

A CHRIST-FILLED HOLIDAY SEASON

Because of you and your provision and service, we were able to serve thousands of people



over the holiday season, stretching from Thanksgiving to Christmas to New Year's Day. We wanted to say thank you one more time by including some photos of

the people we were blessed to serve.

Some of the highlights included:

- Distributing Christmas presents to over 150 homeless children during the Christmas season; (These toys were accompanied by kid-focused Gospel materials that ensured all the children we served could learn the true meaning of Christmas.)
- Providing thousands upon thousands of meals, nights of shelter, clothing items, hygiene products and haircuts;
- Giving away hundreds of Family Food Boxes to poor and low-income families who needed help to get by

during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons;

- Sponsoring over 25 working-poor families so they could celebrate Christ's birth with their children;
- Helping 10 people find permanent employment and progress toward self-sufficiency; and
- Averaging 50 men and women in our inpatient New Life addiction recovery program.

The amount of people we are able to serve is truly amazing. And while these statistics paint an overall picture, each number is the story of a life impacted by the love of Jesus because of your generous support. Thank you for giving, praying and volunteering. We look forward to restoring even more broken lives in 2016. Enjoy the pictures—they tell the story so well.



JANUARY 2016 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

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

RESCUER

JANUARY 2016

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



ALFONSO AGUIRRE: A Final Chance On Life Pays Off

My name is Alfonso Aguirre and before I came to the Rescue Mission I had tried to kill myself three times. Once, I downed a bottle of Tylenol and ended up in the hospital. Even after they pumped my stomach, the doctors were amazed I didn't have any organ damage.

When I came to the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake, it was my final attempt to give life a try. If the Mission wasn't able to help me, I planned to make a fourth suicide attempt, and this time I was going to make sure I was successful.

Wanting to Live Again

I can joyfully report that, after spending a year at the Mission, I don't need to worry about suicide because God has changed me. It was just a few days after coming to the Rescue Mission in December, 2014 that I started hearing God's word again. In daily Bible studies and during the nightly chapel services I began to hear the truths of the Bible like I had at other times in my life. I started praying each day, asking God to deliver me from the depression that I had, and the bad habits I had—the marijuana, the meth, the drugs and the alcohol.

I went to the mission's prayer room almost every day. I would get down on my knees and ask God to deliver me. I told Him I wanted to live for Him. I wanted to serve Him. I was tired of living for myself. If God would give me another chance, I promised to do whatever it took to serve Him. And after about four months of daily prayer, it seemed like God answered. My hope and joy came back. I stayed sober. I even quit smoking cigarettes.



Alfonso Aguirre tried to kill himself three times. Now he is finding the joy in a life connected to Jesus. It's the only way he's found to keep sober and be happy, even through the trials of life.

I started feeling great. I became excited to live again. I learned that there was no other way to have happiness but through Jesus. I went to some great churches where I learned even more about God, but soon I decided to start going to a service in Spanish, which is my native language. Today, I go to a church called Victory Outreach in Midvale. The services are in Spanish and many of the people who go there have struggled with addiction just like I have. My discipler, Frank, who meets with me once a week and encourages me, is planning on attending church with me and that means a lot.

please see "Alfonso" on page 3

Connect
with us

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PRAYING FOR AN UNCOMFORTABLE JANUARY

January is typically the coldest month of the year. And as such, it is the hardest month for the homeless here in Utah.

But it's also the month when people think about change the most. Yes, New Year's resolutions—promises to change—are common in January. People look back at the previous year, see all the mistakes they have made and vow to be better parents, lose weight, exercise more, improve their marriages, or save more and spend less.



So my prayer this month is that God will use these two facts of January (cold and desire for change) to bring a record number of people off of Salt Lake's streets.

Indeed, God often uses discomfort and even pain to bring about change in people. People eat

too much, gain weight, feel uncomfortable about their appearance and then make a resolution towards diet and exercise. While some may question whether God cares about things like obesity, He applies this same model to spiritual change as well. When a person focuses their life on money, possessions, or success, they soon find that these things don't truly make them comfortable. Despite owning all the trappings of this world, there is a lingering discomfort of the soul that remains empty. That discomfort pushes people to the only true comforter, God and His son Jesus Christ.

Cold, like weight gain and spiritual emptiness, causes discomfort too. It only takes a few frigid, sleepless nights out on the streets for our homeless friends to start thinking about a life change. My prayer is that a cold January would be so uncomfortable that the homeless will have to think about change. The physical discomfort may be the only thing that shocks a person out of the rut they are in.

When our homeless friends do step out of the bleak January cold, they will be shocked at how different their

life away from the freezing streets truly is. The Rescue Mission stands as a warm, safe haven where our homeless friends can eat, rest and be loved. The contrast between the discomfort – even life-threatening discomfort – and the cozy joy found inside the Mission's walls should be shocking. Like the person who experiences relief from a physical illness or begins a relationship with Jesus, there is a joy found in replacing discomfort with comfort. That joy can be the catalyst for someone to desire a changed life through our New Life Program, which gets people off the street and into housing, employment and sobriety.

So this January, please join me in praying something a little different for our homeless friends. Instead of praying that everyone will be safe and warm, I am going to pray that those on the streets will be cold and uncomfortable and then come to the Rescue Mission for help. Then maybe God can use that discomfort to create real change in hurting people's lives. It's the time of year for change; let's ask God to bring it out in people who need it most.

God bless you,

Chris D. Croswhite
Executive Director

P.S. Please participate in the Decision America Tour 2016. This effort, led by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, encourages people to seek God's will for their lives and the nation.

The event features a March 29 rally at the Utah State Capitol, including speech by Association President Franklin Graham.

In preparation for the rally, the Decision America Tour will hold a "Concert of Prayer" on Friday, January 22 at Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake, 460 W. Century Drive. Please attend the Concert of Prayer, which runs from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and will feature many local pastors along with more information about Decision America.



Our Stats

how your gift helps

These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted!

	November 2015	YTD 2015
Professions of Faith	23	168
Meals	17,208	151,437
Family Food Boxes	302*	3,138**
Nights of Shelter	4,571	50,520
Clothing	10,414	100,421
Day Service/Hygiene	559	5,591
	*6,640 meals	**62,760 meals

ALFONSO: Continued from Page 1

One of the most important things I learned at the Rescue Mission is to have hope for the future. I have gone through periods when I have been sober, employed and had a good relationship with God. But it seems like I always turn back to drugs and fall into depression. So when I came to the Mission, I was hopeless. I felt like even if I became sober for a while, I would eventually turn back to drugs or alcohol, just like I always did.

"What's the point?" I asked myself. "I am just going to relapse anyway."

But my Rescue Mission counselor, Cassie, kept encouraging me. She told me that this time could be different. Just because I had failures in the past, it didn't mean I had to fail again. The past, Cassie said, doesn't determine what will happen in the future. She believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself and her hope was contagious. Today, I agree with Cassie. I believe I won't relapse. I believe God has truly healed me. Of course, only time will tell, but I feel like God is with me and will not let me go.

Depending on Drugs Instead of People

I needed people like Frank and Cassie to help me, since I haven't always felt like I had people I could depend on. I grew up in Mexico and my parents got divorced when I was an infant, so I had a stepfather as long as I can remember. He was very abusive. He used to beat me up for nothing. Sometimes he used to beat my mom in front of me and my brothers. I could take the beatings myself, but I couldn't stand to watch what happened to my mom. I can still picture my mother falling to the ground and feeling helpless. So when I was only 11 years old, I decided to run away from home. I was afraid to leave home, but I was more afraid to stay. I had nowhere to go, so I ended up on the streets. Life was hard on the streets. I remember always being hungry. I started using drugs, drinking and joined a gang, just to have a place to belong.

By the time I was a teenager, my mother and stepfather had moved to the U.S. and the only family I had real contact with was my grandfather. I was really struggling with gang life, so my grandfather called my mom and told her she needed to come get me or the gang life was going to kill me. My mother traveled back to Mexico and ordered me to come to the U.S. with her.

I did well for a while in the U.S., but I dropped out of high school in 10th grade so I could start working to help my family. It seemed like I could always find a job doing some sort of manual labor on a construction site or work crew. Still, I never really could stay sober and experienced periods of homelessness. When I was in my twenties, my girlfriend and I had two children, a son and a daughter. My girlfriend was also an addict, so we struggled to take care of our children. Eventually, they were taken and raised by my mom and stepdad.

I struggled to stay sober and even entered rehabilitation centers a few different times, only to relapse again. It was two years ago when I really hit rock bottom. That's when my mother died of a heart attack. She was 74 and had a long life, but her passing crushed me. I thought of all the ways I

had failed her as a son. I wish I could've gone back and been better to her. I felt like she had dreams for me which I never reached. I fell into depression and started using drugs and alcohol almost uncontrollably. I became homeless on the streets of Southern California.

I was in rough shape. I have a disorder called acromegaly that causes oversized hands and feet. The resulting disease, called gigantism, is due to a growth hormone issue during adolescence. This condition is painful, but can be managed by very expensive medication that needs to be injected once a month. I was struggling to get the medication I needed and it was causing me a lot of physical pain, even as I tried to numb my emotional pain with drugs and alcohol. As a last ditch effort before killing myself I decided to travel back to Salt Lake, where I had some success staying sober previously, and give the Rescue Mission's New Life Program one final chance.

I'm so glad I made that decision. The Rescue Mission was able to connect me with the Fourth Street Clinic and now I see a doctor there who helps me manage my condition. The Fourth Street Clinic provides me with the medication I need and the doctors really care about me. After our appointments, my doctor always gives me a big hug and tells me she is proud of my progress.

Knowing I Still Need Prayer and Support

Of course, life is still painful. But I believe I am now able to deal with the pain without turning to drugs or alcohol. That belief was tested recently. Two months ago, I learned that my son had died. He was only 23 year old. The autopsy report has not been finalized, so I still don't know how he died, but I know he struggled with addiction, too. I felt guilt like I did when my mother died. I wasn't a good father to my son; I felt like I should've been a better dad to him. This time, however, I haven't turned to drugs or alcohol to numb the pain or cover the guilt if feel. I realize God is in control and has grace enough to forgive me. Nothing in my life, or the life of my son, happens outside of His control.

Without the change God made in me, I know I would've had a really hard time with my son's death. Even now it is painful, but God's goodness and love helps me continue to have joy. He really has changed me in so many ways that I can't help but give thanks to Him. If you remember my story this month, please pray for me. Pray that I would continue to rely on God's goodness and love even when times are tough. Pray also that God would lead me when I graduate from the Rescue Mission's New Life Program. I plan to move into the Rescue Mission's transitional housing facility, the Terri Timmerman Freedom House, to help make my transition into "real life" smoother. I know I have relapsed many times in the past, but I'm praying that God would keep me close to Him this time. Thank you for supporting the Rescue Mission so that people like me can have one more chance at life.

Editor's note: Alfonso's family has a history of addiction with at least five of his close relatives affected. Please keep Alfonso and his family in your prayers as he overcomes generations of addiction.