



## Community Champions Initiative

### **Kim Bartlett Recovery Story**

Imagine living in a world where every movement, every decision you made was criticized by a group of people that you could never see, but always hear. Imagine being in the first grade when you were shoved into this world.

That's what happened to Kim Bartlett. She has schizophrenia, although she wasn't diagnosed until her early thirties. She lived in a world of hopelessness for the majority of her life.

Bartlett said she viewed everything as dangerous. Someone was out to get her. She was convinced her own mother was trying to poison her and that the police were constantly monitoring her every move.

"I was a walking zombie, had no emotions, could not communicate effectively, weighed 257 pounds, was diabetic, hallucinating, paranoid and delusional," Bartlett wrote in a letter to the commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Terri White.

Like so many other people facing mental illness, Bartlett was able to seek help. She found it at the Jim Taliaferro Community Mental Health Center in Lawton. At this facility, run through ODMHSAS, she was finally able to obtain the treatment and support she needed to recover.

"Within five months (of therapy), I lost 110 pounds, the diabetes disappeared, I began to want to communicate, my emotions came back, I wanted to be clean and presentable and, most importantly, I began to love myself the way God intended for me to," said Bartlett.

With the encouragement of her psychiatrist, Dr. Jenny Boyer, Bartlett was able to come out of her living coma and find a new passion for life. She is searching for ways to share her story, seizing every opportunity to speak at conferences and conventions about her disorder.

She currently serves as secretary for the National Alliance on Mental Illness' "Caring Families" chapter in Lawton. Here, she does her part in helping NAMI in its campaigns to educate people about the truths concerning mental illness.

Bartlett said she believes in recovery and in a system that values its consumers' right to recover.

"Today I love my life. I have a lot to offer the world, because I can offer hope ... hope for recovery ... hope for a better future ... and hope for every individual who has ever suffered or been associated with anyone who has had a mental illness. This is my passion and my life – to go public with educating others about recovery."