

Getting back on own two feet

A mother of two talks of self-sufficiency and how Catholic Charities is helping to make it happen.

By **LARRY HENDRICKS**
 Assistant City Editor

Jane (not her real name) has been an addict and an alcoholic for many years. Her criminal past is considerable.

After she got out of prison in February for a felony drunk driving conviction, she went into rehab and completed an outpatient treatment program. She continues to receive counseling and attends 12-step meetings.

"There was always faith in myself that I could do better than that," she said. "And one day I had just had it."

Living with relatives, she was unable to have both of her children with her.

"I needed a stable home for

both of them," she said.

So she went to Catholic Charities, and staff at the agency agreed to house her. They put Jane and her two children up in a two-bedroom apartment, and now Jane is attempting to, in her words, "stand on my own two feet."

As for Jane, her prospects of finding a job were slim because of her felony past — especially while on intensive probation.

"I am so fortunate to have found my job as a cashier," she said.

Jane said when she went to Catholic Charities, staff member Sandi Flores considered her stable enough to go into the permanent supportive housing program. She was clean and sober, was actively addressing the root causes of her addictions and had a job.

"She told me people like me need a second chance," Jane said.

Catholic Charities pays half of her \$625-a-month rent. They also help with utilities and helped

her with furniture.

"I'm a single parent struggling," she said. "They're the other leg."

She said she is unsure how long she will stay under the protective wing of Catholic Charities, but she is confident that one day she will be able to support herself entirely. She has been reunited with her family and has been allowed to develop a relationship with her children.

"I'm blessed," she said. "I'm glad there's a program for people like me who really want to get somewhere in life again."

She said she couldn't afford Christmas this year, so Catholic Charities paired her family up with a sponsor family through their Christmas Program.

"They're making Christmas possible for us," Jane said. "It's only the beginning, but a lot has happened for us now."

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