

Katee Callaway's Success Story



Katee was literally the star of the show as a three-year-old Sumter County resident in the early 1990s. She was crowned Lil Miss Sumter and Lil Miss USA, as a young pageant participant. Sadly, trauma entered her childhood, disrupting her family life, and by age 13 she was addicted to drugs.

Instead of embracing the hope of a second chance through rehabilitation, she became a rebellious teenager. She stayed in school but did not put forth much effort to be successful. She became a single mom at age 15 and again at age 17. She dropped out of school and enrolled in a GED program. Trying to juggle young children and a part time job proved too much to manage so she dropped out of the GED program. She continued to struggle with addiction, lost her rights to her children, became homeless, and continued her downward spiral. She tried GED classes three more times but dropped out of those as well.

After 20 years of cycling in and out of this addiction pattern, she found hope again in 2023. She was six months sober when she again enrolled in GED classes, making a pact with her teenage son that she would focus on her education if he would also focus on his. Even though she was plagued with self-doubt and the constant fear of failing again she continued to pursue her goal of earning her GED. In April 2025, she earned her GED, and is now focused on her next immediate goal of having her driver's license reinstated. These two victories will allow her to become a Peer Specialist (a counselor and mentor role) at the rehabilitation facility that helped her find the light in the dark tunnel of addiction.

Katee wants to be able to encourage others to overcome their challenges one step at a time. To her, classes at the Adult Education Center provided her the support she needed when she felt inadequate. Her instructors provided her with the time and space to focus on each subject so she wouldn't be overwhelmed, and they encouraged her to keep trying even when things got difficult.

Katee is a determined individual. She knows what it is like to fail, but she has also experienced personal success and chooses each day to continue to make decisions that lead to her goals. Katee is also an encourager. Having been at devastating lows in her life, she can now recognize the needs of others and redirect their confidence. Katee is once again shining like a star as she makes strides to give back to her community.