

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

In case you missed it, we what to shout this out: We are welcoming back our chapel providers, kitchen volunteers, and others who want to serve the homeless alongside us.

This month we will be reaching out to those churches and organizations who have led our chapel services and helped feed the homeless at our evening meals. We want to confirm whether a group is ready to continue to help with these outreaches or if they still need to be on hold.

But If you are a chapel provide or kitchen volunteer who has been regularly scheduled in the past, don't wait for us to call you, you are welcome to jump right into your previous spot. If you would like more information, Chapel providers should email Pastor Don Rivera at DRivera@RescueSaltLake.org and volunteers should email Danielle Vaughns at DVaughns@RescueSaltLake.org. You can also give us a call at call **801-355-1302**.

The Mission has been mostly free from COVID over the past several months. Our guests and program members are regularly tested, we practice physical distancing, and wear masks. If someone tests positive, they are removed from the homeless population and treated at a remote shelter until they are well again. So, we provide as safe an environment as possible for our guests, chapel providers, and volunteers.

We are excited to open back up for volunteers and ask for your help. If you have ever wanted to volunteer to serve an evening meal, now is a good time to talk with Danielle about our open opportunities and our continued protocols. We couldn't do all we do with your support and help, so please consider volunteering today.



FEBRUARY 2021 - OUR CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Chapel: First Baptist West Valley Kitchen: First Baptist West Valley	2 Chapel: Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake Kitchen: Intermt. Baptist Youth	3 Chapel: SMCC Kitchen: SMCC	4 Chapel: RMSL Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	5 Chapel: Mt. Oly Presbyterian Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	6 Chapel: Bible Baptist Kitchen: So. Valley Comm. Church
7 Chapel: Gospel Grace Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	8 Chapel: Discovery Christian Kitchen: Discovery Christian	9 Chapel: Unity Baptist Kitchen: Lifeline Community Church	10 Chapel: Northern Utah Mennonite Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	11 Chapel: Millcreek Baptist Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	12 Chapel: Hilltop United Methodist Kitchen: Hilltop United Methodist	13 Chapel: Berean Bible Kitchen: Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake
14 Chapel: Abundant Life Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	15 Chapel: Bennion Christian Center Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	16 Chapel: K2 - The Church Kitchen: Compassion Call	17 Chapel: Missions Door Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	18 Chapel: New Begins. Christian Fellowship Kitchen: Lifeline Community Church	19 Chapel: RMSL Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	20 Chapel: Southside Church of Christ Kitchen: Southside Church of Christ
21 Chapel: Abundant Life 28 Chapel & Kitchen: Grace Community Bible	22 Chapel: Living Waters Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	23 Chapel: Canyons Church Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	24 Chapel: First Methodist Kitchen: Email to Schedule*	25 Chapel: Missions Door Kitchen: Fresh Life Church	26 Chapel: Midvalley Bible Kitchen: Mudita Yoga	27 Chapel: EV Free Church of Salt Lake Kitchen: Email to Schedule*

*Email DVaughns@RescueSaltLake.org to schedule your volunteer request.

RESCUER

FEBRUARY
2021

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org

LESTER HERRERA: A former gang member finds life in Jesus

A little over a year ago I was in jail. I had recently lost my father to ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) and was struggling to keep my marriage together as my wife and I had been using drugs for the past three years. I was 40 years old and had no idea who I was.

That's when God stepped in and started talking to me. I remember there was a Bible on one of the shelves in my jail unit and it was calling to me. But I was too full of pride to walk over a pick it up and start reading.

Instead, I engaged in typical jailhouse jargon with the other inmates in my unit. We would tell jokes that are categorized as "Your mom" or "Your dad" jokes. They are juvenile jokes and often turn coarse, especially in jail. I remember hearing a "Your dad" joke and repeating it to a group.

In that moment, my heart was pierced. All of the sudden, the passing of my father combined the vulgar way I was talking about dads cut my soul deep. I went to my cell and started weeping. I was on my knees crying out to God, asking Him to help me, to save me. I really had no religious background and didn't even know what I was saying, but I cried out for help over and over.

After that, I picked up the Bible and started reading it. I found all the answers to my prayers were in the Bible.

At the same time God was intervening in my life, He (quite uncoincidentally) was also working in my wife's life. We had both been arrested for shoplifting. But given my long record I was kept in jail while she was released. With nowhere to go, God had led her to the Rescue Mission's



Lester Herrera was in and out of jail and prison. Now he has a good job and renewed family relationships.

Women's Facility where she joined the New Life Program. (Note: You can read my wife's testimony in the January edition of the Rescuer).

Please see "Lester" on page 3

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with us

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LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR

In this month of where love is celebrated, I was reminded about something that happened many years ago at the Rescue Mission.

I was leading a Bible class at the Mission when a long-haired, emaciated man came in and sat with his head against the wall, barely able to stay upright. As the days went on the man continued to come to class

and sit with his head against the wall. He did not participate and did not want to talk after class. I wondered if he understood anything that was being said and in my skeptical heart gave him very little chance. One day he was gone, and I had no idea where he went.



A couple weeks later I began counseling a new man named Josh, who had joined our New Life Recovery Program. Josh was on the ball, taking his counseling and classes seriously, while doing his homework and engaging. He was jovial and easily made friends on the program and among the homeless community. Since Josh was new, I did not know much about him, so I read his background interview and viewed his intake picture.

As you might guess, it was the same man I had given little hope for, just cleaned up with a little more meat on his bones and a haircut. I have never forgotten how I felt at that moment. God pierced my heart since I had prematurely judged Josh, who worked a great program, graduated, and ended up doing well.

In this month's Rescuer Lester Herrera shares how he has been judged by his tattoos and his past life. He also shares how the homeless are often judged by appearance. The Bible instructs us not to judge (least

we be judged ourselves) – great wisdom. Yet in an apparent paradox also bids us to make judgments about all things.

The key difference is judging people versus judging actions. It's one thing to see a homeless person and think lesser of that person because of the way they look. It's wrong to consider yourself better than that person. At the same time, we can, in love, tell a homeless person that the decisions they are making to abuse drugs or isolate themselves from other people are wrong.

We can make a judgement on their actions as self-destructing and suggest ways we can help, while still showing love and not heaping condemnation on the person. By listening, observing, and interacting with our homeless friends we can learn to respect them and help them without merely judging by appearances. In this way, we can fulfill Jesus' call in John 7:24 to "judge correctly" when it comes to our interactions with our homeless friends.

Yes, love is the key, and sometimes tough love is rightly making hard judgments. But any judgment done in love should be meant to lift the person up, and not condemn, belittle, or marginalize them. Please join me in reflecting on the interactions we all have with our homeless friends and ask God for help to love them and lift them up, in hopes that we all might see more "Joshes" in our lives.

God bless you,

Chris D. Croswhite
Executive Director

LESTER: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In Jail I was able to talk to her occasionally and one day she asked me if I would join the New Life Program at the Mission's Men's Facility, while she completed the program at the Women's Facility. I agreed and even renounced my gang affiliation—something that I thought I would never do.

I had been in a gang since I was 13. We would rob and steal to get money. I was in and out of jail, going to state prison a few times and once even to federal prison. At times my wife and I would do well and provide for our kids, but we would often slip into drug abuse again. After the passing of her parents in 2017 we abused drugs more and more. Our kids left to live with other family members, and we lost our jobs, housing, and ended up in jail.

But God showed me that living the gang life could not bring me joy. Instead I read that He promised that if I seek Him first, He would take care of me. So, I accepted my wife's challenge. I wrote to the Rescue Mission and asked if I could join the New Life Program when I was released from jail.

When I arrived at the Mission, I was way out of my comfort zone. There were so many homeless people who seemed dirty and disheveled. But my wife asked me, "Don't you trust God?" So, I stayed. I trusted that God had brought me to the place I needed to be.

Through my time at the Mission God has made me into a new creation. Before I came here, I didn't even know what a pastor was. Through the Bible studies, counseling sessions, nightly chapel services, and fellowship with other men struggling to follow God and stay sober, God changed me. I met people who helped me grow and learn.

At the Rescue Mission God taught me how to love other people. In the past, there were times when I would look down on homeless people. Times when I thought I was better. But God humbled me. Helping the homeless through my work therapy at the Mission has shown me that the homeless are just broken people. They are no different from anyone else who might have walked in their shoes. I learned I am no better than any person who finds help at the Mission.

I discovered a great church that my wife and I go to called New Creation Church. We even have a Marriage Coach there who is helping us build a stronger relationship. My kids are connecting with me and remark that they believe I have truly changed. My daughter even gave her life to Jesus after seeing the change in me.

When I moved to the work phase of the New Life Program last month, I was turned down for several jobs because of my criminal background. Just when I was starting to get discouraged, God led me to a job opening and they took a chance on me despite my background. We make bricks for various construction projects. It is hard work, but I am so thankful. I read in scripture that I should do work with all my heart and as if I was working for the Lord and He will honor it. So

that's how I try to approach every day on the job. God even arranged it so my job is right off the TRAX line.

Before I came to the Rescue Mission my marriage was broken, my kids were fed up with me, and I was using drugs every day that I wasn't locked up. Now my life has changed. I

haven't used drugs for a year and all my

relationships are better. On the outside I look like this mean gang member, but on the inside I am full of God's grace and the Holy Spirit. I think God will use the way I look as a testimony to others that this is what Jesus can do. He can change anyone, even someone walking around in a body that is covered with tattoos.

My wife and I will graduate from the New Life Program at about the same time, in the summer of 2021. We are saving money and want to get a place together. We want to get our driver's licenses and a car, so we can visit our family. Mostly we want to live together as sober followers of Jesus, seeing what He has in store for us.

I can't thank the supporters and staff of the Mission enough. My life was a mess and I was at rock bottom. The New Life Program gave me the foundation for God to change me. Thank you for saving my life, my marriage, my family, and giving me a new hope.

"I think God will use the way I look at a testimony to others that this is what Jesus can do."

These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted!

December 2020 YTD 2020

Professions of Faith	5	328
Meals	19,418	183,291
Family Food Boxes	432	2,679
Nights of Shelter	3,621	50,866
Clothing	6,281	43,082
Hygiene Items	6,101	70,817
Day Service	1,480	16,916
Jobs Obtained	2	58
Housing Obtained	2	36

Our Stats

how your gift helps