

From trauma and tragedy to

TRIUMPH



PPL's Keith Mays was determined not to let dire circumstances dictate his fate

Keith Mays was just three years old when both of his parents died.

He was devastated, heartbroken, lost. And that was just the beginning of what would be more than a decade's worth of trauma.

As Mays and his two siblings bounced around from foster home to foster home, he endured pain that no child should ever have to — physical and mental abuse, neglect and living in rough cities where rats and roaches roamed their living spaces and gunshots echoed in the dark nights as the children tried to sleep.

Finally, at age 14, Mays decided he had endured enough pain. His older sister had left his home a year prior to live on her own at age 16 and he and his younger brother boldly chose to leave too. They walked many miles to a child services building in Center City Philadelphia and after a 30-day stay in a shelter, they were brought to The Children's Home of Easton.

Mays, now a proud PPL employee, gets emotional describing how his life suddenly changed.

"At The Children's Home of Easton, they taught me structure and discipline," Mays said. "They showed me unconditional love. If it wasn't for the Children's Home of Easton, I wouldn't be here."

"Coming to The Children's Home was truly a blessing," Mays said. "From three to 14, I was living every day to survive, thinking, 'Am I going to eat today? Am I going to get beat today?'"

Mays spent nine years at the home and in 2010, his last year, he was named the home's student of the year. In his years there, he traveled around the country to states like Vermont, Missouri and Texas as a member of the home's basketball team. He later played basketball for Northampton County Community College.

In the years that followed, Mays went on to earn a criminal justice degree and worked several jobs, including one as a guard at a juvenile justice center in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. Since February of 2020, he's been an associate security professional for PPL, helping to maintain the physical security of PPL's buildings and infrastructure. He's also an assistant coach for the Liberty High School varsity basketball team.

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Keith Mays,
PPL associate security professional

"What Keith has endured and triumphed over is a testament to his inner strength and work ethic," said Ed Wurster, PPL's director of Protective Services and chief physical security officer. "He has not only overcome a difficult past, he has gone on to be a role model for others. Overcoming adversity and working through challenges are characteristics of a great employee and remarkable person. I believe Keith lives the Vision, Mission and Values of PPL every day and I am proud to work with him and be part of his remarkable story."

Mays has visited The Children's Home of Easton to share his inspirational story and has coached basketball there. In July 2020, he was appointed to the board of directors at the home.

Mays is living in the Lehigh Valley with his 2-year-old daughter, happy and free from the stress and trauma he endured early in life. And his siblings are successful too — his sister is a nurse and his brother is a Pennsylvania state trooper.

"When we get together it's emotional because of what we went through and where we are now," Mays said. "All three of us made it. We made a choice not to be victims of the system, of the environment. We all could have gone the other way."

Mays has advice for anyone struggling through dark times.

"Your circumstances don't determine your outcome," he said. "Whatever cards you're dealt, play them to the best of your ability and don't fold."

Mays said his favorite quote is from former WNBA star Becky Hammon: "You never know what your journey has in store. You just work hard and keep your nose to the grind. You do things the right way, you treat people the right way, and good things happen."

KEVIN AMERMAN