

# Ex-addict earns a new life in year's time

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Last fall, D'Arcy Pierce celebrated his graduation from a five-month addictions program at the Ottawa Mission.

The Ottawa resident was down and out, fighting mental illness and a 25-year addiction to alcohol when he landed at the Mission just over a year ago. Wanting to change his life, he entered and graduated from the addictions program.

To some, that may sound like a happy ending. But for Pierce, it was just the start. Yesterday, the 42-year-old celebrated his graduation from the Mission's six-month maintenance training program, making him the organization's third graduate.

The hands-on maintenance program taught Pierce skills including flooring, drywalling, basic electrical work and plumbing.

While Mission staff will help Pierce find a job when he is ready, he's hoping to further his education.

"I'm looking to possibly go back to college, maybe even university," he said.

"For the people who take advantages of the services that are provided, we get really good results," said Virginia Hodgson of the Ottawa Mission.

"I want people to know," Pierce said, "that you can come to the Mission, and that they're offering this and that you can change your life, if you want to."