

WE ALREDY NEED YOUR HELP FOR WINTER

If you can believe this, we are already preparing for our Thanksgiving, Christmas and winter rush. We know that sounds crazy sitting in 100-degree summer weather, but with over 44 years of experience, we know that we need to start preparing and asking for help early.

It's true that we have had an influx of homeless people seeking help throughout this sweltering summer. Thanks to your generous donations and God's help, we have been able to meet their needs, day in and day out. As we look forward to our busiest time of year, we ask again for your help to get ready.

Please consider donating today. You can give online at RescueSaltLake.org, use the enclosed envelope or call our finance office at 801.746.1006 to make a secure credit card donation over the phone. Also, begin saving up cans of food, warm clothes, socks and boots so that you can help us keep people safe this winter.

We know it's strange to be thinking about the cold when it's so hot outside, but given our high demand, we need to prepare as early as possible this year. Thank you for donating, volunteering and praying. We could not exist without your support and God's enabling power.



AUGUST 2016 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 First Baptist of West Valley City - Chapel and Kitchen	2 Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake Kitchen: Intermountain Baptist Youth	3 South Mountain Community Church	4 Salt Lake Christian Center Kitchen: Korean Presbyterian Church of Utah	5 Mt Olympus Presbyterian	6 Bible Baptist Kitchen: South Valley Community Church
7 Gospel Grace - Chapel and Kitchen	8 Intermountain Baptist	9 Unity Baptist	10 Northern Utah Mennonite Kitchen: Southeast Youth Group	11 Millcreek Baptist	12 Hilltop United Methodist Church	13 Berean Baptist
14 Calvary Chapel Salt Lake - Chapel and Kitchen	15 Bennion Christian Center	16 K2 - The Church	17 Capital Church	18 Wasatch Christian Kitchen: Capital Church	19 Discovery Christian	20 Southside Church of Christ - Chapel and Kitchen
21 Alpine Church	22 Living Waters Christian Fellowship	23 Canyons Church Kitchen: First Baptist Tooele	24 First Methodist	25 Tooele Christian Fellowship	26 Midvalley Bible	27 Evangelical Free Church of Salt Lake
28 Grace Community Bible	29 Gateway Community Church	30 Bennion Christian Center	31 First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake			

RESCUER

AUGUST 2016

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



DON JOHNSON:
The red Elmo doll was a true Godsend

When I first walked past the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake eight months ago, I was completely broken. I was plotting my second suicide attempt when I happened to look up and see a sign that said “Jesus Saves” hanging over the Rescue Mission’s door. Something caused me to walk inside, and within 45 minutes I was a volunteer in the Mission’s New Life Program.

Soon I was a full New Life Program member and last month I began an internship with the Rescue Mission that will hopefully lead me to obtain a job at one of the many faith-based homeless missions across the nation that are part of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions.



Today, I have lost my anger and mistrust of God. Those feelings have been replaced by trust and faith in Jesus Christ. This shift, along with the ability the Rescue Mission gave me to verbalize many of the feelings that I had bottled up inside, changed me.

At age 61, I now feel like I have my whole life in front of me.

Was it Random Chance?

It was really three “coincidences” that made me put my trust in God again. Today, I realize these apparent coincidences were actually God’s plan playing out in my life.

The first happened eight months ago when I decided to kill myself. I was living in Ogden and was so broken from a life of pain, loss and alcoholism, that the pain of life seemed worse than the pain of death.

The downward spiral of my life began from an abusive childhood where I learned to use alcohol to numb pain. I

After being an alcoholic for 48 years, Don Johnson has a new life of sobriety and is working towards a career in helping the homeless and hurting off the streets.

was chubby and a slow learner. Kids at school made fun of me and my dad fat-shamed me at home. I was so desperate to have friends that one night, when I was 13, I crashed a party that I knew my two brothers and some other “cool” kids were attending. Before I went, I was able to convince an airman (we lived in Arizona near a military base) to buy me some beer and liquor. I showed up at the party, got drunk and supplied many other kids there with alcohol.

That’s about all I remember. But the significance of that night came the next day when two kids from the party, a

Please see “Don” on page 3.

CONNECT with us

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JOIN US IN RUNNING THE GOOD RACE

Running the race to win.
This statement has taken on new meaning for me recently, especially when I phrase it in the form of a question: “Am I running the race to win?”



With all the political punditry abounding in the effort to win the White House, as well as the building anticipation for the Rio Olympics, it seems like everyone is talking about running. And whether it’s an athlete, politician, business person, medical professional, student, parent or practically anyone else, I think most people want to win whatever race they are in.

But the homeless are not most people. They are engaged in a different kind of race, a race for survival, where the outcome can be life or death. The day I wrote this message, I was talking to a homeless woman named Kathy. She was in our New Life Program for about a week three years ago before she left and returned to the streets.

We have invited her to come back to the Rescue Mission’s Women’s Center several times since, but she has stayed on the streets. Today, she told me how scared she was. The streets, she said, are getting more dangerous. It’s not safe anymore.

I again extended her an invitation to get off the streets, but she rejected it and walked away. She is like the other 115 men and women who will spend the night in the Rescue Mission’s emergency shelter each night. At any time any one of these men or women can come to us and say, “I need help,” more help than food, shelter, clothing and the other emergency services we provide. “I need to change my life.” And we would get

them started on our New Life Recovery Program, just like we did with Don Johnson eight months ago. But instead they, like Kathy, continue to run a race toward depression, hopelessness and, ultimately, death unless something changes.

This race is opposite from what the apostle Paul talked about in the Bible. He said God wants us to “run in such a way as to get the prize.” Paul’s race was one of hopefulness, not hopelessness. He called believers to live for God and find the eternal reward of Jesus’ welcome to Heaven. This is the race we should all be racing: one where we finish by bringing recognition to Jesus and gaining His welcome and blessing. This is, of course, the opposite of political and athletic races, which seem to be largely for the racer’s own glory. And this is much different from the races run by our homeless friends, which lead to their own destruction.

So what kind of race are you running?

At the Rescue Mission, we strive to run our race for God’s glory. And we believe God gets glory when people struggling with homelessness, who are running a self-destructive race, are radically upended and start running the race to win. We want to run with, and at times even carry, our friends who are striving to leave homelessness and addiction. On a daily basis we ask our friends to run the race to win, to run with us, because we realize that it is a race for life and death. Thank you for helping us to instill faith and provide food, clothing, shelter, counseling, job placement, housing assistance and more. We are all going to run a race, but only one race brings the hope of an eternal prize.

God bless you,

Chris D. Croswhite
Executive Director

OUR STATS
how your gift helps

These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted!

	June 2016	YTD 2016
Professions of Faith	72	325
Meals	11,243	82,574
Family Food Boxes	300*	1,707**
Nights of Shelter	3,899	25,731
Clothing	5,448	68,688
Day Service/Hygiene	412	2,860
Jobs Obtained	5	21
Housing Obtained	1	5
	*6,000 meals	**34,140 meals

DON:
Continued from Page 1

boy and a girl (who would later become my first girlfriend), showed up at my house. This was the first time that anybody had asked me to hang out. They told me that they had never met a funnier kid than me. I realized then that alcohol could turn me into a different, more popular person. For the next 48 years, I never had more than 60 days of sobriety at a time.

The Night My Son Died

My life’s great pain came in 1988 when my first son, Joshua, died in my arms on Christmas Eve. He had bronchitis, and earlier we had taken him to the hospital to be checked out. Later that night I started drinking. I was drunk and rocking him in a chair, trying to help him fall asleep. I felt a great sense of accomplishment when I finally did get him to sleep sometime after midnight. I kept rocking him and finally put him to bed at about 4 a.m., after which I went to bed myself.

I woke up to my wife screaming and went into my son’s room. He was in the exact same position as he had been when I laid him down, and when I turned him over, his face was purple. The coroner said he died of bronchitis around 1:30 a.m. I realized I had probably rocked him for several hours after he had already died. It is hard to get over the feeling that if I hadn’t been so drunk, I would have noticed that he stopped breathing in my arms. Maybe if I was sober, I could have done something. Maybe I could have revived him and taken him to back to the hospital.

Since it was Christmas Eve when my son died, we had presents under the tree. When it was time for his burial, I went home and got one present. I took it to his gravesite and opened it. It was a red Elmo doll that I had purchased for him. I unpackaged it and placed it in his grave.

My wife and I had two more kids, a son and a daughter, within the next two years, but I couldn’t get close to them because I felt like I would lose them. One day my wife left home with our kids and I didn’t see them again for 18 years. I was such a broken and depressed person, I couldn’t blame her for leaving.

All that pain boiled up one night in Ogden when I decided to take the last bit of money I had, buy a bottle of whisky and a 30-pack of beer, and walk to the freeway. My plan was to get so drunk that I would have the courage to walk out in front of an 18-wheeler. It was nighttime and I started drinking by the side of the road. I knew I only needed the courage to walk 10 steps into oncoming traffic.

I remember being very drunk and seeing a large truck approaching. I had the courage to do it. I stood up, walked a few feet and then I must have passed out. The next thing I remember is waking up at the McKay Dee Hospital in Ogden and spending seven days getting sober in the psychiatric ward of the hospital.

When I was released, I got on a bus to Salt Lake. Arriving in the city, I started walking down the street, head down and

miserable, contemplating where I could get some drugs or cash that I could use for my next suicide attempt.

The Red Elmo Doll

That’s when I happened to look up and see the Rescue Mission’s ‘Jesus Saves’ sign. When I walked in and started volunteering in the New Life Program, one of my first jobs was processing a large donation of clothing that had come in. But before I started the job, I talked to Cassie, one of the counselors, and told her how broken I was. Cassie told me to “go upstairs and ask God for healing.” I followed her advice and for the first time in a long time, I actually spoke with God. When I finished, I went to start sorting the clothes.

As I was working through this large donation, I came to a black garbage bag. I opened it and the first thing on top was a red Elmo doll, exactly like the one I had laid in my son’s grave. I believe this was a message from God, an answer to my prayer. He was letting me know that He was with me and that He was taking care of my son for me. He had a plan for my life and a plan for my son’s life, however short it may have been.

These three things—God preventing me from killing myself, God causing me to look up and see the ‘Jesus Saves’ sign, and God showing me that red Elmo doll on the first day I came to the Rescue Mission—proved to me that God was real.

I have now been sober for eight months, which is the longest period of sobriety I have had since I was 13 years old. I am excited that the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake has accepted me for an internship where I will learn more about helping the homeless and operating a full-service rescue mission. I know what it’s like to be drunk and homeless, and because of this experience, I can relate to the people we serve. I hope this internship will prepare me for full-time work at a rescue mission somewhere in the U.S.

Since coming to the Mission, I have met with my daughter, who is now an adult, and talked about my struggles and success at the Rescue Mission. She and her younger brother are angry at me because I was not there for them. This is true, and I can do nothing but apologize, plead for their forgiveness and pledge to do better. Ultimately, I am a drunk. And it’s hard to trust a drunk, especially when the drunk is your father. I know that. I am praying and trusting that God will keep me sober and that my kids will see a change in me and want to be part of my life. It’s in God’s hands and if He wants to reunite us, I know He will.

Thank you so much for supporting and praying for me. Without your support and God’s guidance, I would likely be dead today. As it is, I have a new life here on Earth, and hope for everlasting life when I do leave this world one day. I could not be more grateful.