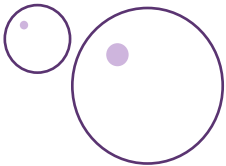


# Amber Rayoni

NAS Symposium 2023

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# Childhood years

- *Born Uniontown, PA*
- *May 28, 1988*
- *Went to Lafayette School*
- *Hyperactive behavior started*
- *Began getting in trouble*
- *People pleasing to fit in*



# Teenage years

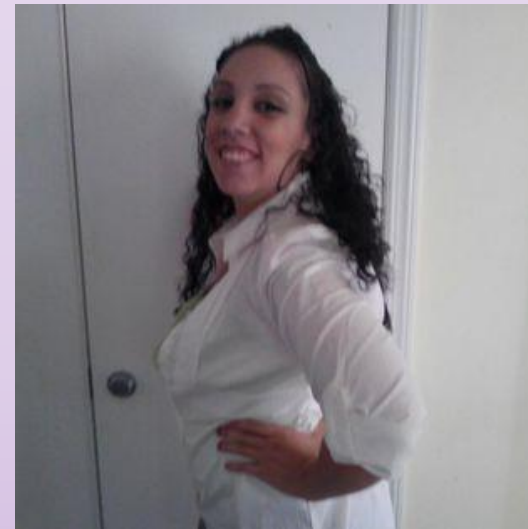
- *Suicidal tendencies*
- *Admitted to psych ward*
- *Misdiagnosed with ADHD*
- *Drinking and smoking marijuana*
- *Overdosed on prescribed pills*
- *Started using cocaine at age 14*
- *Went to first rehab at 15*
- *Started to notice parents using crack/cocaine*
- *Ran away from home frequently*
- *Raped at age 15; miscarried baby*





# 20s

- *Abusive relationship for 2.5 years*
- *Kidnapped*
- *Jail – found out I was pregnant with 1<sup>st</sup> baby (Josiah) while in jail*
- *Continued use*
- *Second pregnancy (Sincere)*
- *Moved away from home*
- *Raped*
- *Third pregnancy (Elijah)*
- *Started using pills from doctor while pregnant*



# 2016

- *Granny died and my addiction spiraled*
- *Detoxed*
- *Drug of choice changed to crack/cocaine*

# 2017

- *Went to rehab*
- *Lost kids; Josiah went to live with my mom; Elijah went to live with my sister*
- *Went to jail for 7 months*

# 2018

- *Continued to use*



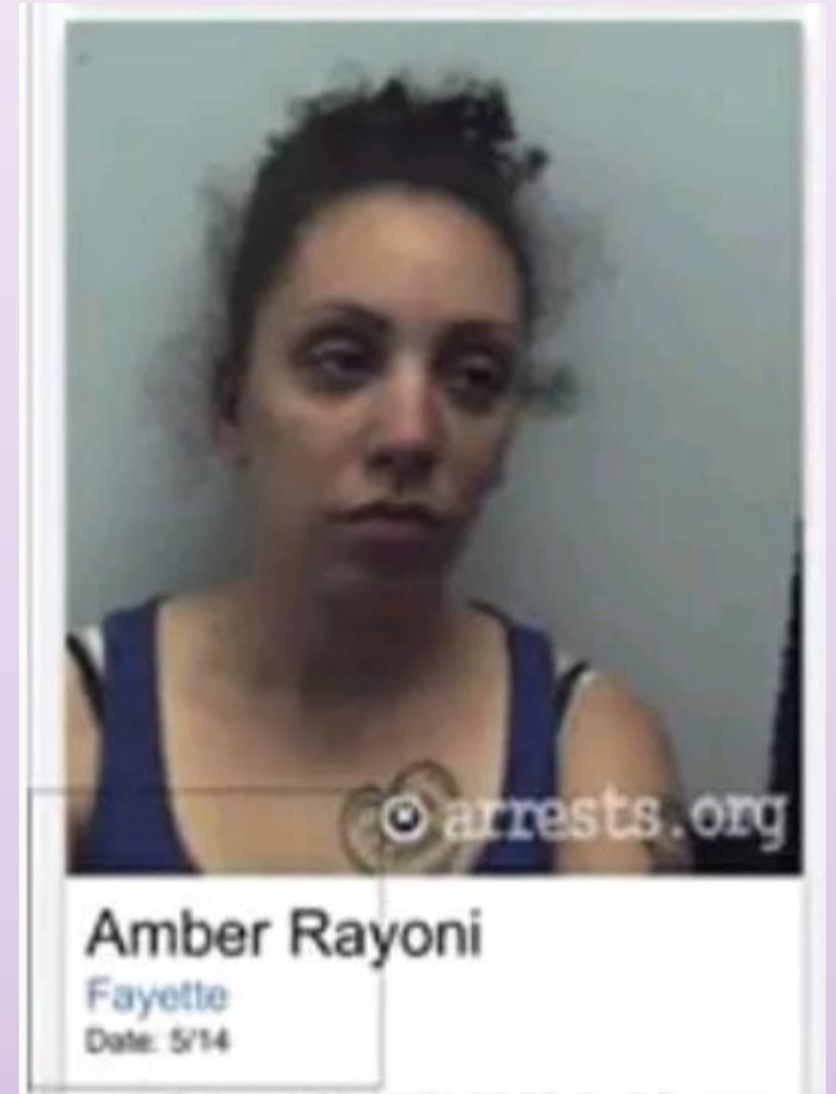
# 2019

- *Went to psych ward again*
- *Went to a recovery halfway house – Good Works*
- *Elijah was staying with my biological dad; he was physically abused by my biological dad*
- *My sister took in Elijah*
- *Kicked out of halfway house for stealing*
- *2020*
- *Continued to use*
- *Cut off house arrest bracelet; went to state-run rehab*
- *Released from rehab and continued to use*



# 2021

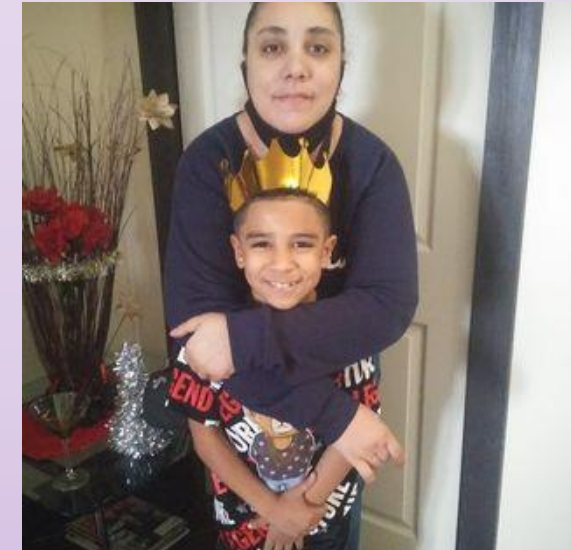
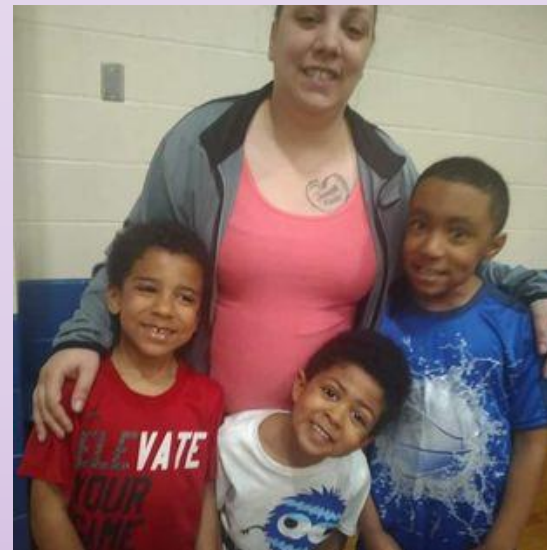
- *Family threatened to disown me if I didn't go to rehab and prevented me from seeing my kids*
- *Went to rehab in March and kicked out after 45 days due to using*
- *Kept using*
- *Only went to rehab because of family threats and being forced to*
- *Knew I was an addict, but wasn't done*





# 2021


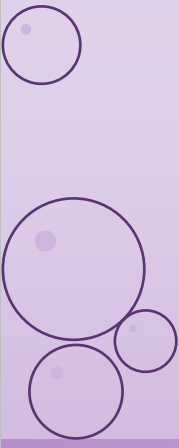
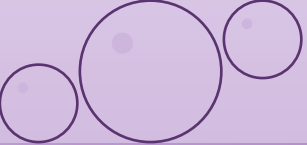
- *Staying in a homeless shelter*
- *Went to domestic violence shelter with Elijah; continued to use while in front of my son*
- *Kicked out of shelter and went to son's father's sister's house and continued to use*
- *CYS became involved*
- *Continued to use*
- *Moved in with my sister and found out I was pregnant; continued to use*
- *Sister kicked me out and kept Elijah; I was living on the streets*
- *September 30 – i decided I would check myself into the psych ward again*
- *October 1 – went to psych ward*
- *October 13 – went to House of Healing*







## ***2021, continued***

- ***While at House of Healing at first, I was complacent and pregnant, full of self-pity; tried to get my son back from my sister***
  - ***December 2021, I got Elijah back; He had a lot of trauma-induced anger and behaviors***
  - ***Realized I had to work on myself to be able to be there for elijah; Elijah had a lot of hatred towards me; felt abandoned by me; claimed my biological dad abused him.***
  - ***Enrolled Elijah in Crime Victim's Center; called police to report abuse; nothing ever came of it.***
  - ***Worked with counselor to get Elijah into therapy***
  - ***Closed CYS case***
  - ***Started rebuilding relationship with family***
  - ***Went to Community House***
- 
- 
- 

# 2022: The process of recovery started

- Decided to relocate to Erie
- Created a network of sober supports here
- Started attending meetings regularly; found a sponsor
- Continued working on myself and helping Elijah with his trauma
- Had a reunion with my family





# 2022: *The process of recovery started*

- *Overcame a major challenge at Community House with peers using*
- *Baby Legynd was born*
- *Decided to move to Mercy Center for Women*
- *One year clean! My family came to help me celebrate*





# 2023

- *Accepted into the Mercy Anchor Center – two bedroom apartment*
- *Josiah will be joining us in June*
- *Elijah loves school and is doing well in therapy; learned coping skills through painting.*
- *Elijah helped paint mural for Mercy Center for Women*
- *Experienced 8 deaths since New Year's eve and have been able to deal with them without using!*



# Why have I been successful?

- *Relocation*
- *Working on my trauma with my therapist*
- *Support from back home*
- *Working with sponsor*
- *Going to meetings*
- *Pregnancy*
- *Watching Elijah have so much pain and trauma*
- *Getting to rebuild relationships with my kids*
- *Realized I was "done"*

