

## **Kimber Steele**

Hi my name is Kimber Steele I'm 25 years old. I became homeless when I was 23 years old. I was living with my boyfriend and unfortunately he got attacked and because I was 6 months pregnant and didn't feel safe there any more I left and moved in with my mother.

My mother lives in supported housing and only has a 1 bedroom flat which made living there very cramped. Because I knew my baby was due in 3 months I had to think about getting somewhere else to live so I went to Birmingham City Council to see what my options were. I spoke to a member of staff there who decided to put me on a home options scheme. I was introduced to Ian from St Basils Link who helped me tremendously well. Ian informed me about a mother and baby unit within St Basils. At first I wasn't so sure about moving into a hostel because I thought it would be grubby and unhygienic but once Ian explained to me a bit more about St Basils I decided to accept. The mother and baby unit was full so I had to wait. When my son was 8 days old I got a call to say I could come and attend an interview.

I went along for the interview at Trentham house. I was given a warm welcome and shown around. After my interview I was offered a place which I accepted.

When I moved in I was given a lot of help and support by staff. I was also given a keyworker, Sylvia Allen who gave me a lot of support.

Whilst at Trentham House I got along with everyone (staff and residents) and I tried to keep myself occupied, I

Enrolled on the in house Learning Power course

Became resident's representative.

Chaired meetings for residents

Held cooking sessions

Organised activities

Took part in baby massage and breast feeding workshops

Liased with staff

I enjoyed myself as resident's rep as it gave me the enthusiasm to help others in my situation.

Whilst I was living at Trentham house I got offered a two bedroom house. I accepted this offer and moved out. My resettlement worker Michelle helped me to fill out the forms for housing benefit and community grant. She also visited me on a regular basis to offer me support. She used to check on my progress and set me tasks to achieve e.g. getting my GP and dentist sorted.

Even though I had now left St Basils I still wanted to be a part of the work they did and to help by giving something back. So I decided to join the Youth Advisory Board YAB. I am the YAB Resettlement Rep which involves helping to support the young people in getting it across to the organisation just what the young people want to see happening and don't want to see happening within St Basils.

I also decided to get involved with the Schools Training and Mentoring Project StaMP, where I go around to schools, remand centres and also youth offending centres and deliver homelessness awareness sessions. I have also passed my level 2 in mentoring.

I took part in a workshop about Lifeskills and Learning power, a course I did, at the St Basils national youth led conference 'Young People - Telling it Straight' at Aston University to over a 100 housing professionals from all over the UK.

Last year I also hosted the Lifeskills Graduation ceremony at the Birmingham Library theatre. I have got involved in drama and have been in a play. I am currently involved in 1st Chance Theatre Company and performed in a play at the Birmingham Rep theatre on December 18th

I am taking my level 3 in mentoring and pursuing my career in the mentoring field

I work as a volunteer for an organisation called Values for Education which is a key centre for young people who have been permanently excluded from schools and are disaffected.

My son is now aged 2 and doing really well.

At this point in my life I feel I have a lot to look forward to. I'm glad St Basils helped me and even more glad I have been able to give something back.