

# Portraits of Ricochet

April 11, 2025



At 62, Colleen carries the scars of a life shaped by addiction, grief and homelessness. Yet, she moves forward with resilience, faith and dignity.

# COLLEEN WILSON – 62 years old

## *A Story of Resilience and Strength*

### Before the Fall

Colleen Wilson, 62, is originally from Montreal and proud of her Irish and Christian roots. At first glance, her warm smile and sincere gaze speak of resilience and transformation. Sadly, behind that smile lies a journey filled with hardship and an exceptional inner strength.

### The Downfall

“I had a normal life before drugs. I didn’t even like alcohol or being around people who used” she confides. Unfortunately at 43, everything shifted drastically when her daughter and first grandson moved out, it left a deep void. Feeling lost, Colleen then entered a toxic relationship with a man who wanted her to be a “bad girl.” Slowly, she fell into the grip of addiction, using crack and stealing to fund her habit. This dark period led to jail time and eventually rehab.



### The Breaking Point

“I had been clean for eight years, using only occasionally, until everything fell apart in 2021” she says. That year, she experienced two devastating blows: her son moved away with his twin boys, and she found the lifeless body of her mother—dead for 12 days. “I was haunted by visions of death everywhere. Those traumas drove my addiction even deeper. I was spending up to \$1,500 a day” she recalls.

### The Turning Point

Despite everything, Colleen never lost hope. In June 2024, on her daughter’s birthday, she experienced a spiritual awakening that changed everything. “I woke up overwhelmed by the presence of God. From that day on, I never felt the need to use again.” Her faith and sobriety are now her top priorities.

### Finding Ricochet

Ricochet entered her life at a critical time. “I needed a safe place, far from drugs and close to my daughter. When I arrived, I was amazed. The place was beautiful, welcoming, and the staff were extraordinary. They treated me like a human being—not like an addict” she says with emotion.

### Respect and Dignity

What struck her most was the respect and compassion from the staff. “Here, I’m not just a number. They call me by my name, listen to my story, and treat me with dignity. It gave me my voice back and helped me believe in myself again” Colleen shares. Ricochet gave her more than a roof—it gave her a family.



## And Now

Despite the hardships, Colleen still dreams big. She hopes to publish a book about her life to inspire others and even dreams of buying a hotel to support Ricochet residents. Her journey, though difficult, is a powerful lesson in courage and perseverance.

## Her Message

Through projects like Portraits of Ricochet, Colleen hopes her words will touch hearts and raise awareness.

“Life on the street isn’t a choice—it’s the result of trauma and mental health issues. We all need a helping hand and respect.”

## Taking Her Life Back

After a long journey,—and a lot of work on herself—Colleen has reclaimed her dignity and realized that she matters. Her story is living proof that even in the darkest moments, it’s always possible to rise again and find the light.

