



## NEW JERSEY ADVOCACY NETWORK TO END HOMELESSNESS

### Voice of Hope: A Housing First tenant in Mercer County

#### *On the street, in the shelter:*

“To me, now I feel good because I get a chance to get a roof over my head. You know, not worry about nothing being taken from me at the shelter. Being at the shelter, you know. I was there off and on for about 10 years, trying to survive. A couple times I remember at the shelter I had a seizure. When I would get back from the hospital my stuff would be gone, my bag with medication and stuff, oh man, all my important papers, and it really wasn’t nothing valuable to them. That’s the thing about the shelter, when you go there you have to sleep with one eye closed and one eye open. You can’t go take a shower because you got to bring everything with you...The papers and stuff were more important to me than anything, I had a few pictures in there I will never get back of my kids. The only ones I could keep with me, you know. I am glad I got away from that. I can say that. Every time I turn around I was always about to get into a fight, most of the time I had to fight, you know, protecting your area, it’s crazy man.”

#### *In his own home:*

“I am gaining the weight now. I keep myself involved in NA, you know, I go to an AA meeting sometime on Tuesday... I can sleep better, I can stay on my medication, I can get my act together more, get myself settled more. Being homeless man, you always in danger, you never know what you are going to do on the streets ...It is a lot better now, like I said, being that I have a place I can concentrate on my health and my medication. I have a regular doctor now. I keep in touch with her about health and things.

“I’ve been more or less having my grandkids back and my daughter, she’s gonna get back August first. Cause when I was all messed up on drugs before, my daughter probably really wouldn’t want to be there. Me having this, having a place, aw man... I am looking forward to (Father’s Day) this weekend. My grandson is nine, the youngest just turned three. Having a place, being near them, I can have them over. It’s been hard. I try to see them as much as possibly I can. Before, I didn’t have a place, I couldn’t do certain things, couldn’t have them over, didn’t have no safe environment for them. I got a better environment for them now... I am happier today. I have a chance to see my grandkids now.”