JOANNE REID: A mother finds joy by receiving God’s love

A little over a year ago, I died after taking too much of a drug I bought at a Florida bus station. My heart stopped and I turned blue. But God, through the paramedics, saved me, and I woke up in a hospital bed.

Today, I am not just alive, but I have a new life. I have been sober for over a year and when I graduate the New Life Program this month, I hope to become the permanent House Manager for the Rescue Mission’s Women’s Facility. I am happy to be near my youngest daughter, who lives in Layton and runs a pet company. She was the one who found the Rescue Mission for me, when I was at my lowest point after almost dying in Florida.

My life has changed because I now know that God loves me. For most of my life I thought I would always be a drug addict and never be worthy of love. But despite my past mistakes, I realize that if God didn’t love me than He wouldn’t have saved my life, arranged for my daughter to find me a place at the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake, given me a great church family at Capital Church, and allowed me to have a good job that I love.

God has proven that He is faithful to me, even when I am not faithful to Him, and His continued faithfulness has made me trust Him. It’s that trust that has helped me stay sober.

Sobriety is something I have struggled with since my parents divorced when I was 12. I was a daddy’s girl and I remember the pain and shock when my dad came into my room and told me he was leaving my mother. After he left, I remember the pain and shock when my dad came into my room and told me he was leaving my mother. After he left, I

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These selfies say it all. JoAnne Reid has joy again. She is consumed with following God, staying sober, and helping other homeless women off the streets.

Connect with us
As a father of two girls, a husband to an accomplished wife, and a son and grandson of women who significantly influenced my life, I am grateful that March is Women’s History Month. I know that God puts wonderful women in this world to bless His creation. Oftentimes, the women in my life have challenged me to live for God, show kindness and love, and strive to be a better person. By celebrating women’s history, we can better appreciate and understand the great accomplishments women have made and look forward to future great accomplishments.

But the women on our streets, there is often little to celebrate. Instead of rejoicing in past accomplishments or looking forward with hope to the future, many homeless women are stuck. They have been abused, mistreated, and neglected. In turn, they have oftentimes neglected others, sometimes even choosing addiction over their own families. The shame of abuse and the shame of the abuses they have committed towards others makes them feel stuck in shame.

They feel incapable of receiving love and incapable of giving love. Trapped by shame, they feel unworthy of doing anything but waste away on the streets. For many homeless women, living on the streets is a self-inflicted punishment they are giving themselves for what they believe is a wasted life.

In this month that focuses on historic women, we have the opportunity to change the hearts and lives of homeless women. Just like JoAnne Reid who shares her story in this month’s Rescue, homeless women can receive God’s forgiveness and faithfulness and feel valued again.

You can help with our efforts to reach women this month by praying for homeless women each day in March. Pray that these women would seek help from the Rescue Mission, local churches, or other places where they will hear God’s truth. We also have many volunteer opportunities at our Women’s Facility.

From dropping off care packages to coming by to play some music, to helping to remodel a bathroom, there are countless ways to interact with the women on our New Life Recovery Program. Contact our volunteer coordinator at Rachel@RescueSaltLake.org, if you are interested in volunteering at our Women’s Facility in March.

As we remember the contributions of great women this month, join me in also remembering those women who are struggling. Join the Rescue Mission in blessing those women who need our help by praying, serving, and giving. As we engage in restoring the broken lives of those who God brings to our door, we could not serve the many homeless women in Salt Lake without your support.

But during our marriage I continued to use drugs, mostly pain pills. I stole money from him and used the money to buy drugs. We separated for a while, but I convinced him I was sober, even though I really wasn’t. He took me back only to have me steal more money. After we divorced, I truly felt like I could not be loved, or forgiven.

But I tried to find work, but my addiction grew so bad that I wasn’t employable. I ended up homeless staying in shelters. I had periods of sobriety but always went back to drugs. It was like this up to last year, when I purchased a large dose of liquid methadone from a woman at a Florida bus station and took it all. At first, I thought I was fine, but then people began telling me I wasn’t acting normal and asking me if I was alright.

I was told I turned blue, my heart stopped, and I quit breathing. Some good Samaritans called emergency services and God spared my life. It was then that my daughter told me she thought she could find me a recovery program here in Utah. She asked me to come live out here, so I could be close to her. I agreed, and she said that the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake would be a good place. I called the Mission and they gave me a spot on their New Life Recovery Program.

After spending a year on the New Life Program, I see that God didn’t save my life, he saved it twice. After moving to Tennessee and my mother tried to support us. My brother and I were left on our own, with my mom not really knowing if we went to school or not. My brother, who was one year older, would get drugs for us to experiment with and by age 16 I was pregnant and had a son. My baby had a heart defect. As a teenager, I just could not take care of him, so I gave him up for adoption.

Sadly, my son died from his condition several years ago at age 24.

Despite my addiction and heartaches, I tried to live life. I got married, had three more children, divorced, and could hold down jobs. For a while, I believed I was a “functioning” addict. Much of the guilt I carried around as an adult came after I married my second husband. We met on an online dating site that was run by AOL (if you want to know how long ago that was!).

We moved to the employment phase of the New Life Program, I started working at a call center. It wasn’t my favorite job, but I knew that supporting myself through work was a key part of recovery. After working for a while and saving up some money, I learned that the Rescue Mission had an opening for a house manager at the Women’s Facility. The manager lives in an apartment behind the Women’s Facility and serves as the evening staff member to help the women on the recovery program during hours when the rest of the staff is not there.

I applied for the job and have been serving as an intern house manager while I finish my program. If I continue to do well in this position and finish my other responsibilities on the New Life Program, I hope to become the full-time house manager for the Women’s Facility in a few months.

This job blesses me because I can help so many women who are coming into the program and feel hopeless, just like I did when I came the Rescue Mission. I know having this position will also help me stay sober by providing me with the accountability and connection to the Rescue Mission that I need. I still feel like I need the structure of the Mission to help me, so I trust God to keep me in close fellowship with Him and His people.

I would not be a happy, healthy person without Rescue Mission supporters like you, who make everything that happens at the Rescue Mission possible. Please pray for me, as I engage in my new role. Pray that God would give me words of encouragement to the many homeless and low-income women and children that come to our doors. I need His help to serve our homeless friends well, while remembering to take time to nurture and feed my own relationship with Him.