



*“Circles is not only a program, it is a family for me and my daughter. Circles at CAC has helped me strive to meet my goals...it is a life changer for Cherish and me. The Circles approach, my allies, and everyone at Circles is helping me better myself in all aspects of my life.”*

- Manny

## Emerging From Client to Community Action Agency Employee

### Impact Update

Since attending Circles, Manny has received his GED and is currently taking an HVAC course through the Western MD Consortium...part of which is paid for by a scholarship for which he applied. Cherish is now enrolled in a Head Start Program in Hagerstown and receives other supportive services to help her to be school-ready.

Manny is 35 years old and came to Hagerstown to attend the Wells House, a recovery house. Seven years ago as a recovering addict from Baltimore. Manny was raised by his aunt and did not have a relationship with his mother or father. Manny did not graduate from high school. Manny has remained clean since he came to Hagerstown but got involved with a woman who was an addict.

Manny tried for years to help his girlfriend get clean but was never successful, even when she became pregnant. At one point, he even had to have her arrested when she was pregnant so he could protect his unborn daughter. Manny has always taken care of his daughter, Cherish, since her birth in January 2021, but didn't live with her mother. In 2022, Cherish's mother passed away from a drug overdose. Manny became the sole caretaker of Cherish following her mother's death and until attending Circles, Manny didn't have a single reliable support person in his life.

By attending the Circles Program in Washington County, MD (a 2Gen Pilot Program) and becoming a Circle Leader, Manny was able to obtain full custody of his daughter. He relied on Temporary Cash Assistance, SNAP benefits, and Medicaid for both himself and his daughter.

Manny has the goals of completing the HVAC course successfully and is obtaining his driver's license. He would then like to gain employment, start the coursework for his Bachelor's degree, and eventually open a recovery house to help those who are struggling with addiction.

