

## CARE PACKAGES FOR THE HOMELESS: A GREAT WAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Many people enjoy making care packs for the homeless, and they have become one of the most popular items we give to our homeless friends. Some people call them “blessing bags,” and there are several websites that walk through the process of putting these homeless survival packs together. And while, in general, we can provide for most basic needs—food, shelter, clothing, hygiene items—below are some creative items we often don’t have in stock that homeless people love to receive in blessing bags. If you decide to put together a care pack, remember that you don’t always have to buy new. You can recycle or up-cycle items from your house if you have things available. Also, collecting items and putting them together can be a great team-building project for coworkers, youth groups or even families. Keep in mind that here at the Rescue Mission, we don’t give things away to make homelessness more comfortable, but rather to show love and help keep people alive. Our goal is for this love to be the catalyst for someone to join our New Life Program and want a changed life. If you do decide to put together some care packs, you can drop them off at the Rescue Mission any time. If you call ahead, you can even arrange for a quick tour of our facility. It’s a good way to learn more about homelessness and how you can help.

- Backpack:** A durable backpack is an essential item for homeless individuals.
- Hand warmers:** Cheap and instant warmth is always welcome.
- Thermal cup:** This keeps liquids warm longer and doubles as a hand warmer!
- Flashlight:** Any kind of flashlight is helpful. Also, consider providing extra batteries.
- Warm socks:** Keeping feet warm and dry can save a life.
- Wool blanket:** This is one of the most essential items because even when wool is wet, it can still keep you warm.
- Water bottle:** Dehydration is a big problem among the homeless.
- Poncho/Umbrella:** This is a smart and affordable item that is especially important in wet weather.
- Handwritten card:** A handwritten note (no personal information) of encouragement can brighten someone’s day.
- Lotion:** This can give relief from Utah’s dry weather.
- Ziplock® bags:** These keep items organized and waterproof.
- Pad of paper & pen:** A handy-dandy notebook is helpful to write down addresses and phone numbers.
- Duct-Tape:** Is there really anything duct-tape can’t fix?

### FEBRUARY 2015 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

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

# RESCUER

FEBRUARY 2015

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



## RAYMOND DÛMBRYS: Finding joy and the will to live again

*My name is Raymond Dûmbrys and about a year ago,* I was standing in line at a soup kitchen in downtown Salt Lake, waiting for lunch. Over the past decade I had tried many ways to indirectly end my life. Once, I purposefully antagonized a war veteran. I knew he had a knife and a short fuse, so I taunted him. He ended up stabbing me eight times. Hundreds of surgical staples later, I awoke in the hospital, still alive.

Another time, I tried starving myself to death. While I achieved a pale, gaunt appearance, I couldn’t actually achieve total starvation. Of course, there was the daily abuse of cocaine, meth and alcohol that was slowly eating me away. Eventually, these drugs would kill me if nothing else worked. So as I stood in that soup line, while I was still alive physically, I was dead on the inside.



A year ago Raymond Dûmbrys was homeless and hopeless. Today he has a great job as a limo driver and a new-found hope for the future.

### God Intervenes

That’s when this homeless couple came up to me in line. The woman, whom I had never met before, looked at me and said, “You don’t have to give up hope.” I stared back at her. How did she know I was hopeless? The couple went on to tell me about the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. They said the help there was different than the basic food and shelter I was getting at the soup kitchen and the public housing shelter.

They told me that the Rescue Mission wasn’t just focused on meeting physical needs, although they provided for those too, but was concerned with changing a person’s heart. The staff at the Mission taught about God and the Bible and showed a deeper love to broken people like me, who desperately needed help from the inside out.

And so, a few days later, I walked the few blocks to the Rescue Mission and joined the New Life Program. This may sound strange, but the biggest help I needed when I joined the program was motivation to live. I carried so much pain and depression inside that I didn’t care if I lived or died. Yet, at the same time, I didn’t seem to have the ability to kill myself. I had devised all these schemes to sort of indirectly end my life, but none had worked.

At the Mission, I started going to the daily Bible studies and talked to people who shared some of the same experiences I had. Like me, they had turned to daily drug use to numb the pain of life. I found that I could relate to people better, and began to experience an intimacy with God and other people that I had never known before. Prior to that point, I would describe myself as a hater of people. I had so much hate in my heart that I needed to get it out, and usually the outlet was another person.

### Deciding To Live

But through the positive relationships I made at the Rescue Mission, I hated less and less. One day, I consciously told myself, “I want to stay on this Earth.” I made the decision that I would keep on living. That was an important and life-changing day for me.

With that decision made, I knew that real life could only be found in a relationship with God, so I invested in the New Life Program. Each morning, Chris Beane, one of the counselors at the Mission, held a Bible study that I attended. Then I had regular one-on-one counseling



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## Connect

with us

## What Love Has Got To Do With It



*February and its signature holiday invoke feelings of romance.* And while appropriate romance is a true God-given blessing, we know that people often get romantic relationships so wrong.

Here at the Rescue Mission, we often find that bad romantic relationships have lasting negative impacts. From children who witness a messy divorce, to adults stung over infidelity or abuse, the breakdown of male-female relationships can

lead to depression, hopelessness and substance abuse. This was the case for Raymond Dumbrys, who shares his testimony in this month's Rescuer. It was the infidelity and eventual loss of his fiancé that shaped his life of incarceration, homelessness and drug use over the past 25 years.

Here's another example. I recently spoke to one of our New Life Program members about her relationship expectations. She told me that, until coming to the Rescue Mission, she never knew that most women weren't beaten up by their boyfriend or husband. She thought that being beaten was normal and actually supposed to happen in a relationship. It was hard to hear this woman's experience, but it helped me realize how she ended up on the streets.

I was thankful that we are here to help her understand

what loving relationships are supposed to look like. It might be surprising, but teaching our students what loving relationships are is a big part of what we do at the Rescue Mission. We work to heal hearts by focusing on the one person—God through His son, Jesus Christ—who will never hurt us in a relationship.

We teach about who God is and how He loves us. God not only created us, but also made a way for us to be with him in Heaven. He gave up his Son for us when we were completely uninterested in Him. We were lost and He came and found us. That is His love for us.

When we understand how much God sacrificed just to have a relationship with us, we can begin to realize what love really is. This love can help when other people let us down or treat us poorly. And when we experience love from God, we are better able to forgive and show love to others.

So as we look forward to celebrating Valentine's Day, join me in seeking a loving relationship with God above all others. When we have a right relationship with God, all of our other relationships—even our romantic ones—fall into their right place. And even if all our romantic relationships in the past have been off track, with God, there is always hope for the true heart change that will lead to God-blessed relationships in the future.

Thank you for supporting our work, praying for us and praying for those we serve.

Chris D. Croswhite  
Executive Director

### These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted!

	December 2014	Total 2014
Professions of Faith	28	299
Meals	14,677	161,149
Family Food Boxes	270*	3,418**
Nights of Shelter	4,859	49,930
Clothing	14,955	108,422
Day Service/Hygiene	548	4,556
	*5,400 meals	**68,360 meals

## Our Stats

how your gift helps

## RAYMOND: Continued from Page 1

meetings with my personal case manager, George Sproul. I started going to church at Capitol Church near the University of Utah and I learned to worship God through song and by listening to His Word from the pastor. And through it all, I had the support of the entire Mission staff.

I found that I could stay sober and not hate people. I called my mother and told her how well I was doing. She lives in Hot Spring, Arkansas and she started crying over the phone. She was so happy and proud that I was finally sober and not depressed. Five years ago, when my father was on his death bed, I wanted him to know that I loved him. But my father said he knew I didn't really love him, because if I did, I wouldn't have used drugs and committed crimes.

Those comments hurt, but today I am thankful to be able to talk to my mom and feel like she is proud of me and loves me. She is in her 80s now and I didn't want her to feel the same way about me on her death bed as my father did.

### Finding A Great Job

When I moved to the employment phase of the New Life Program, I got a job at a manufacturing company. I told my mom and she was so proud. But after working there for a couple of months, I got into a fight with the person who gave me a ride to work each day, so I couldn't keep the job.

I had saved up a little money and, after talking to God about it, I decided to take a chance. I had been a limo driver in the past and had heard about a limousine company that was just two blocks away from the Rescue Mission, so I didn't need any transportation to get there.

I took what little money I had and invested it in the tools I needed to be a limo driver—a suit, crisp shirts, new pants, nice shoes, a good cell phone and a quality Bluetooth headset. It took all the money I had, but now I was ready to apply for work at the limousine company. I praise God that they hired me and today I have a good job as a professional driver. As I write this, the Sundance Film Festival is under way and I have been busy for weeks picking people up at the Salt Lake International Airport and transporting them up to Park City.

Having this job has helped give me a sense of purpose. I feel like I am part of a good team of drivers who are working together to serve people. It's interesting, because as part of the New Life Program, I was assigned a community mentor, or "discipler." My discipler was a businessman who traveled a lot for work. One of the things he really showed me was how to have a relationship with God while being an employed professional.

Soon I will transition away from the Rescue Mission and no longer be in the New Life Program. So I will need to follow my discipler's example of maintaining an intimate relationship with God while being in a professional job. I will no longer be required to go to church or participate in recovery meetings. I will have to be passionate about God on my own. So I am thankful that God gave me a discipler who was an example of that.

People might look at me now in my nice clothes and never imagine that I was a homeless drug addict just a year

ago. Really, I had been destitute on the inside for several decades. Most of my problems started when I moved to Las Vegas in the early '90s. My fiancé was still in Southern California while I went to Vegas for a job. I had called her to talk about our upcoming wedding and how she would come to live with me in Las Vegas.

That's when she told me she had cheated on me. I was so enraged that I yelled at her. I told her I wished she was dead and hung up. About ten days later I tried to call her and tell her I was sorry. I still loved her and was ready to forgive. I couldn't get through and eventually found out from a friend that my fiancé had been murdered. She was a waitress at a bar in Hollywood and a few days after our argument, three men had taken her home and killed her.

### God Leads Me To Help

I can't really describe how devastating this news was to me. In a very real way, I lost the will to keep living. I already knew some people who were into illegal activities in Las Vegas. I started working more with them. They sold drugs and I would often take the job of assaulting people who owed money and weren't paying. I had so much hate towards the people who killed my fiancé that it felt good to take it out on delinquent drug users.

I was so brazen with my assaults that I was often arrested and spent about 15 of the next 20 years in prison. When I wasn't in prison, I turned to drugs to numb the pain. Once, I checked myself into a psychiatric hospital and convinced the staff I was insane. I wasn't really crazy, but they pumped me with drugs that took away all my pain. I was mostly in a vegetative state for 23 of 24 hours every day.

Eventually, however, the staff realized I was faking it and they kicked me out. When I wasn't locked up, I was a vagabond drug user. I was fine being homeless or crashing on someone's couch if that was available. I would go to Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous just to hang out and get free coffee and pastries. Even though I wasn't sober, people there had sympathy for me. A few years ago, a guy I met in AA invited me to come up to Salt Lake City. We had decided that we needed to get out of Vegas if we were ever going change our lives.

We got an apartment in Draper, but soon had a falling out and I was homeless again. I tried a few rehab facilities, but eventually I started using drugs daily and slept on the streets or wherever I could find a place. That was my life until the day when that couple came up to me in line at the soup kitchen and told me about the Rescue Mission.

I guess it was God who directed those people (who knows, maybe they were angels) to come talk to me. I thank Him so much for leading me to the Rescue Mission. I will be here at the Mission for a couple more months as I save up some money to purchase my own car. I now look forward to the future. I look forward to talking to my mom on the phone a couple of times a week and hearing the excitement in her voice. I look forward to staying connected with my church, doing well at work and actually enjoying other people. Please pray that God's hand would continue to guide me and encourage my heart.

I can't thank God, the Rescue Mission and you, the Mission's faithful supporters, enough. I wish you all could have seen me a year ago and then see me today. You would be amazed at the transformation God has done!