



RON MACARTHUR PHOTOS

**CRISIS HOUSE** Program Director Nancy Woodruff, left, gives a hug to Kisha Fuhr, who is back at the shelter a fourth time as she struggles with addiction.

# Addiction creates a path to homelessness

By Ron MacArthur  
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Kisha Fuhr sits down in the Crisis House office and immediately breaks down – tears start to flow even before she says a word.

Fuhr has been battling drug addiction that keeps her in a vicious cycle of homelessness, and it's tough for her to talk about what her life has become. She's quick to say she's thankful for the Crisis House Emergency Shelter in Georgetown.

The shelter is a lifeline for Fuhr and others like her who have nowhere else to turn. "This place has saved my life," Fuhr said.

As she begins to talk and the tears continue, she's comforted by Crisis House Program Director Nancy Woodruff.

**"THIS PLACE HAS SAVED MY LIFE."**

- KISHA FUHR

## Addiction

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She's been allowed to come back to Crisis House four times over the past few years. "I see something in her and refuse to give up on her," Woodruff said. "I know she's going to make it. I want to see this to the end."

For the past 20 years, the 45-year-old Fuhr has been an addict. She's lived on the street and in a car, and spent time in prison for missing child support payments.

Addiction has been a daily part of her life.

Her drug use started when she was in her 20s when she first tried crack. She also took pills, and when she couldn't get pills, three years ago she took her first hit of heroin.

"I never thought I would put a needle in my arm – I hate needles," she says.

Because of her drug use, she's lost custody of two of her children and must pay child support, and she also lost her driver's license.

Growing up in the Seaford area, she's lived in Sussex County all her life, but she hasn't had a permanent address for nearly 20 years.

Now, she's taking part in a rehabilitation program at Connections in Millsboro, which provides transportation to and from Crisis House. She's been

down that road before.

But she also knows that in order to stay at Crisis House, she must be drug free.

"The clinic does help, but getting the urge to get high builds up," she says.

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Her most recent try at getting clean was cut short when she lost her apartment and couldn't get a job. "The stress piled on," she said.

Another time, she stayed clean long enough to purchase a van and have her first bank account. That's all gone. She's attended Narcotics Anonymous meetings off and on over the years. "I want to be one of those standing up there at a meeting telling my story. I know I can do it. Why can't I do it?" she asks.

She's been clean for periods up to six months over the years. "My mind keeps telling me to stop but something always happens," she said. Bad choices – especially when it comes to men in her life – and stress are her demons, Woodruff says.

Fuhr's optimistic this time that the clinic program and another stay in detox will turn her life around. "This is the before you see. Come back and see the after," she says.

Woodruff nods her head. "It's not too late," she said.