

My name is

Elizabeth Quiroz

I am a thirty-four-year-old mother of five. Growing up, I went from being in a foster home to correctional facilities. I dropped out of high school and ran from all of my problems. At the age of fifteen, I found myself trapped in human trafficking and abusive relationships that were hard to get out of because that's all I knew. At the age of sixteen, I was placed in Juvenile Hall for a robbery case under the control of my trafficker. Throughout the years, I was stuck in my addiction and committing crimes that led me to imprisonment in correctional facilities. In 2011, I was arrested for the last time. While incarcerated, I received my G.E.D. and completed Starting Point (an in-custody treatment program). When I got out, I attended and completed Women's Recovery Services (a one-year residential treatment program) where I decided I want to save lives and help those that are still sick in their addiction and the bondages of Human Trafficking. I graduated from SRJC in May of 2019 with multiple degrees with highest honors.

I am now at Sonoma State University to obtain my bachelor's degree in sociology and my master's degree in social work. I give back to my community by volunteering at The Promise Center (my church) as a greeter. I volunteered for the Bear Cub Scholar Program (for foster youth) for a year. I was president of The Second Chance Club (for formerly incarcerated students) located at the Santa Rosa Junior College for three years. I go out into the community and speak at expungement workshops, graduations in Sonoma County Jail, and Folsom State Prison for woman in hopes to speak life to individuals who are still broken. I am also a member of the Sonoma County Human Trafficking Task Force. I am currently an AODS Counselor at Athena House Residential Treatment Center for women. I also founded Sonoma Counties first Human Trafficking support group for victims survivors with other organizations.

In the future, I will be pursuing the career God has planned for me. I also received an Unconditional Governor's Pardon from Jerry Brown on Christmas Eve of 2018. I ran away from school for so many years because I didn't think I was smart enough to pass. I am now a 3.8 G.P.A student at Sonoma State University. My story was in The Oak Leaf Newspaper located at Santa Rosa Junior College and also in The Press Democrat Newspaper as well. I also won the 2019 Humanitarian Hero Award by The American Red Cross for all my community work.

The challenges I have experienced while at SSU is not having my family supporting me. I have family through organizations or my husband and kids, but not my parents. My positive experience at SSU is the love and understanding I receive from the professors and faculty. I truly feel at home at SSU and for someone that came from a broken home, that is everything.

When I turned twenty-six, I was arrested for the last time, and that's when I decided to turn my life around.

