

HELPING HOMELESS CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS



The youngest person we ever served at the Rescue Mission was just two days old. The very day mother and baby were released from the hospital, they came to the Mission for our Thanksgiving Banquet. Mother and daughter enjoyed a meal out of the bitter cold while dad searched through our clothing table for anything that would suit his baby girl.

It was our privilege to ensure that mom, dad and baby had food, clothing, blankets, diapers and a place to stay before they left. One of our volunteers, who had a one-year-old child at home, even called her husband and had him bring down a bag of newborn winter clothing that their child had outgrown.

As the staff of the Rescue Mission marveled, cried, and rejoiced over the baby girl we had the privilege to serve, I was reminded that over 2,000 years ago, Mary and Joseph were turned away from the inn and Jesus was born homeless, laid in a manger. As we rejoiced, so too did angels, shepherds and wise men as they worshiped and gave gifts to Jesus. How appropriate to give gifts to Jesus, who was Himself a gift.

When most people think of homeless people, their minds drift to images of elderly men with beards in ragged clothing. But here at the Rescue Mission, we do serve a lot of children. It's one of the most difficult, yet rewarding parts of our ministry.

Every day, parents walk through our doors with their kids and ask for help. Some need a nutritious meal, clothing, or are looking to escape the cold in our day room. Others need a Family Food Box. Sometimes the parents are struggling with

addiction and need a recovery program.

Over the past several weeks, children have been a particularly rewarding part of our ministry. Low-income families have been lining up to qualify for our Christmas sponsorship. Our heart and approach is to talk with the parents and determine eligibility, needs and desires. Once this is done, we do our best to obtain gifts and a Christmas Family Food Box and pass them off to the parents without their children's knowledge.


This way it is the parents who are nurturing, providing for and giving gifts to their children. We hope our approach enables parents to build stronger family bonds, which are important for children to learn and experience in order to help break the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

I personally want to thank you for all your prayers, support and time you have given God through the Rescue Mission and to our most hurting neighbors this year. Please prayerfully consider further support for our Christmas Banquet and God's continuing work throughout the year as we work to change lives for now and eternity.

Have a Blessed Christmas,
Chris D. Croswhite
Executive Director

P.S. If you would like to help bless a family this Christmas, it's not too late. Please give Greg Sheffield a call at the Rescue Mission and ask him how you can help: 801-355-1302.

DECEMBER 2014 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Merry Christmas!	1 Road to Freedom Biker Mission	2 Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake Kitchen: Intermountain Baptist Youth	3 South Mountain Community Church - Chapel and Kitchen	4 Salt Lake Christian Center Kitchen: Korean Presbyterian Church of Utah	5 Mt. Olympus Presbyterian	6 Bible Baptist Kitchen: South Valley Community Church
	7 Grace City Church	8 Intermountain Baptist	9 Unity Baptist Kitchen: Southeast Youth Group	10 Northern Utah Mennonite	11 Millcreek Baptist	12 Hilltop United Methodist Church
14 Calvary Chapel Salt Lake - Chapel and Kitchen	15 Bennion Christian Center	16 K2 - The Church	17 Capital Church Kitchen: Capital Church	18 Wasatch Christian	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

DECEMBER 2014

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org

JOSEPH JOHNSON: A Grieving Man Finds Renewed Hope

My name is Joseph Johnson and thanks to the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake, I have hope.

I was out of hope two years ago when I slit my wrists inside a dingy motel room on North Temple Street on the west side of Salt Lake. But everything changed when I came to the Rescue Mission on November 4, 2013.

Sobriety, a Job and New Hope

One of the biggest ways the Mission helped me was by giving my life meaning again. After my wife lost a three-year battle with cancer in 2008, I slowly fell into a deep depression, culminating in the day I decided to kill myself.

But at the Rescue Mission, I was surrounded by a community of people focused on a noble purpose - taking care of the homeless. So for me, one of the most important parts of the New Life Program was the work therapy component, removing the focus from myself and forcing me to consider the plight of people worse off than I was.

For those who might not know, each person in the New Life Program is assigned work therapy responsibilities. Some people serve in the homeless dorm, making beds, washing sheets and collecting clothing. Others serve in the kitchen, preparing meals for the hundreds of hungry people who come to the Mission.

I was recruited to help run the front desk. I checked in people for the night, helped the homeless get the services they needed and scheduled volunteers. I felt that what I was doing had value, and it felt great to serve others. It seemed like many of the homeless people who came through the door really appreciated my help.

It had been so long since I felt needed and was doing something significant. I finally had some value again. People depended on

me. I couldn't slack off or I would be letting down our whole team and the people we served.

The value I gained at the Rescue Mission grew into a sense of accomplishment. So when it was time for me to find a job outside the Rescue Mission, my desire to accomplish grew. I found a job that I really wanted. It was performing technical support for a network systems company. The company contracts with public and private groups to provide support for different

please see "Joseph" on page 3



Just 18 months ago Joseph Johnson tried to kill himself. Now, with his new mountain bike (which he rides whenever possible) in the background, Joseph holds up his recovery graduation certificate.

Connect

with us

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Social: facebook.com/rescuemissionofsaltlake

Email: info@rescuesaltlake.org

Phone: Main - 801.355.1302 Finance Office - 801.746.1006

Mail: PO Box 1431, Salt Lake City, UT 84110

Physical Address: 463 S. 400 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84101

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT THANKSGIVING



With your help, we provided over 1,500 meals to homeless and hurting people at our annual Thanksgiving Banquet, which included a special message of hope, great food, clothing giveaways, praise music, hot showers, haircuts, free flu shots provided by the Fourth Street Clinic and Christian counseling for people who are struggling during the holiday season.

Over 100 volunteers cooked, served, bussed tables, cleaned up, sorted clothing, played music and simply talked to our homeless friends. Thank you so much to each and every one of you who served and donated to make the banquet possible, including Smith's Food and Drug Stores, who generously donated 100 turkeys for the banquet. Donations like these help keep our costs in line and allow us to bless others with the abundance of food through Family Food Boxes and donations to local refugee churches. Please check out pictures of our banquet in this edition of the Rescuer and visit our Facebook page for more great photos.



With Thanksgiving behind us, we are looking to Christmas. We have less than a month to prepare for what may be an even greater outreach - our Annual Christmas Banquet for the Homeless on December 23. This Christmas, we are planning to serve another 1,500 meals at our banquet and provide over 12,000 hot meals and hundreds of Family Food Boxes to needy families throughout the month of December. Our food service comes in addition to handing out warm winter coats, new socks, long pants and thousands more items of clothing. Please pray for and support our Christmas outreach. We have much work to do and since we gave away so much for Thanksgiving, we are running short on warm clothes and food.



Please remember that our banquets are not just meant to provide for material needs, but to give hope. Many of Utah's homeless don't have anywhere to go for the holidays. We hope that great food, warm clothes and smiling faces might be the encouragement they need to join our New Life Program, which changes lives by helping people off the streets and into housing, employment and restored family relationships. Please pray that our Christmas outreach would touch many lives this year as we celebrate Jesus - God's gift to us all!



REMEMBER OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT OUTREACH TO HOMELESS FAMILIES. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO HELP:

- 1) Call our job placement coordinator, Greg Sheffield, at 801.355.1302 to "adopt" a child or a family. When you adopt a child or family, you purchase gifts for them and then drop the gifts off at the Mission.
- 2) You can make a monetary donation designated for the Christmas gift outreach that we will use to purchase presents for kids and families who haven't been "adopted."

This is an important outreach that blesses many kids and families, both spiritually and physically. Prayerfully consider supporting today!



JOSEPH: Continued from Page 1

online functions and internal networking.

I was good at this kind of work as I had been an avionics expert in the Air National Guard and knew about internal computer systems and processes. But it was a hard job to get. I interviewed several times over the course of two months. During those months I had other job offers to work at retail electronics stores, but I turned them down in hopes of obtaining a job that paid a living wage.

I also realized that I needed a sense of purpose if I was going to stay sober, and I really felt like having a job that challenged me would make a big difference in my long-term success. Finally, after all the interviews, phone calls and waiting, I was hired.

Today, I love my job and I love helping people solve complex systems questions. It's fun and I really feel like people need me and depend on me. I am so thankful to the Mission's job placement coordinator, Greg Sheffield, who was there to support me in finding a job. I don't know if I could have done it alone.

Struggling to Find Hope

Thanks to the help I received at the Rescue Mission, my life is totally different from a year ago. I am even rebuilding relationships with my two adult step-children with whom I had struggled to keep in touch with after their mother died of cancer in 2008. It was the end of that three-year cancer battle that sent me spiraling into homelessness and hopelessness. If you have never lost someone close to you - to cancer or another illness - you might find it hard to relate to my story, but my wife's battle with cancer and eventual death broke me.

Even before she died, alcohol and drug use had been part of my life. We both drank too much and sometimes used drugs, but we were always able to have good jobs and raise our children. However, when my wife was in the late stages of her cancer, she drank until she passed out each night. She just could not endure the pain. She said it didn't matter if she drank herself to death because she was dying anyway.

Each night I would pick her up off the floor and put her to bed. When I tried to help her stop drinking, we would get into fights. She felt like I couldn't relate to what she was going through, and I felt like she couldn't relate to what I was going through. I told her, "you don't have cancer, our whole family has cancer!" And that's what it felt like.

It was so hard at the end that we separated and were living in different homes when she died. The whole experience was devastating. After she died, I started drinking more and more. While I still held down my job as the manager of an electronics store, I was coming to work hungover every day. At night, I was so disinterested in life that I just got drunk until I fell asleep.

By January of 2012, I had lost my job and couldn't pay rent. I was

evicted and for the first time in my life I had nowhere to go. I was so depressed that I couldn't really take care of myself, and I was so isolated that I really had no friends or family to turn to. Since it was winter and freezing, I did the only thing I could. I went to the public housing shelter.

It was shocking to be homeless and the shock breathed a little life into me. I went out, got a job and saved up some money. After I had saved up enough, I secured a long-term rental at a dumpy hotel on North Temple in Salt Lake.

The motel wasn't much better than the shelter. I never knew when one of my neighbors might fly off the handle, bust into my room and try to hurt me. The one thing that was good about the public housing shelter was that they made sure no one had any alcohol inside. That rule helped me stay sober. But once in my own motel room, I returned to drinking a bottle a day.

By April of 2013, I had completely run out of hope. With my last little bit of money, I bought a cell phone as a present for my 22-year-old step-daughter and made plans to take my own life. I cut and cut on my wrists as I drank and slowly waited to bleed to death. But in the morning, I woke up again. I hadn't lost enough blood and my wounds were already healing.

I didn't want the maid to find me, so I called the police, who checked me into the psychiatric evaluation facility at the University of Utah. I transitioned into some temporary housing, but still was as lonely and depressed as ever.

The Help I Needed

In November, someone told me about the Rescue Mission. While I was leery about joining the New Life Program because it was a one-year commitment, I decided to give it a shot.

Through the Bible studies, counseling sessions, work therapy and meeting with my community mentor - Scott Price - my life has changed. I don't have thoughts of killing myself anymore. And with more success and sobriety, I feel like I can be a father to my step-children again. They have already lost a mother; they shouldn't have to lose their father as well.

So moving forward, my goals are simple: I want to continue succeeding at my job and stay sober. I look forward to graduating from the New Life Program and getting my own apartment. Most of all, I'm excited about repairing relationships with my children and earning their respect.

I am so thankful to the Rescue Mission and all of its supporters. I truly believe that without this place, I would be dead today. The Mission was here when I was desperate and hopeless. They gave me a new life, for which I am eternally grateful.

Our Stats

how your gift helps

These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted!

	October 2014	YTD 2014
Professions of Faith	18	260
Meals	12,960	131,927
Family Food Boxes	320*	2,790**
Nights of Shelter	4,246	40,930
Clothing	13,504	82,791
Day Service/Hygiene	367	3,623

*6,400 meals

**55,800 meals