**15717, Ray Figueroa**

Your Honor, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Court, Fellow Participants

There was a time in my life when alcohol and drugs were the norm for me. You know that I’ve had my ups and down over time. There were times when my attempts to get better had to be required of me. But, those days are no more. Today I have been clean and sober for 6 months and 27 days. During this time I have grown in many ways. I’ve learned the value of honesty and how it can change the way people think about me and respect me for it.

I also learned the value of accomplishing a job well done, and the rewards that come with doing a job to the best of my ability. My employer even told me that I was indispensable! That not only warmed my heart, it encouraged me to continue to grow and learn. I have learned new job skills and gained confidence in those skills.

I go to 4 to 5 self-help meetings a week and have a literature commitment at my home group just 3 blocks from my house. Without my meetings I don’t know what I’d do. I enjoy the Newport Beach meeting a lot because I have the chance to share my experience, strength and hope with several newcomers each week.

My medications make me feel like a normal person. There was only one change in them a couple months back and I believe it was for the best. My use of the wrong kinds of drugs in the past caused great harm to my life. But, using doctor monitored medications now to balance my system helps me to live a more balanced life and fulfill my responsibilities.

There was a time that I went back through the Gerry House Drug Treatment Program for the second time and kept telling my probation officer I was clean and didn’t use meth when in fact I had used it. But, even though I’ve had problems with honesty with myself and others in the past, I’ve seen the light and now feel I can be honest. I can experience the shame and embarrassment of doing wrong, accept it, and most importantly, move PAST it. I found out that my dishonesty got me zilch in this program. I’ve learned that honesty will bring its own rewards and help me to earn the respect of those I work for and work with.

I now feel I have great purpose in this life in service to others while volunteering at the LGBT CENTER OC. I’ve been volunteering there for over 6 years, and at work with people living with HIV and AIDS as well as with people living with HEP C. Right now I am very content with my life and feel that I’ve earned advancement into phase 4 of this CORT program

So please, your honor, with your permission I ask that you allow me to advance to phase 4 of the CORT program. You have my word that I will give it my best effort and you will not regret giving me this opportunity.

Thank you