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MID-STATES



Breaking the cycle of addiction: First-time mother delivers the first Freedom House baby of 2026

Growing up in Knott County, Kentucky, Dana was no stranger to addiction. Both of her parents struggled with substance use disorder, and she was raised by her grandmother.

"My dad was in prison, and my mom was out with whoever and wherever," Dana said. "She left me and my sister wondering where she was all the time."

From a young age, she was determined to go down a different path. But at 16 years old, she got into a car accident that left her with severe injuries to her leg and underwent 13 surgeries to save the limb. She was on bed rest for six months and prescribed pain medications.

"I hadn't touched drugs at all," she said. "I wanted to grow up different than my parents."

Dana started abusing her pain medicine, and soon she was in the throes of addiction, living a life she hoped to avoid.

After nearly four years of active addiction, she was arrested for the second time on a possession charge and found out she was pregnant with a baby girl. The court sent her to Freedom House in Clay County, a nationally recognized recovery program for pregnant and parenting women run by Volunteers of America Mid-States (VOA).

Dana entered the program in October 2025 and worked with VOA's licensed and trained clinical therapists to understand the root causes of her

addiction and overcome substance use disorder.

"My life's been coming back together," she said. "They're bringing me back to life."

The program also helped Dana prepare for motherhood. She learned routines and habits to help her become a successful, sober parent. As a first-time mom, Dana is determined to break the cycle of addiction for her family and create a stable environment for her baby.

"I just want to be a present mother that's able to provide for my daughter," Dana said. "That's not something I really had due to addiction, and I don't want to put my child through that."

On January 20, her daughter, Kinzley, was born weighing 8 pounds. Dana will continue to live at Freedom House with Kinzley and work on her recovery until she graduates from the program in the spring.

Everyone at Freedom House was thrilled to welcome the new mom and baby home with love and care, and all of VOA celebrated Kinzley's birth as the first Freedom House baby born in 2026.

Since Freedom House launched in Louisville 32 years ago, the program has delivered over 340 healthy babies free from substances.

If you or a loved one is struggling with addiction, VOA is here to help. Learn more at <https://www.voamid.org/services/substance-use-recovery/>.