in her youth.

Christina went through the continuum of care program beginning with detoxification to residential treatment and then to outpatient treatment before starting a life of sobriety. She began working at CLARE | MATRIX as an alumni coordinator before being promoted into a supervisory role in the admissions department. During this time, she was able to regain custody of her young son.

Christina brought her real-life experiences to those who were seeking help at CALRE | MATRIX and was also active in the alumni program. She is now the Director of Admissions at Breathe Life Healing Centers, a program in West Hollywood that works with the LGBTQ+ community and those experiencing substance use disorders and addiction. She navigates and guides clients through the path that leads to recovery. Christina's son continues to live with her. He was recently accepted into the Hybrid High College Prep School at the University of Southern California.

## **Daniel L.**

Daniel L. grew up in South Los Angeles. He was a trumpeter at Manuel Arts High School, where music changed his life. He went on to attend Fresno State University but had to return to Los Angeles at the end of his sophomore year to care for his mother after his father passed away. He took on two job stocking and filling merchandise orders at Banana Republic and the Apple store. While leaving his job one evening, Daniel was shot at gunpoint during an attempted robbery. He sustained damage to his sciatica that still causes episodes of substantial pain. He began to use alcohol to reduce the pain, and he became an alcoholic. He came to CLARE | MATRIX in the tenth year of his addiction. He went through the residential and sober living programs. CLARE | MATRIX helped him earn his Associates degree from West Los Angeles Community College and prepared him to rejoin the workforce. Working with some of our partner agencies, Daniel landed a job UPS.

He remained active in the alumni program, helping his peers in their journey to sobriety. At a UPS staff meeting, Daniel learned that UPS was looking to hire more employees. Working with CLARE | MATRIX staff, he prepared a group of program participants who were completing the program and prepared them to apply for these jobs. He helped with their resumes, interview skills, and job readiness preparation. He arranged for them to take part in a UPS job fair. Through his efforts, 10 CLARE | MATRIX program participants were hired at UPS. He then went on to work with the owners of his apartment complex to secure housing for three other program participants. They have created a home support system to sustain their sobriety and to assist with family life. Daniel has two children, a teenage son with Williams syndrome and a teenage daughter. He uses his experience in sobriety to care for his children. He reminds his children of the 12-Step principle, "You keep what you give away."