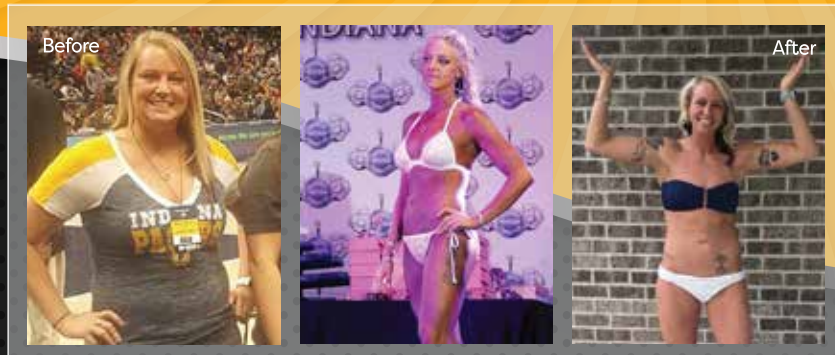


2019

SOUTHERN MUSCLE GUIDE presents

COURAGE AWARD Finalist

KELSIE WEST



I'm an alcoholic. In recovery. 15 months to be specific. My life hasn't been all rainbows and unicorns but rather a testimony of grace.

Okay back up just a tad, I am a nurse. Well, I was a nurse. I will be a nurse again. I was fortunate to find my passion right out of high school and earned my RN in 2013. Shortly after I started working in healthcare, my addiction began. It wasn't abrupt, it developed over time. But that Jesus, oh my sweet Jesus, He had a plan, and I am evidence it is ALWAYS good.

At the peak of my addiction, I was lost in a toxic relationship and at the bottom of a bottle. After earning my second DUI, I found myself broken, extremely overweight, a slave to alcohol, and removed from the only thing I felt I had left in this life that gave me purpose, my career. I needed help and I could NOT do it alone. May 2018, I went to treatment. I surrendered and began to claw my way out of this deep trench I had dug for myself.

I slowly started to rediscover who I was, what gave me purpose, what fed my soul. During that time, I found kickboxing and returned to the weight room; a place I had found therapeutic my whole life until I became "distracted" with life. A sweet friend, who had seen my progress, suggested that I enter the transformation category of an upcoming competition. I asked myself, why not? And when I couldn't come up with a reason...game on!

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*Proving to myself I was capable of making such huge changes to my physical self, gave me more motivation to improve my whole self.*

I was committed. Not only to getting my physical self in check, but healing my mind, my heart, and spirit. I quit giving up on me. I set gym appointments and I treated them as that. I stuck to a nutrition plan that served my body. I worked hard on me. By the grace of God, I was given the opportunity to share the story of my valley with my church and was baptized. I am His. Always and forever. I stand here today, as living proof that God's power and strength is made perfect in my weakness.

I am aware that I am constantly healing. Proving to myself I was capable of making such huge changes to my physical self, gave me more motivation to improve my whole self. It was all part of the process. I am blessed. My heart overflows with gratitude. April of next year, I will have the opportunity to get back into the field of nursing because of a program in Indiana that not only ensures nurses are safe to practice but are given the chance to recover. Thank you Jesus for this program.