

Otto grew up in West Texas and in the Texas Hill Country. Growing up, he could do anything he applied himself to. He learned how to be a mechanic, how to fly airplanes, how to weld. He dreamt of being an underwater welder, so he learned how to scuba dive. Despite his talents and gifts, he describes himself as a quitter. "I've been a quitter all my life," he says. "I quit church, I quit school, I quit jobs, and relationships, and even a marriage. I quit what I shouldn't have, and I didn't quit what I should."

The things Otto refers to when he talks about his troubles quitting all his life are his addictions. Throughout his life, Otto has always struggled with his relationship to alcohol and other drugs. "I'm not sure I know why my addictions started," he says. "It's hard to be true with yourself, because the truth hurts. Was it to fit in? To make money? It might have been neither. It might have been both."

His addiction reached its breaking point when he stole a car. "I always dreamt of being a Texas Ranger," he says. "But after I stole that car as a teen, my future went from one side of the fence to the other. I didn't realize then that since I was a minor, they couldn't hold it against me." And off he went.

Whether or not his addictions came from a desire to fit in or make money, James found himself making twice as much money as the average household, and found himself in constant joyful company.

His addictions ebbed and flowed. At one point he was relatively sober and spent 10 years second in command at an air conditioning company that made \$25,000 a month. At another, he spent \$65,200 in 7 months, feeding his addiction and lifestyle.

His most recent struggle with alcohol and drugs led to his going to jail, which led to his experience with homelessness. Otto was driving in a drug-heavy area of Houston with an expired license and a drug dealer in his car when he was pulled over by police. Due to paperwork issues and other misunderstandings, Otto was wrongfully charged with having a revoked license, and was sent to jail. When he came out, he was without everything, and turned more heavily towards his previous demons.

And so, Otto ended up at the ARCH. He started staying in the shelter and was quickly referred to case management. "Robbie came on the scene." Robbie and Jim helped Otto in his quest to find housing. The day his housing went through "was a damn miracle." Otto went to Streets of Hope too, in an effort to keep his addictions at bay.

Otto doesn't consider his story to be a success story, but with some prompting he admits he has had successes. He now has his own place to stay at night. He has a mind at least temporarily freed from addiction. But he still struggles, he still strives, he still has places he wants to go with his life. "Right now I'm coming out on top," he says, "and I hope I don't wind up back down there. I had to break the cycle. These people helped me do it. I didn't get here overnight, and I won't get back overnight. But I believe I've made that U-turn, and I'm headed away from that dead end. I've still got goals to accomplish, some I don't even know about yet."