

POSITIVE PEER ~ April Naccarato

“I believe in angels, the kind that heaven sends. I’m surrounded by angels, and I call them my best friends.” – Pamela Daranjo

This quote hits home for April Naccarato, and while many of us can relate to being “surrounded by angels”, April lived with one for 19 1/2 years and he was her best friend. Before her “Angel Baby” arrived April’s life was a constant party. Her only real concern was to make her car payment. She didn’t care about anything but her cocaine highs. During her teens she was held to a higher standard as her dad was the principle of her high school. But by her senior year she abandoned the standard and rebelled by doing drugs and partying a lot.

A few years in to a very solid drug addiction, she got pregnant and had a big wake up call and began questioning everything she was doing. Once there was a life growing inside of her she realized she had to stop doing drugs and she did. She gave birth to her son Brennan “Angel Baby” and he had leukodystrophy, a very rare and terminal condition that effects the brain and nervous system. April poured herself in to researching how to best help him and most of all she poured everything into him. He became the center of her universe and she credits him for saving her from the dark path she was going down.

“Brennan was never able to talk, he only made noises - but he had a lot to say for never speaking (!) and the way he looked at people without saying a word changed them in a profound way. I knew I needed to help people too and to use my voice because he couldn’t.”

It was through this experience, and the inspiration she felt from Brennan, that she realized she had to live out her passion in wanting to help others. She got out of an abusive relationship and when Brennan was 8 years old they moved out of her parents house in to a house of their own. Shortly after that she got married and had another son, Michael. After many sleepless nights she got her bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Criminology from an online program.

She became a CPSW in July 2018. The opportunity to be a Peer and help others from lived experience really brought her idea of service together and it was the perfect way to share her passion for a life of service.

Now April works for Blue Cross Blue Shield as a Recovery Support Assistant. She does work in the County jails and works with members to support whatever they need in recovery including rehab, outpatient or inpatient programs. She will soon be working at the women’s prison in Springer. She also organizes Recovery events with her son young Michael who is proud of his mama for being a CPSW.

Brennan died 8 months ago, and now April has more passion and drive than ever. “I can’t lose that or I am not honoring his memory” she says. April has an “Angel Baby” tattoo with his heartbeat at 28 minutes before he took his last breath.

Last words from April:

“Keep telling your stories whether you are a CPSW or not. Share it because you never know what an impact your story can have on someone”.