

## Alumni Testimonial

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Words truly cannot express my gratitude for The Renfrew Center, but this is my attempt. **Renfrew and their West Palm Beach staff saved my life.** About a year and a half ago, my eating disorder landed me in the hospital. At the time I was in a toxic romantic relationship, but in an even more toxic relationship with food, exercise and my body. Food was a necessary “evil,” exercise—a punishment, and my body—a prison of my own making.

After my hospital stint, I finally ended my relationship with the toxic boyfriend but clung ever more tightly onto my eating disorder. After all, my eating disorder made me feel safe and comfortable, it gave me a purpose, I was “good” at it. It was just ME. Or so I believed...

In just seven weeks’ time at Renfrew, the thoughts, ideals and routines I once thought immovable and unchangeable had transformed. **I have come to realize I am in fact so much more than my eating disorder.** I found my personality again! I have learned I can tolerate my emotions and that I am strong enough to experience them. Life has opened up and actually become so much simpler and easier than I could ever have imagined.

I had put my body through so much stress, both physically and mentally, for so long, that when I finally started to let go of some of my eating disorder’s structure and rigidity, it felt like an immense weight had been lifted from my shoulders. **In recovery, I’ve been told the color has returned to my face. I noticed that too, sure. But, what I really noticed, was the color coming back into my life.** I have energy now; I’m not too tired to crack a joke. I can focus on my work without distractions of when I’ll allow myself to eat again. I can carry a conversation without drifting off into my own thoughts about how to compensate for whatever food I’ve allowed myself to eat. I’m able to give so much more attention to the things and people I value—the parts of my life that make it a life worth living.

My therapist can only be described as a Godsend. She’s been there for me through all my ups and downs along this journey. **She has helped me better understand myself and most importantly, helped me to be aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviors.** My dietitian has been there for me through countless freak outs—the times when I’ve doubted myself, thought my meal plan was too much and in general when I just thought I couldn’t eat “so much” food. She’s always been there to reassure me of the recovery path I’m on and has given me the education to know I can trust my body. I could say so much more about the staff at Renfrew, but the thing they all have in common is their authentic, kind hearts that have made this journey to recovery possible for me. They all truly care, and it shows.

This letter can’t possibly do justice to just how grateful I am to my support team at Renfrew. I am so thankful to Renfrew for helping me continue on the path to recovery that I know is possible. ”



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