According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, domestic violence is the immediate cause of homelessness for many women. Survivors of domestic violence are often isolated from support networks and financial resources by their abusers, which puts them at risk of becoming homeless. As a result, they may lack steady income, employment history, credit history, and landlord references. They also often suffer from anxiety, panic disorder, major depression, and substance abuse.

Other studies from the Alliance also suggest that many women experiencing homelessness are survivors of domestic violence, even if it’s not the cause of their homelessness. One study in Massachusetts found that 92 percent of homeless women had experienced severe physical or sexual assault at some point in their lives, 63 percent had been victims of violence by an intimate partner, and 32 percent had been assaulted by their current or most recent partner. Such studies suggest a correlation between domestic violence and homelessness.

At the Rescue Mission we find that the majority of our clients, both men and women, have been domestic violence victims. Please pray for domestic violence victims during October and support the Mission. Because of your generosity, we are able to help many victims get off the streets, experience God’s healing, obtain soberly, employment and housing.

We still need your help for our Thanksgiving Banquet. Please donate today if you are able. We are still trying to gather the food and supplies we need to create our great Thanksgiving feast for the homeless. You can donate using the enclosed envelope, call our finance office at 801.746.1006 to make a phone donation via credit card or donate online at RescueSaltLake.org.

Becoming a New Person

Today I am a different person, mostly because of my new relationship with God. Before I joined the New Life Program, I never had a relationship with God. While I was raised in a religion, I was taught that regular people couldn’t talk directly to God. A church leader talked to God for you. Hearing about having a relationship with God seemed strange to me. When I started attending a Bible-believing Christian church I felt like I was cheating on my religion.

But after going to a Christian church, participating in Bible studies, and meeting with my counselor, Lisa Wolfe, I came to realize that I could have a personal relationship with God through his Son Jesus. Having a relationship with God freed me to live sober and today I have a stable life and hopeful future.

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The pain of life and a lack of a relationship with God caused Michelle McGaughey to turn to alcohol. Today she is sober, has a relationship with Jesus and a good job.

My Brother’s Suicide and My Addiction

Three years ago, however, something terrible happened in my life. It was so bad that I still don’t feel comfortable talking about it.

Before

I started abusing alcohol after my brother committed suicide several years ago. His death ate at me and without a relationship with God, I found no other way to ease the pain outside of alcohol. For a while, I was able to be a mother, a wife, and hold down a good job, even as my drinking grew worse and worse.

Three years ago, however, something terrible happened in my life. It was so bad that I still don’t feel comfortable talking about it.

Please see “Michelle” on Page 3.
As you read in this month’s Rescuer, October is domestic violence month. It’s a good time for us all to think about the ways we could use our lives to help stop domestic violence and also help victims after the fact.

Domestic violence is a problem we encounter regularly here at the Rescue Mission. It is violence or emotional abuse committed by a person who the victim knows. And while we often think of domestic violence as abuse between two adults, I think we should consider child abuse and even sexual abuse (when committed by someone the victim knows) as domestic violence.

A few years ago we helped one woman escape abuse after her husband became very controlling. He wouldn’t let her leave the house. When her husband would leave for work he would take her phone with him and he would take all her shoes, so she couldn’t leave the house unless she wanted to walk barefoot.

With no access to her phone or ability to leave she sat alone and watched TV all day. One day she couldn’t take it anymore and escaped. She eventually came to live at the Rescue Mission and completed our New Life Recovery Program, even speaking at one of our annual banquets.

Another time, I received a call from a woman out of state. She had found our website and asked me if I could help her best friend who was living in Utah and being abused. With the caller’s help the Rescue Mission was able to find the woman, contact the police and then together we were able to get the woman and her kids into a safe shelter.

Our community talks a lot about ending homelessness. One way to significantly decrease homelessness is to end domestic violence. Since so many people become addicted because they are trying to ease the pain related to domestic violence, I wonder how many fewer homeless people there would be if we were able to eliminate or greatly reduce domestic violence. Would there be 25 percent fewer homeless people? 50 percent less?

As a former addict, I can see how domestic violence can lead to addiction. I have been there. I know how hard it can be to break the cycle of addiction and recovery can be difficult. The healing journey can be long and arduous. And yet, it is possible to overcome addiction and build a life without drugs.

Chris D. Croswite
Executive Director

As the holidays approach there will be more and more panhandlers on the streets. Often, it’s difficult to know if the person really needs help, or is just trying to get money to buy alcohol or drugs. For those who truly want to help panhandlers, we have created “Help Cards” that can be distributed 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 recovery program that can truly give the homeless a restored life by helping them off the streets and into employment and housing. We encourage our supporters to give a Help Card and let panhandlers know there is a place that can take care of their needs.

Helps cards are available at the Rescue Mission, or they can be ordered off our website and can be downloaded and printed there as well. Visit RescueSaltLake.org for more information.

About it except with people I really trust. After that incident I couldn’t stop drinking to ease the pain. I lost my job and bounced around from one lesser paying job to another trying to hold my life together.

But my alcoholism controlled me and I couldn’t stop drinking. The pain of my brother’s suicide and this other incident were too much for me to bear.

Towards the end of 2015 my life had completely unraveled. My husband and I were fighting almost constantly and I decided to go live with my parents in Mesquite, Nevada for a few weeks. I stayed six weeks before deciding to drive back home.

My DUI and Suicide Attempt

On my way back I stopped in Cedar City and purchased a bottle of vodka. By the time I reached the Salt Lake Valley I had finished almost the whole bottle. I was pulled over near Sandy and taken to jail on a DUI charge.

While many people might shrug off a DUI, I was humiliated. I still considered myself a respectable businesswoman. I wasn’t a criminal. I didn’t want to admit to myself that I had become the kind of person who would get a DUI and spend time in jail. I was so upset about my arrest and my complete inability to stay sober that I decided to follow in my brother’s footsteps and kill myself.

So, I took some sleeping pills, drank a bunch of alcohol and waited to die. I was lucky that my husband found me unconscious and called for help. Doctors at the hospital worked to save me and I spent two weeks recovering. When the hospital was set to release me, my husband knew that I was not in the right mindset or condition to be around our kids.

During my darkest hours, the one person I had confided in the most was my sister. She attends Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake and has a good relationship with the Rescue Mission. My sister said I should give the Rescue Mission a chance. She said she thought they could help me.

I am so glad I took her advice.

My New Life

While I still have a lot of work to do I feel like a new person. I connect with my kids a lot and now I have hopes of saving my 22-year marriage. While I know my husband and I still need a lot of counseling to make it work, I have hopes that we can...

I love my family and want to be there for them. I know my kids and my husband love me and need me as well. I love going to my home church, Capital Church, and have dreams that my family will join me there one day. I have grown so much listening to my pastor’s sermons. I am an official greeter at my church and have been able to build friendships with lots of people. They are there to help me and pick me up when I am struggling.

I will graduate from the New Life Program in January and am excited for what God has planned for my life. Clearly, my No. 1 goal is to live for God and stay sober. Beyond sobriety, I know I have a lot of work still to do in repairing relationships with my family. That work will not be easy, but I am asking God for help to do it. If you remember, please pray for me, and others who have experienced traumatic events. Pray that I will continue in my new relationship with God, stay sober and that God would continue to restore my relationships with my family.

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