

SUPPORT OUR EASTER BANQUET

It's not too late to support our annual Easter Celebration for homeless and low-income families here in Salt Lake.

Held on April 19 - the Saturday before Easter - we are planning to serve over 1,500 meals. There will be free clothes, an Easter egg hunt and carnival games for homeless and low-income kids. There will also be music by local churches and an invitation for the homeless to join the Mission's New Life Program - a free program that helps people get out of homelessness and into sobriety, employment and housing.

We are still low on several items needed to make our Easter Banquet complete, so please consider using the enclosed envelope to donate today! If you would like to help serve at our Easter banquet, please give us a call at 801.355.1302 and ask to speak with our volunteer coordinator.

YOUR TAX RETURN CAN HELP

April means tax season and many will be getting a refund from Uncle Sam. If you are getting money back this year, please consider helping the homeless by sharing some of your refund with the Rescue Mission.

We are always in need of April donations to help us get through our difficult summer months, when donations slow down, but the need for food, shelter, clothing and our New Life Program continues. There are many ways to give. You can send a check in the enclosed envelope, click on one of the donation buttons at rescuesaltlake.org or call our finance office at **801.746.1006** to make a donation by credit card over the phone.



RESCUER

APRIL 2014

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



rescuesaltlake.org

DON NICHOLSON: From a Six-Figure Job to the Rescue Mission

It was 2001 when I gave up on life. I was standing at the top of the Eiffel Tower, looking out over Paris. I asked myself, "What is the purpose of all of this?" Life seemed empty and meaningless.

The five years leading up to my Eiffel Tower epiphany had been taxing. Growing up working in the oil fields of Vernal, Utah, I rose through the ranks of an oil company and became an instrument control manager stationed off the coast of Angola. I was making \$120,000 a year and had over \$200,000 saved for retirement.

Losing It All

Working overseas meant an unusual schedule. I would work for 28 days straight, living on an ocean-based rig. Then I would have 28 days off. It was an enjoyable arrangement, making six figures for only six months of work. In Angola, the rig was completely dry, which meant that alcohol was not allowed. So for the 28 days I worked, I was sober. But the minute I left the rig, I would start drinking and would not stop drinking for the next 28 days. It was like that the entire time I worked overseas.

At home in Vernal, I was married to a woman I didn't love. This was my third marriage, a rebound response to the loneliness I felt when my second - and longest lasting - marriage fell apart. The first time I got married, I was only 19 and it lasted for six months. But my second wife, Jeri, was the true love of my life. We stayed together for over 12 years and the hole that was left in my heart when our marriage ended couldn't be filled, even by alcohol.

Many times, coming back from Angola, I would route my flight home through Europe so I could spend some of my 28 days off seeing the sites. This time, in Paris, I was depressed,



Don Nicholson shared a poem he wrote with some Rescue Mission volunteers. They were so impressed that they turned it into a poster Don could display in his room.

unable to stop drinking, disconnected from God and living in what I felt was a loveless marriage. Looking back, I can see why I gave up on life. When I returned to the oil rig, I told my bosses I was quitting. Back in Vernal, I told my wife I didn't love her and wanted a divorce.

I took my savings, secured a rundown apartment in Vernal and started drinking every day. Over the next three years, I spent my life's savings on alcohol. I wasted my days locked inside my apartment and kept two half-gallon bottles of vodka in my home at all times. The only time I would leave

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APRIL 2014 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Christ is risen!		1 Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake	2 South Mountain Community Church - Chapel and Kitchen	3 Salt Lake Christian Center	4 Mt Olympus Presbyterian	5 Bible Baptist
		Kitchen: Intermountain Baptist Youth		Kitchen: Korean Presbyterian Church of Utah		Kitchen: South Valley Community Church
6 Grace City Church	7 Road to Freedom Biker Mission	8 Unity Baptist	9 Northern Utah Mennonite	10 Millcreek Baptist	11 Hilltop United Methodist Church	12 Berean Bible
			Kitchen: Southeast Youth Group			
13 Calvary Chapel Salt Lake - Chapel and Kitchen	14 Intermountain Baptist	15 K2 - The Church	16 Capital Church	17 Wasatch Christian	18 Discovery Christian	19 Evangelical Free Church of Salt Lake
				Kitchen: Capital Church		
20 Alpine Church	21 Sandy Ridge Community Church	22 Canyons Church	23 First Methodist	24 Tooele Christian Fellowship	25 Midvalley Bible	26 Capital Church
		Kitchen: First Baptist Tooele				
27 Grace Community Bible	28 Living Waters Christian Fellowship	29 Potter's House Christian Fellowship	30 First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake			
						He is risen, indeed!

Connect with us

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JESUS MEETS THE EVER-PRESENT NEED

A few months ago, the U.S. Conference of Mayors released its 31st Annual Assessment of Hunger and Homelessness. The assessment

included data from 25 major U.S. cities, including Salt Lake. While the report noted that homelessness in Salt Lake had decreased 14 percent, there had also been an increased demand for food and shelter space last year.

So while more people are being lodged in subsidized housing for the chronically homeless, the need for food and emergency shelter continues to rise here in Utah. And despite the great need for food and shelter assistance, finances available to

support these services are expected to decrease in 2014.

"Nearly three-fourths of the cities expect that resources to provide emergency food assistance will decrease over the next year," Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton said. "[And] in 62 percent of the cities, resources to provide emergency shelter are expected to decrease over the next year."

It's a familiar theme that I have experienced in my eight years at the Rescue Mission. Demand is ever increasing while the resources to meet the demand seem to always be in peril. I think Jesus recognized this ever-present dilemma when he said "For you will always have the poor with you." (Matthew 26:11, ESV)

And while there will always be poor people in our communities, it doesn't stop us from following God's

call to help. When Paul wrote of his conversations with early church leaders, he noted that "... they asked us to remember the poor - the very thing I also was eager to do." (Galatians 2:10, ESV)

At the Rescue Mission, we follow the call to "remember the poor." We praise God for using His people to provide the support we need. We feed, clothe and shelter the homeless in a loving atmosphere where they can access services that can change their lives.

During this Easter season, I am reminded that the Rescue Mission is really just an extension of what Jesus did. He "remembered the poor," namely, all of us human beings. He came to Earth, was tempted just like us, suffered just like us, but never sinned, so that the One who had no punishment for His own sin could take the punishment of others. God's wrath fell on Jesus instead of us. And after the cross, Jesus rose from the grave and ascended into Heaven to give hope to those that hope in Him. We know that death is not the end, but that forgiveness and everlasting life with God are available to those who trust in Jesus.

Hope is what we strive to share with the homeless: hope that there is a place out there with hot food, safe shelter and warm clothes. Hope that there are people who will help them off the streets and into employment and housing. And hope that there is forgiveness and everlasting life in Jesus.

This Easter, we will be bringing hope to thousands of men, women and children in our community. Please remember to pray for our homeless friends and consider volunteering at the Rescue Mission. We know the demand for our help is ever increasing; please help us meet it with the hope of the Gospel.

God bless you,

Chris D. Croswhite
Executive Director

These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted!

	February 2014	YTD 2014
Professions of Faith	13	30
Meals	10,555	24,457
Family Food Boxes	220*	486**
Nights of Shelter	3,674	7,936
Clothing	4,135	7,617
Day Service/Hygiene	397	805
	*4,400 meals	**9,720 meals

Our Stats

how your gift helps

DON NICHOLSON: Continued from Page 1

was to buy alcohol or food. I was so lonely that I remember wishing someone would knock on my door. But then when someone did knock at my door, I would hide inside my apartment, not answering.

My Family Breaks Up

It was strange to be so isolated in the town where I spent most of my life. I had moved to Vernal in the fifth grade after my parents divorced. Previously, we had been living in Seattle. I was the youngest of four children and went to Catholic school. When my parents told me they were getting divorced, I remember going to school and praying that it wouldn't happen.

It was frightening for me to think of life without both a mother and father. In Vernal, I was shocked to find out that not everyone in the world was Catholic and that some people had different thoughts about how the world worked. I became a loner and spent more time reading books than with friends.

When I was 14, my older cousin introduced me to alcohol. When I drank, I felt transformed. Instead of being a shy introvert, I actually felt comfortable being around people.

When I turned 18, I started working in the oil drilling business that employed so many young men in the Uintah Basin. At 23, I married Jeri. We followed a job transfer to Evanston, Wyoming and had a son together. Life was good. We were active in church and I even taught a ninth grade Sunday School class. Still, I drank most every weekend, and soon my wife joined me. We started going to dance clubs and our drinking grew worse. We quit going to church and in 1995, after 12 years together, our marriage fell apart. After divorcing, I quickly remarried a woman I didn't love and transferred overseas to Angola.

Out of Money and Locked Up

After drinking away all my savings, I realized that I needed to find a job. I started working at a "fishing" rental company. We rented equipment to oil-drilling companies for retrieving tools or other items that accidentally fell into their wells.

The job wasn't great and paid far less than I was used to, but at least I had money to buy alcohol. In 2008, I was married for the fourth time to a woman I met at Alcoholics Anonymous. We were both trying to stay sober and thought we could help each other stay away from vodka. Instead, we started drinking together. We were drinking so much that we would black out (being conscious, but not remembering what had happened the next day).

During some of our black-out sessions, we fought and the fighting became physical. The cops were called many times and usually it was my wife who was blamed for scratching or hitting me. One night, however, I grabbed her and was arrested for aggravated assault. I was given six months in the Uintah County Jail.

After four months in jail, I came across a brochure for the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. I picked it up and took it back to my cell. For the next two weeks, I read it over and over. I started praying to God again. I asked Him if I should ask the judge to send me to the Rescue Mission for help. With just 40 days left on my 180-day sentence, I spoke with my lawyer.

I asked him to see if the judge would release me to attend the New Life Program at the Rescue Mission in Salt Lake.

My attorney was against it. "I think you will be humiliated," he said. In his mind, I wasn't a homeless person. I wasn't as bad as those street drunks. My reply was, "Maybe that's what it will take." Instead of being humiliated, maybe I would find the humility I needed to stay sober. Against his better judgment, my attorney convinced the judge to let me out 40 days early so I could spend a year in the Rescue Mission's New Life Program.

A New Life

When I walked into the Rescue Mission in January of 2013, I remember thinking, "I am nothing like these people." I made up my mind that when the weather warmed up, I would head back to Vernal. But then things started to change. I began to love the daily Bible study class. Even though I had gone to church many times, I realized that I had never really studied the Bible.

The truth of God's Word came alive. For me it was just like running into a brick wall. A spiritual light was turned on inside of me. I realized that God loved me, that He sent His Son to die for me and was ready to forgive if I would turn to Him and follow Jesus Christ.

I began to see that I was exactly like all the other people at the Rescue Mission. In God's eyes, all people are the same, from the billionaire to the penniless homeless man. There is equality in how God views people. I took pleasure in studying the Bible, learned to have joy and made friends I could trust. Many of the things I formerly perceived as weakness, like being timid or shy, I started to view as positive ways God had made me unique. I was encouraged by 2 Corinthians 12:9, "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

One of the best things about the Rescue Mission has been connecting with so many people who are excited about following God. I have met many great volunteers and had a great community mentor, Frank Murray, who read through an encouraging Bill Bright book with me. I love going to Calvary Chapel on Sundays and am learning more about who God is and how I can serve Him better.

I have graduated from The New Life Program and am living at the Terri Timmerman Freedom House, the Rescue Mission's transitional housing complex. I have a good job at an instrument control company, where I prewire electric panels for substations. When I am off probation for my assault charge, I hope to return to work in the oil drilling business, this time as a sober follower of God.

I know my struggle is far from over, and I am not one who counts the number of days, months or years I've been sober. Instead I say, "By the grace of God, I won't drink today." Please pray that I would stay close to Him and continue to grow. And most of all, thank you for supporting the Rescue Mission and giving a person like me a second chance at life.