

NEXUS CHAMPION

SHAYLEE ALLEN



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SANDY LANCASTER

DFPS case worker, True North Program

At the age of 11, Shaylee Allen’s family was abandoned by her father. When her grandfather passed away shortly thereafter, Shaylee was overwhelmed with grief. That’s when the self-harm began.

Shaylee cut herself with knives, carving deep lacerations into her stomach and arms that resulted in significant blood loss. Confused and fearing for Shaylee’s life, her mother reached out to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) for help.

Over the course of 4 years, Shaylee was sent to facilities all over the state, including psychiatric hospitals, group homes, and residential treatment centers (RTCs). She would begin to stabilize in hospital settings, then transfer to behavioral facilities, and finally home, where the aggression and self-harming behavior would resurface. It felt like the cycle would never end.

Then she was admitted to the True North Program at Nexus Children’s Hospital – Houston, where she participated in behavioral therapy while under constant medical supervision. Her case worker noticed a difference in Shaylee soon after she was admitted. Prior to Nexus, she received three to four calls per day from Shaylee, usually when she was distressed or agitated. Suddenly the calls stopped, and when Shaylee did call, it was because she was excited to share good news.

“The Nexus staff is amazing with her,” said Sandy Lancaster, Shaylee’s DFPS case worker. **“When she’s talking to someone, she wants their full attention, and she gets that at Nexus. At other RTCs, she didn’t have that level of one-to-one care, which is what she needs in order to learn.”**

Once Shaylee became more stable, she was transferred to Nexus Neurorecovery Center – San Antonio — a medical-model residential treatment

center within the Nexus network. There, Shaylee continued to participate in True North programming, which includes therapy and incentive programs that foster a sense of personal responsibility while rewarding achievement.

“The incentives work with Shaylee,” said Sandy. **“They keep her focused and give her something to work toward. Recently, she was the only one to earn her reward for the week, and she got to choose where she wanted to have dinner with the staff.”**

Shaylee has continued to improve throughout her stay at Nexus. She is learning to listen, manage difficult emotions, and practice healthy coping skills. At the same time, she’s working on her self-paced schoolwork, which is especially challenging due to her dyslexia. Shaylee had fallen behind academically at other facilities, but is now making progress.

Since admitting to Nexus, Shaylee and her mother have begun to make strides in family therapy. She talks to her over the phone daily and looks forward to returning home. In the meantime, Shaylee is thriving at Nexus — and her mother and case workers are thrilled with the strides she is making.

“I love Nexus,” said Sandy. **“Nexus is the reason she’s doing so well, and I hope she continues on the path she’s on so she can walk away with everything she’s learned and return home successfully.”**

TRUE NORTH
PROGRAM

NEXUS
NEURORECOVERY CENTER

MENDING MINDS.
A Nexus Health Systems Facility