

## HELPING WOMEN GET OFF THE STREETS



Taking a shower with a garden hose, sleeping with a stranger so you don't have to sleep on the streets, feeling lonely even when you're surrounded by dozens of people—these are some of the experiences of women who get help at the Rescue Mission's Women's Facility.

Being a woman on the streets can be a uniquely challenging experience. Men may not be as particular about things like body odor, appearance, hair and whether they have shaved recently. And, in general, men are often physically better able to protect themselves.

But women feel the dirt more. They don't have the luxury of lotions or perfume, a way to take a bath or even brush their teeth—everyday things that can make women feel feminine and confident.

"It's really important to a woman, any little thing you can do, to maybe pamper yourself. A shower is good, but whether I can shave or not means a lot," said Shannon, a woman who has lived on the streets but has been in the Rescue Mission's New Life Program for four months now. "Focusing on taking care of ourselves and our appearance is important to us."

And beyond appearance, there's a lot of fear for women on the streets.

"Relaxing is impossible," Shannon said. "You never know when somebody is sneaking up on you in your sleep and

going to do something to you."

Chrissy Ward, who shares her testimony this month, says that a place like the Rescue Mission can be a safe haven for women who suffer huge anxieties on the street.



"We all came to the Rescue Mission because we were broken. That is something we all share and it binds us together because we can be around each other and feel accepted and safe," Chrissy said.

The Rescue Mission is blessed to be a place where women can escape life on the streets and rebuild their lives. Please read the news our Executive Director, Chris Crowwhite, shares about how the Rescue Mission is now offering even more help to homeless women.

### OUR STATS - HOW YOUR GIFT HELPS

	April 2015	Total 2015
Professions of Faith	8	69
Meals	15,138	56,120
Family Food Boxes	283*	972**
Nights of Shelter	4,879	18,814
Clothing	15,368	50,743
Day Service/Hygiene	475	997
	*5,660 meals	**19,440 meals

### JUNE 2015 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	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 RMSL	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 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				

# RESCUER

JUNE  
2015

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org

## CHRISSY WARD: From Hopelessness to a New Life

Hi, I'm Chrissy Ward and today I play third base for an undefeated church softball team. I have a great job with a company that advocates for and takes care of autistic children and adults. And, for the first time, I have a relationship with Jesus.

All of this wouldn't have been possible without the help I received from the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake's New Life Program. When I came here in July of 2014, I had just been released from the psychiatric ward of the hospital for the 12th time in the past six months. It was another suicide attempt that hospitalized me. I was broken and ashamed.

### A Sudden Change

But God started working in my heart right away. I was at my first church service as a New Life Program member when God got my attention. It was July 6, 2014 and the pastor at Intermountain Baptist Church started talking about suicide.

He spoke about whether suicide was forgivable or not. I felt like he was speaking directly to me, even though he didn't know me or anything about me. I had chills and goosebumps and the girl next to me actually asked if I was OK. She said the Holy Spirit was talking to me, and I believe He was.

Since then, God has worked in my heart and my life to change me. The biggest help I found at the Rescue Mission was forgiveness. I needed to be able to forgive myself, to forgive others and to receive forgiveness from God.

But before I was really ready to commit my life to God, I fought with Him. Mostly I fought God over my dad. The older I got, the more my dad drifted away. He grew more physically, emotionally, and verbally abusive. Before I could trust God, I wanted Him to tell me why my dad was like that. Why didn't my father seem to love me like I felt he should? Why did he leave our family? I demanded answers from God and I even started having nightmares about the situation.



Chrissy Ward found hope and a new life at the Rescue Mission.

Then one day, I was sitting in a Bible study. I dropped my pencil, quit taking notes and started praying. Through that prayer I realized that God was my true father. God is a dad who will never leave me or hurt me. I decided that I didn't need all the answers and could live with the fact that my father was who he was, and I didn't need to know why. That night I had the most peaceful dream about God being a great father to me.

### Peace on the Inside

After that, I had peace and joy in my heart. One person whom God really used to change me was my discipler, Amanda Burrows. The Rescue Mission pairs each member of the New Life Program with a discipler, or community mentor, and Amanda was a perfect fit for me. I feel like she is a true friend and she even invited me to play softball on her church softball team. We play every Tuesday night on the fields up by the University of Utah. When other teams learn

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## Where God Guides, God Provides

*For years we have been praying that God would enable us to offer a transitional house to the many formerly homeless women who graduate from our New Life Program. While we have operated Freedom House—a transitional home for men who are coming out of homelessness—for many years, a similar home for women has been lacking.*

**Today, I am blessed to announce that God has provided the Rescue Mission with funds to purchase a transitional home for women who are coming out of homelessness!**



Transitional homes for people who have spent a year or more at our men's or women's facilities can be critical to their long-term success. Through our experience and addiction training, we know that if someone is going to relapse, they have to first isolate themselves from friends, family and their support network. It's only in isolation that relapse happens.

At a transitional home, where there are some light rules and

accountability, isolation can't happen as easily. Also, statistics tell us that the longer a person stays connected with an organization like the Rescue Mission, the greater chance they have to stay sober. With this in mind, it's been our goal to have a place where women could live for a while, pay a little rent, have some freedom and stay connected with the Mission.

A number of years ago, Col. Breck Lebegue, in honor of his late wife Terri, purchased a home for the Rescue Mission to use as a clean and sober transitional house for men who graduate from our recovery program or who have served in

the armed forces. The Terri Timmerman Freedom House has existed ever since.

With the growing number of women graduating from our New Life Recovery Program, we have had an increased desire for a clean and sober transitional house for our female graduates as well. A few months ago, a couple who are longtime friends of the Mission made a donation and asked that the funds be used for a transitional house for women. Then, just last month, Bear River Camp, where men and women from our recovery program have enjoyed connecting with God in nature, awarded us a grant and asked us to consider using their gift for a women's transitional home.

These two generous gifts will enable us to purchase a home where four to five women, once they have completed the New Life Program, can live for six to twelve months to help ensure their successful integration into fully independent living.

We are praising God for His provision and the generosity of His people. Please keep us in your prayers as we now seek to locate, purchase, and furnish the right home for our female graduates.

Your generosity not only provides emergency services but enables "the least of these," whom Jesus calls "brothers of Mine," to have radical transformations. They come to know Jesus, obtain recovery, secure employment and can afford housing. Ultimately, they are God-dependent, yet self-sufficient.

Thank you so much,

Chris D. Croswhite  
Executive Director

## A Summer of Hope

Here at the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake, our "summer slump" is the time from June to August when gifts to the Mission slow down, but the number of people needing help stays the same or even increases. In fact, during the summer, the number of gifts we receive drops off nearly 45 percent! So before you head for the pool or take off on one last summer vacation, please remember the homeless and send a gift to the Rescue Mission. Your support will help us make this summer a true "Summer of Hope." You can use the enclosed envelope or donate online at [RescueSaltLake.org](http://RescueSaltLake.org).



## Working to End Panhandling

Remember, we have created "Help Cards" that people can give to panhandlers. These cards let panhandlers know that the Rescue Mission offers free food – fresh cooked meals and food boxes every day – as well as free nightly shelter and clothing. There is also information about our New Life Program that can help the homeless off the streets and into employment and housing. So instead of giving money, give a Help Card and let panhandlers know there is a place that will take care of them. The cards can be ordered from our website and mailed to you. They are also available at the Rescue Mission, or can be printed from [RescueSaltLake.org](http://RescueSaltLake.org).



## CHRISSEY: Continued from Page 1

that we are a "church team," they assume they will have an easy time beating us, but so far we have been undefeated. The best part is that we often get to share the Gospel with other teams. They ask us where we are from and why we play and we tell them, "We just want to play for the good name of Jesus." It's been great to participate and build my relationship with Amanda and our team.

In February I moved into the employment phase of the New Life Program. I wanted to do something where I could help other people. After a few days, God provided me with an interview at a business specializing in compassionate care for children and adults with autism and other disabilities.

I was offered a job that day. The next day, I had an interview with the mother of the young lady I would be taking care of. Her mom needed to approve me before I could start working. We met at the downtown city library for an intense interview. She gave me her approval and I started taking care of her daughter, my only patient.

She is 28, has autism, is blind and has the body of an eight-year-old. Despite her disabilities, she is full of life. I spend the entire day with her in a care model we call "dayhab." I take her on hikes, go shopping, buy groceries, and even take her to swimming lessons. I care for her as a friend and make sure she gets out and is active every day. I love working with her and am so excited God changed my life to the point where I could give back to another person.

### *What God Saved Me From*

Before I had God in my life, I was growing more and more depressed. While I didn't have a great relationship with my father, and my family was by no means perfect, I had a pretty good life through high school. I was really into sports and since my school required good grades to be eligible for sports, I excelled in school. I started all four years on the varsity soccer team and was a good player.

I was a model student athlete who dreamed of going to college and playing college soccer. But then I suffered a serious injury when I collided with another player as we were going for the ball. I was hospitalized with a head and spinal injury. I came back from the injury and played well, but I continued to get concussions from heading the ball or colliding with other players. When I was 18, I went to the doctor with yet another concussion and he told me I had swelling on my brain. He said I couldn't play sports anymore, that one more concussion could kill me. This may sound silly, but as an 18-year-old whose whole life goal was to play college soccer, this news devastated and depressed me.

Even though it was really only the end of my high school career, I lost motivation to achieve. I started partying and drinking. I got a piercing which became infected and my doctor gave me some prescription pain medicine. I grew addicted to pain killers and then began a relationship with a guy who was really into pain killers. Our relationship centered on using drugs, and eventually we graduated to heroin and morphine.

We got engaged and I became pregnant twice, but neither baby developed very long and I had two miscarriages. Even when I was pregnant, I couldn't stop using drugs and eventually I was arrested and faced serious jail time. My

mother and I met with my probation officer and he agreed that if I moved to Utah (where my brother owned a catering company I could work at), he would let me leave Ohio.

So my mom and I drove nearly 2,000 miles from Ohio to Utah. I quit heroin cold turkey and the whole trip I was miserable, just hating life, but it was really my only choice.

In Utah I was able to quit using heroin, but I turned to alcohol instead. I was engaged again and the relationship turned controlling, even physically and sexually abusive. Still, I didn't leave the relationship. I stayed. Then I felt guilty about staying. I didn't know why I couldn't leave. My mother was abused in her first marriage and she told my sister and I that she couldn't bear it if either of us entered an abusive relationship.

Now here I was, smack in the middle of one, but seemingly unable to break away. I became pregnant for the third time and had another miscarriage. My fiancée' blamed me for losing the baby. He said I was drinking too much and not taking care of myself and that's why the baby didn't make it. I was at rock bottom. I was being abused, had lost three babies, gave up on my dream of playing college sports and was still obsessing over why my father didn't love me.

I finally left my relationship and moved in with my mom. I tried to kill myself by drinking a gallon of alcohol. When my brother and mom found me, they rushed me to the hospital. As my mom watched at the hospital, I flat-lined and quit breathing. The hospital staff brought me back, but the doctor said it was a miracle I lived. He said there was no medical reason I should have survived with that much alcohol in my system.

I downplayed that I had tried to commit suicide and just told my family that I drank too much. But then I tried again and even a third time. I was in and out of the psychiatric ward of the hospital, being treated for suicidal tendencies. That's when my brother told me I needed to move out.

He said it was too hard on my mother to watch what was happening to me. So there I was, suicidal, with no place to stay, no job and no hope. I started calling around to see if there was anywhere I could go, but I kept getting the run-around. Then I finally got in touch with Lisa Wolfe, who supervises the Rescue Mission's Women's Center. She interviewed my mother and me the next day and I moved in to the Rescue Mission's Women's Center on July 1st 2014, just a few days before I went to that church and heard the pastor talk about God's forgiveness and suicide.

### *My New Life*

I honestly can't believe how God has changed me. I am so thankful to my counselors and all the staff at the Rescue Mission for investing their lives in me. I have some fairly simple goals right now. Throughout all the hard times, I did manage to get accepted to the University of Utah and completed some classes towards my bachelor's degree. So my goals are to stay sober and to finish college.

But probably my biggest goal is to cook a meal for my mother. I am the youngest of her six kids and she has never had one of her kids invite her over and cook a meal. My four brothers have had her over, but it has always been their wives cooking or catering food. I want to be the first to cook for her. I know that's a silly goal, but it would mean a lot to me. It's something I would have never thought about one year ago, when I was trying to kill myself.

Thank you so much for supporting the Rescue Mission and changing my life. I would probably be dead if the Mission wasn't here. So thank you for giving and praying. People like me, who are stuck in desperate situations, need help. Your support truly is restoring broken lives, just like mine.