

Grateful for a new beginning

Pasco mother rebounds from 15 harrowing years of drug addiction

By [Molly Moorhead](#), Times Staff Writer

Rosemarie Glade, 28, holds a photo of herself with daughter Lisa Rose, 2, whom Glade calls “my pumpkin.” She credits her daughter as her motivation to turn her life around.



Published Saturday, November 28, 2009

NEW PORT RICHEY — Rosemarie Glade had made the decision to get sober.

But first she had to get high one last time.

Sitting outside the courthouse in her drug dealer's car last November, Glade shot methamphetamine into her veins. Then she walked inside in a haze.

From there, the authorities would take her to a detox center for a week, followed by three months of intensive in-patient treatment to help her battle the addictions that had gripped her since age 12. Months later she would move to a half-way house and would find a job waving a sign on U.S. 19.

Each step of Glade's journey to sobriety held more freedom and hope, but with those, more danger of a relapse.

But Glade, 28, never slipped.

In the 15 years before she got help, she barely went a day without taking drugs and manipulating or hurting someone in the process. Now, she filled her time with work and support group meetings. She focused on repairing broken relationships.

"I just got a conscience," she said.

• • •

Once, Glade filled out paperwork tallying 55 different substances she had experimented with. Marijuana, cocaine, acid, ecstasy. Freon from an air conditioner, fumes from a spray paint can.

"I liked anything," Glade said. "I would take my dad's blood pressure medication because it had a prescription label on it."

She started drinking at 12, drugging at 14, just a scared teenager trying to fit in. By the time she was 21 and old enough to drink in bars, she was there every night, living up to her wild reputation.

"I was so desperate to be accepted," she said. "I had to be better than everybody else at drinking."

Her first arrest came at age 15 for stealing beer. Over the years she picked up more charges for domestic violence and battery, flying into rages when the drugs ran out. She was kicked out of Brooksville's Central High School two weeks before graduation because of absences.

"I really don't remember much of my childhood," Glade said.

One memory she does have: giving birth to her daughter, Lisa Rose, born April 9, 2007. Glade was high on meth when she went into labor, but somehow the feeling of her new baby being laid on her chest is still with her. When both mom and baby tested positive for drugs, the state Department of Children and Families stepped in and gave custody to Glade's parents in Brooksville.

Glade tried hard to get and stay sober. It lasted two months.

Lisa Rose was 6 months old when Glade's mother died. Glade, who lost the person she depended on most, never grieved. She just stayed high. Glade's father took responsibility for the baby. Before long, DCF declared Glade could not live under the same roof with her child.

She ended up in a house with no electricity or running water and was arrested in Pasco for drug and paraphernalia possession. She tried to say it wasn't hers.

• • •

Detox, rehab, group meetings, one-on-one counseling. These became Glade's new routine. At first, she just went through the motions trying to convince the counselors she was really buying in.

Then she really was.

There was no eureka moment, just the undeniable reality that if she failed this time, she would never see her daughter again.

Her dad and sister brought the baby by for a couple hours on Sundays. It was agony to watch them leave each time, but the visits gave her confidence.

"Once I realized there was that little bit of hope, that's when I wanted more," she said.

Scott Swartz was Glade's primary counselor in Pasco County's drug court program, which steers low-level drug offenders into treatment rather than jail. He said Glade faithfully showed up for drug court sessions — four times a week for a while — in addition to daily support meetings. For six months, she called in every day, as required, to see if she would be tested for drugs. She never failed a test. "She's been very special," Swartz said. "She did a lot of work."

When Glade left in-patient treatment on Feb. 5, she was terrified.

"I had no idea how to apply anything (I had learned)," Glade said. "I was scared to cross (U.S.) 19. I was scared to ride a bicycle."

But she settled at Ace Opportunities, a transitional home in New Port Richey, started going to meetings and found a job as a "tooth fairy" — a roadside sign waver dressed in a frilly costume, advertising for a dental insurance company.

Before long, she was promoted to a telemarketer, then to administrative assistant.

"She's always been very loyal, she's always worked every way she could," said Tom Lane, president of Healthcare National Marketing in New Port Richey. "We want to do everything we can to make sure she stays on course."

Glade's teeth were rotted out by drug use. Through a nonprofit organization Lane is starting, he provided her with grant money to pay for dental work. Now, she has shiny white crowns and a confident smile.

"She's our poster child," Lane said.

• • •

Glade has been marking a lot of milestones lately. Drug court completion, her one-year anniversary of sobriety. And on Thanksgiving morning, she left the halfway house and went home to her father and her child.

Bob Glade is 73. He never understood his daughter's addictions and he admits he's leery of her transformation now.

"I'm proud of her, but I'm still on pins and needles," he said. "But I'll give her all the support I can give her."

Glade is eager to prove herself. She wants to succeed in a normal life, to cook dinner for her dad and read books to her daughter.

"I had that opportunity to live at home but that wasn't enough for me then," she said. "But today I am so grateful for exactly what I used to have."

Molly Moorhead can be reached at moorhead@sptimes.com or (727) 869-6245.