



***"I hope you don't relate to my story, but if you do, please remember it is not ever too late to seek help! You too can have a life again!! Recovery is so worth it. You are worth it!!" ~ Ali***

I'm Ali from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Moonshadow's Spirit came into my life almost a year ago. Since they helped me greatly, I wanted to share my story to help others not feel alone, bring hope, and turn others to the path of recovery.

I have struggled with anorexia most of my adult life. I'm 38 now. My anorexia and mental illness started around the age of 22. I was almost finished with college and well past adolescence. Many things were going on in my life. I had moved out of state. I was missing family and friends and fell into depression. I was in an isolated relationship which later turned into an emotionally abusive one. I was having severe stomach issues and anxiety. I felt like I had no control about my future. I hid my depression, started drinking to ease my anxiety, restricted food to ease my stomach issues. These became my coping mechanisms to feeling in control while inside I was struggling. This became my way of life.

At 26 I got married. Our lives consisted of work, eating disorder behaviors, OCD behaviors, drinking, and exercise. Finally things had gotten so bad that my parents got involved. I went to inpatient treatment for anorexia at age 27. At first, I really wasn't convinced I had an eating disorder. Soon I came to love it there and I met some great women. I divorced, moved back to Tulsa, and moved in with my sister and niece.

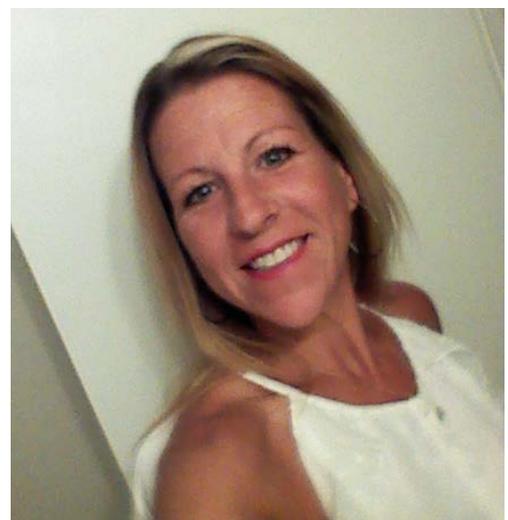
I had no insurance, I was not on any of my medications, and was drinking to cope. Things started to get pretty dark. For the next few years my drinking had taken over and was masking my eating disorder and mental illness. Something had to change! So in 2010 I got sober. Slowly the eating disorder started to prevail and, my life was sober, but consumed with eating disorder behaviors, exercising, OCD rituals, panic, depression, isolation, and hiding. I didn't get help again until my mom and stepdad moved back from North Carolina, they got me a therapist and I eventually moved in with them.

I got on disability due to anorexia and OCD. I finally had insurance and was able to see many doctors and a psychiatrist. I got medication for depression and anxiety. My support team was really proud of the work I was putting in, but I just couldn't handle the eating part. I was in denial as to my anorexia. I moved out of my parents' house thinking things would get better if I had my own place where everything could be safe and perfect for my OCD and anorexia.

Things got worse and my weight dropped, my depression was horrible, and my anxiety was heightened. I was so tired of trying. In 2016 in order to please my outpatient team I went to treatment in California and left after two weeks. I got worse.

I went back to California in August 2016 for myself, not to please my outpatient team or my family. I had a different experience and motivation to get help.

Was it hard? Yes; Was it perfect? No; Did it save my life? YES! I was there three weeks. I had a lot of work to do back home! But I did it! I'm really lucky to be living. Recovery is so much better than living in constant fear, hopelessness, depression, anxiety, isolation, and self hate. Is recovery hard? Hell, yes!! I didn't realize how hard it would be. Do I still struggle at times? Yes. But recovery is so worth it. I finally have a life. I'm involved with friends. I'm a part of my family again. I have hobbies and am involved in the community. I actually went to my 20th high school reunion and wasn't on that list of ones who had passed.



**Our mission:** Moonshadow's Spirit, Inc. honors the memory of Jennifer Mathiason by offering need-based financial assistance to individuals with an eating disorder diagnosis who are seeking treatment at residential facilities or intensive partial hospitalization program facilities. Moonshadow's Spirit seeks to remove the myths and stereotypes surrounding eating disorders through increased awareness by sharing personal stories and providing research-based literature.

Since we began accepting applications in February, 2010, Moonshadow's Spirit has provided **61 awards totaling more than \$139,000.**

The number of applications continues to increase every year. The good news is that you can help! Your donations have helped sustain us. You can also help by telling your friends and family about this cause and participating in events. We truly thank you for your generosity! You can donate confidentially on our web site or by using the enclosed envelope.

<http://www.moonshadowsspirit.org/donate>

## Upcoming Events in 2017

Moonshadow's Spirit Ninth Annual Fundraising  
Dinner  
Casino, Silent Auction and Raffle.  
**Friday, October 13 ~ 6:30 to 9:30**  
Burgundy Basin, 1361 Marsh Road, Pittsford, NY

Alex and ANI Charmed By Charity Fundraiser  
15% of sales go to Moonshadow's Spirit  
**Sunday, December 11 – 3:00 to 6:00**  
Culver Road Armory, Rochester, NY

### Financial Summary (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017)

Balance (June 30, 2016): **\$ 28,324.56**

#### Income:

Donations: \$14,308.67

Fundraisers (net): \$11,463.69

Merchandise: \$70.00

Interest: \$0.75

**Total Income: \$25,843.11**

#### Expenses:

Body Project: \$1620.04

Office: \$1698.76

Insurance: \$598.00

Legal-Prof Fees \$550.00

Miscellaneous: \$111.64

**Total Expenses: \$4578.44**

**Awards Given: \$15,063.00**

**Cash Balance (June 30, 2017):\$34,526.23**

### Prayer Shawls

*"I wanted to thank you and tell you how awesome the shawl is that was sent to [my daughter]. You know we often at church crochet little hats for the babies at the hospital but the thought never crossed my mind how comforting this could be to make a shawl for an adult. **She says she keeps it with her constantly and it is a constant reminder that people actually care!**"*

Keep those shawls coming. They are truly appreciated.

### Special Thanks

Moonshadow's Spirit wants to express a special thanks to those organizations who have given us grants this year: **McCallum Place Treatment Center, Xerox Community Involvement Program, Pen-Web Rotary and Greater Rochester Masonic Service Bureau.** Thanks to **Alex and Ani** and the **Penfield Pour House** for sponsoring fundraiser events. And Shel Beaston at **Speedy Print Services.**

### How To Find Us

Our E-mail is: [info@moonshadowsspirit.org](mailto:info@moonshadowsspirit.org)  
Visit the Moonshadow's Spirit facebook page  
Or view us on Instagram

Visit our web site [www.moonshadowsspirit.org](http://www.moonshadowsspirit.org)

Follow us on Twitter (@mshadowsspirit)

Call: 585-353-2205



***"Hello, I am Sara's mother and I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Moonshadow's Spirit in helping out with your generous scholarship towards [her] treatment. This has helped us immensely. She has been able to enter treatment and begin her journey to a healthy life. ... Keep up the good work. May you and your team be Blessed! Thank you. "***

## Body Project

**Moonshadow's Spirit** focuses significant effort into helping sufferers who are seeking treatment. However, we feel it is also important to try to prevent the illness from occurring. That is why we teamed with **KMB for Answers** (foundation in memory of Katlyn Mary Bennett) to bring Body Project training to western New York.

According to the Body Project web site:  
"The Body Project intervention is designed to help high school and college-age women resist pressures to conform to the thin-ideal and reduce their pursuit of thinness. "

In May, Chelsea Kronengold of NEDA (National Eating Disorder Association) came to Rochester to train 24 Body Project facilitators. Each of these facilitators will now be able to lead Body Project workshops with high school and college women. The intent is to address body image issues and help females recognize their self worth.

Three attendees were also trained as trainers. In the words of **Ellen Bennett**, founder of **KMB for Answers**, "We are going to build an army to help reduce negative body image thoughts."

## Awareness

**During the 2016/2017 school year, we reached 928 students** in health classes at Leroy, Geneseo, Hamburg, Webster Schroeder, and Webster Thomas High Schools.

If you have a group that is interested in learning more about eating disorders, please contact us at [info@moonshadowsspirit.org](mailto:info@moonshadowsspirit.org)

We give a pair of **socks** to any student who asks a question. You can help us by donating adult-sized, colorful ankle socks.



**23** people will die every day as a direct result of an eating disorder.

Eating disorders affect our military at a rate of **6 times** that of the civilian population.



From the journal of our inspiration,  
**Jennifer (Moonshadow) Mathiason.**

***"... today my roommie from this past year e-mailed me some pictures...and just seeing how thin I was, how tiny my arms were, how much my chest bones protruded. It would be so easy to restrict now, so easy to drop a few pounds and get that thin again, but at what price? I know that I do not function well at that weight. I know those smiles were fake. I was miserable, but I was thin. Stick thin. Hard to see, to really see, how scrawny I was. But what if I stop being "the thin one?" It's this weird identity crisis. I know there are other, more interesting things about me that make me stand out, but dammit I was the Thin One and now...I look healthy. Sometimes health can feel weird. Happiness feels weird. It's hard for me to accept the fact that maybe I really AM happy sometimes! It's a massive illusion and you tend to forget that. You see the thinness and you want that sickness again. You forget that you were miserable, that at the time you would have willingly gained the weight just to end the misery. I had finally decided it was recovery or death. I never want to feel like that again. And I have to fight off the voice saying "just restrict a LITTLE bit, workout a LITTLE bit more, the weight will fall off, you can be that thin again..." That voice lies. It lies, it lies, it lies. - June 20, 2005  
© Moonshadow's Spirit, 2014 to present.***

**A Very Busy Year for Moonshadow's Spirit (7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017)**

**5K Oct 1, 2016  
(\$1,252.28 Raised)**



**Garage Sale  
June 9/10, 2017  
(\$ 1,876.61 Raised)**



**Pour House June 13, 2017  
(\$519 Raised)**



**Casino, Raffle and Silent Auction Oct 20, 2016  
(\$ 13,187.57 Raised )**



**NEDA Body Project Training May 16 and 17, 2017  
Joint effort with KMB for Answers  
24 facilitators trained and 3 new trainers for Western New York**

