

SAVING LIVES THROUGH
OPERATION HYDRATION



Summer is a hard time for our homeless friends, especially this year during a drought.

The homeless employ many strategies to survive the summer. They wait and find someplace where the sprinklers come on at night then use the sprinkling system to take an impromptu shower. But as more and more places are shutting down sprinklers to cope with Utah’s extreme drought, this strategy is less tenable.

Other times, our homeless friends will buy a cheap cup of coffee somewhere just to get access to a restroom and while they are in the restroom, they wash their clothes in the handwashing basin. During the heat of the day, they will duck into stores or a mall and try to act like they are shoppers just to get a few minutes of air conditioning before they are kicked out.

In some situations, we even see the homeless lay down under trucks or vans just to find a bit of shade and get out of the heat. Yes, it is miserable being homeless during Utah’s hot summers.




But, God willing, we can use this discomfort to draw our homeless friends off the streets. This June through August we will again be running our Operation Hydration campaign.

Operation Hydration helps supply cool, clean water to the homeless. We are purchasing water bottles and have water coolers in our kitchen and foyer. Additionally, our chapel is open (chilled by our swamp coolers) as a respite from the summer swelter. Besides cool air and water, our homeless friends receive hats, sunscreen, reusable water bottles, and lip balm, along with kind words, love and friendship.

You can help by donating to the Rescue Mission today. Use the enclosed envelope, give online at

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JUNE 2021 - CHAPEL AND KITCHEN SERVING SCHEDULE

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  | 1 Chapel: Calvary Chapel of Salt Lake Kitchen: Intermt. Baptist Youth | 2 Chapel: SMCC Kitchen: SMCC | 3 Chapel: RMSL Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 4 Chapel: Mt Oly Presbyterian Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 5 Chapel: Bible Baptist Kitchen: So. Valley Comm. Church |
| 6 Chapel: Gospel Grace Kitchen: Gospel Grace | 7 Chapel: First Baptist West Valley Kitchen: First Baptist West Valley | 8 Chapel: Unity Baptist Kitchen: Lifeline Community Church | 9 Chapel: Northern Utah Mennonite Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 10 Chapel: Millcreek Baptist Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 11 Chapel: Hilltop United Methodist Kitchen: Hilltop United Methodist | 12 Chapel: Berean Bible Kitchen: Calvary Chapel |
| 13 Chapel: Abundant Life Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 14 Chapel: Discovery Christian Kitchen: Discovery Christian | 15 Chapel: K2 - The Church Kitchen: Compassion Call | 16 Chapel: Mission’s Door Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 17 Chapel: New Begins. Christian Fellowship Kitchen: Lifeline Community Church | 18 Chapel: RMSL Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 19 Chapel: Southside Church of Christ Kitchen: Southside Church of Christ |
| 20 Chapel: Abundant Life Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 21 Chapel: Bennion Christian Center Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 22 Chapel: Canyons Church Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 23 Chapel: First Methodist Kitchen: Salt Lake Christian | 24 Chapel: Mission’s Door Kitchen: Fresh Life Church | 25 Chapel: Midvalley Bible Kitchen: Mudita Yoga | 26 Chapel: EV Free Church of Salt Lake Kitchen: Email to Schedule* |
| 27 Chapel: Grace Community Bible Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 28 Chapel: Living Waters Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 29 Chapel: RMSL Kitchen: Email to Schedule* | 30 Chapel: RMSL Kitchen: Fresh Life Church |  | | |

RESCUER

JUNE
2021

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org

MELISSA MIKKELSEN:
A mother finds a new life with her kids

Five years ago, my life seemed OK. I lived in Elko with my husband and our three children. We made a good living and seemed successful. But in 2017 addiction took a greater hold in our lives. We were soon divorced, and my husband took guardianship of our children, as I worked to get sober.

But without connection to family, my addiction grew worse and I was selling drugs and using sex to get drugs and money. I was mired in a terrible life in Nevada. I felt I needed to get back to my children, who had since gone to live with their grandpa and aunt in Lehi, Utah.

I traveled to Utah to see if I could reconnect with my family, but I was really in no shape for a homecoming. I was not taking the prescription medication I needed to manage my bi-polar disorder and was using illegal street drugs, such as meth.

I was homeless and when I had a severe depressive episode, I was hospitalized. As I recovered, the hospital staff asked me if I had a place to go when I was released. I really had nowhere but as I was lying there, a phone number came into my mind. It was a phone number I had called a few times before to seek help when I was homeless. It was the number to the Rescue Mission’s Women’s Center.

I asked the hospital staff to call the number and when the Rescue Mission answered I told them I needed help and a place to stay. They agreed to give me a chance on their New Life Program, and so I arrived at the Mission on May 14, 2020.



Melissa Mikkelsen is sober, has a stable job, and is saving money so she can provide a stable place where she and her children can call home.

The biggest thing I had to accept in joining the program was that it was 13 months of my life. I thought, “what’s going to happen to my children. What about the few belongings I still have. How will this impact my future relationships with everyone knowing I had been in a long-term recovery program?”

But God gave me the strength to commit. It was hard to tell my family about my decision. It embarrassed me because although they knew I had struggles, I don’t think they realized how bad my life had become

Please see “Melissa” on Page 3

Connect
with us

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FRIENDSHIP, ESPECIALLY IN JESUS, IS A CURE-ALL

As I have worked as the Pastor, Counselor, and Executive Director of the Rescue Mission over the past 15 plus years, I have witnessed the importance of friendship. In fact, friendship is so important that it is one of the key components of our recovery program.

I reflect on Aelred of Rievaulx's book called "Spiritual Friendship". Alred was a monk in the 1100s. While I don't subscribe to every bit of theology or opinion Aelred had, I loved this line: "No medicine is more valuable, none more efficacious, none better suited to the cure of all our temporal ills than a friend to whom we may turn for consolation in time of trouble, and with whom we may share our happiness in time of joy."

God also reminds us in Psalm 17 that a friend loves at all times and Aelred picks up on this truth when he beautifully states that true friends pick up right when they left off, even though decades may have passed since spending time together.

Certainly, Jesus is our greatest friend and the one we can turn to in any situation. But as we emerge from months and months of isolation, we should remember human friendships as well. After all, God has given us these relationships as a blessing and a necessity. In fact, a lack of human friendship and connectivity is one of the greatest hurts that impact the homeless.

Here at the Rescue Mission, your support helps us to be a place where the homeless can find friendships. They can step out of the loneliness and isolation of the streets, and into great fellowship, friendship, and can connect with the greatest friend of all, Jesus Christ. Please join me in praying that as the pandemic winds down, friendship and community, especially among our homeless friends, will increase and along with it, faith, sobriety, employment, and new life. Thank you for supporting our ministry. We would not be here without you.

God bless you,
Chris D. Chriswhite
Executive Director

It's a true blessing to see a person come in off the streets (after years of isolation and loneliness) and immediately build friendships (Melissa Mikkelsen shares more about this in her testimony in this month's edition of the Rescuer). Because many members of the New Life Program have similar life experiences, a quick bond can develop.

When homeless men and women join the New Life Program, we give them a small amount of money each week as a gratuity for getting through the week and meeting their program commitments. The amount is small, like \$10 or \$20 a week, depending on how long the person has been on the program. While our program men and women at times burn through their gratuity quickly by getting a meal at fast food restaurant or a needed item at Walmart, I often see them give a few dollars away to their friends on our program or to the homeless. The money is given knowing full well that it will often cause the giver to be broke for several days until the next gratuity is distributed.

The reason those who have nothing give to others is because of friendship. They have lived so long without friends that the blessing of giving (even if it means you yourself will go without) is greater than hoarding nickels, dimes, and dollars. It might seem strange, but blessing someone who has eaten 48 straight meals at the Rescue Mission's kitchen with a McDonald's double cheeseburger is the stuff that creates lasting friendships.

Our Stats
how your gift helps

| These are not just numbers, they are lives impacted! | | |
|--|------------|----------|
| | April 2021 | YTD 2021 |
| Professions of Faith | 1 | 11 |
| Meals | 12,217 | 39,832 |
| Family Food Boxes | 88 | 228 |
| Nights of Shelter | 3,963 | 15,140 |
| Clothing | 12,815 | 27,513 |
| Showers/Hygiene Kits | 8,188 | 21,513 |
| Jobs Obtained | 3 | 13 |
| Housing Obtained | 13 | 17 |

MELISSA: Continued from Page 1

until I told them I was joining the Rescue Mission's program. Still, being honest about how broken I was was a huge first step for me.

As I worked through the New Life Recovery Program, I found that it was filled with counselors and staff and other program members who genuinely cared about being my friend. It seemed like they wanted to have a real relationship and even friendship with me, not just work through a series of counseling questions.

I found that real companionship can blossom and even grow during recovery. It was not 13-months of constant struggle, it was enjoyable at times, too. I say "at times" because certainly there were difficulties and frustrations. I was challenged to get to the bottom of my issues. To forgive those who hurt me in the past and, in turn, accept forgiveness for the wrong things I have done. And, most importantly, to truly accept Jesus and what He did by providing eternal forgiveness for us on the cross.

I love attending my home church of Calvary Baptist and learning more about Jesus. I need that connection to my church because I need people in my life who will encourage me to stay close to Jesus. As God has changed me over this past year, He has also been faithful to restore my relationships with my children and family.

My children view my word as trustworthy now. They believe the things I tell them and trust that I am able to follow through. They are thriving living with their aunt and step-grandfather in Lehi.

One way God has blessed us is that I never lost custody of my children. They are under a temporary guardianship now, but I will be able to have full custody again when I graduate the New Life Program.

I am currently saving money so I can get a small apartment where my kids and I can live together. When I moved to the employment phase of the New Life Program, God provided me with a good job at a Maverik Country Store just a few blocks from the Rescue Mission's Women's Center. After two months I was promoted to shift lead. Maverik is a good, stable company with great benefits, so I feel blessed to work there.

I am hoping to be able to transfer to a store in Lehi or somewhere in northern Utah County when I graduate because I would like to move there so my kids and I can be close to the rest of our family who have been so instrumental in raising them.

Even as I look forward to living with my kids again, I know I need to take everything slow and not forget to take steps each day to seek the fellowship with God

"My mental health is doing so much better and, with the correct prescription and sobriety, my bi-polar disorder is well controlled."

and His people that I need to stay sober. My mental health is doing so much better and, with the correct prescription and sobriety, my bi-polar disorder is well controlled. I know God's healing has been a part of that as well.

Please pray for me as I make the transition out of the Rescue Mission's New Life Program and work to reunite with my children, who are 12, 9, and 4. I feel like as long as we are together and have God in our lives, that is all that matters. Thank you for supporting the Rescue Mission and giving me another chance to be a mom and a sober person again who knows Jesus.



OPERATION HYDRATION:
Saving lives, from page 4

RescueSaltLake.org or call 801-746-1006 to make a secure credit card donation over the phone. Besides your financial support, we are also in need of brimmed hats, SPF lip balm and sunscreen, school-sized backpacks, new underwear (large and extra-large) and hygiene items so we can help our homeless friends beat the heat this summer.

We want to be a place where the homeless can come to escape the misery of the burning hot streets this summer and find rest. The respite we provide may be the catalyst for someone to join our New Life Recovery Program and get off the streets and into sobriety, employment, and housing. Not to mention that water and our cool chapel might just save a life from a physical standpoint as well.

Help make Operation Hydration a success and save a life from being lost to extreme heat. Please help today!