



Evora Frances Johnson

Healthcare Success

“I’m still here. I’m still standing.”

Those simple words capture the spirit of Evora Frances Johnson’s journey.

Raised in Asbury Park, New Jersey, Evora remembers a childhood filled with family, home-cooked meals, and parents who worked hard to create a loving home for their children. She speaks

warmly about her mother, a talented cook who could prepare entire holiday feasts from memory and taught Evora that if food tastes good to you, it will taste good to everyone else.

For much of her life, Evora carried battles that few people could see. Depression and anxiety followed her for years, and addiction gradually took hold, pulling her further away from the life she wanted for herself. The turning point came when years of substance use began to take a serious toll on her health. Following a medical emergency, Evora learned that her heart had stopped briefly at the hospital. This pushed her to take the first step and enter a rehabilitation program. Upon learning this, her son shared words she has never forgotten.

“When I called him and told him I was in a program, he said, ‘I can get my mom back.’”

For Evora, those moments were impossible to ignore. Three years ago, she made the decision to heal and start fighting for her future. **Today, Evora is celebrating three years of sobriety, but for her, recovery is about much more than staying clean. It is about choosing herself every day.**

She dreams of attending culinary school, inspired by the love of cooking she inherited from her mother, or pursuing a degree in psychology so she can help others who have walked a similar path.

When she first arrived at the Care For the Homeless women’s shelter in the Bronx two years ago, Evora was hesitant to trust people. She kept her struggles to herself and was slow to open up, even when people were trying to help. This kept her isolated and allowed her mental health struggles to consume her. **Everything began to change when she finally sat down and had an honest conversation with her case manager.**

“Once I started talking to her, she started helping me out a lot,” Evora said. “I wasn’t used to people being nice like that, trying to do their best to help me.” When Evora talked about leaving New York and returning to New Jersey whenever things became difficult, her case manager challenged her to confront why she was making that decision.

That question forced Evora to decide that for her journey, recovery meant doing something different. **That willingness to ask for help became a turning point. Instead of facing every challenge alone, Evora began working alongside the people around her.** She started to focus on her mental and physical health, attending her appointments, working through ongoing financial challenges, and decided every day to show up for herself.

None of it has been easy and some days are still difficult. But where she once felt stuck, Evora now focuses on what she can do today to move forward.

That is the mindset that continues to guide her. At 60 years old, Evora is already thinking about what’s next. She dreams of attending culinary school, inspired by the love of cooking she inherited from her mother, or pursuing a degree in psychology so she can help others who have walked a similar path.

For Evora, recovery is not a finish line. It is a daily commitment to living fully, caring for herself, and believing that the new possibilities are always within reach. After everything she has overcome, she keeps moving forward with the same determination that brought her this far.

She’s still here. And she’s still standing.

“I first met Evora at a smoking cessation workshop at Susan's Place. During the workshop, she shared her struggles with addiction. Fast-forward I see Evora at another community health event, and the physical change in her was amazing. She shared that she was continuing her recovery journey, reconnected with God, and felt much more at peace.”

Ilkia Solano, Senior Population Health Specialist

