

IT'S GETTING HOT OUT THERE: SUPPORT US AS WE LEVERAGE THE SUMMER HEAT TO HELP PEOPLE OFF THE STREETS

As we prepare this July newsletter the forecast is for temperatures in the mid-90s, with some days approaching 100 degrees. The chance of rain is 0% and the air is so dry it seems to suck the moisture out of a person's body. While many of us can retreat from the July heat into an air-conditioned home or apartment, our homeless friends living on the streets are in dire straits.

While many come to the Mission's doors and find cold water, swamp-cooler chilled air, and refreshing showers, others – for reasons including severe anxiety, addiction, PTSD, lack of trust, and crippling fear – remain on the streets. They haven't experienced the love and healing power that Jesus brings, and are stuck in a rut, living in camps or alone outside in the smothering, dry heat.

This is why a big part of Operation Hydration is outreach. Each week our staff and volunteer teams travel to area homeless camps. We share Care Kits – which include things like water, hats, and sunscreen – with those living in camps and invite them to come to the Rescue Mission where they can relax, get cool, cleaned off, and hydrated. They

OPERATION HYDRATION

SUMMER HEAT RELIEF

can obtain the physical care they need, as well as finding loving people, biblical teaching about Jesus, sobriety, employment, and self-sustained housing.

So please continue to support Operation Hydration this summer. You can volunteer to visit homeless camps. You can collect supplies like water bottles, hats, sunscreen, lip balm, and lightweight long-sleeve shirts.

And you can also give. Donate by using the enclosed envelope, **scan the QR Code** below, give online at **RescueSaltLake.org**, or call **801-746-1006** to make a secure credit card donation over the phone. Your support can help save a life from being lost to extreme heat and introduce a homeless person to Jesus!



Steve Spiess, Rescue Mission outreach coordinator, talks to a man living in a homeless camp as part of our outreaches.



A woman secures hats and light long-sleeve clothes for the summer during a Rescue Mission outreach event.

RESCUER

JULY
2023

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org



Connis Burt spent two nights on Salt Lake City's streets before God lead him to the Rescue Mission where he found the life-changing help he needed.

I have struggled with sobriety for most of my life but it wasn't until I arrived in Utah two years ago that I finally became homeless. It was a blessing in disguise, since God used my homelessness to lead me to the help I truly needed at the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.

In large part, I have been able to "manage" my substance abuse. I would drink beer almost every day, like a ritual. Sometimes I would add drugs into the mix. Yet, I was able to hold down jobs. I always had a home and a mode of transportation. It was hard for me to see my substance abuse as a real problem, as long as I supported myself.

It wasn't until I came to the Rescue Mission that I fully realized how my addiction had impacted my life. I realized that I wasn't fulfilling my obligations. I was way behind on child support for my three daughters. My driver's license

was revoked for a DUI. My credit cards were canceled for lack of payment.

GOD INTERVENES

It was God's providence that led me to Utah. Initially, I thought I had come for a change of scenery. I had been working as a restaurant manager near the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. There were many late and overnight shifts and it wore on me. My brother lived in Ogden and He said I could stay with him while I looked for a job. It only took about 10 days, however, to realize my brother and me were not compatible roommates.

I had one more paycheck that would be deposited in my account from the job I left in Montana. The day it was set to deposit I took the train from Ogden to the airport. It

Please see "Connis" on page 3.

RECORD-SETTING HOMELESSNESS IN UTAH

You might have seen in media outlets recently that Utah’s 2023 Annual Data Report on Homelessness indicated Utah’s chronically homeless population has nearly doubled (96% increase) since 2019.

A chronically homeless person is someone who has been homeless for at least a year, either continuously or in four or more instances within the last three years. The increase in chronically homeless people, which likely has many contributing factors, was blamed largely on Utah’s lack of “deeply affordable” housing, Ksl.com reported.

Here at the Rescue Mission, I am thankful to say that your support enables us to be one of the only remaining deeply affordable housing units in downtown Salt Lake. Not only are we “deeply affordable” we’re free, because of your support.

We’re free to people like Connis Burt who shares his life story in this month’s *Rescuer*. Connis was homeless for only two days before he realized he needed help. He used google and the search engine led him to the Mission, where he has gotten sober, addressed life issues, connected to a local church, secured a good job, and paid many debts, including back child support.

While Utah’s Homelessness Report counts people living in temporary housing shelters like the Rescue Mission as “homeless” we are more than just a shelter. We link



people with healthcare partners. We connect people with local churches. We teach people the Bible and share the Gospel. We introduce people to our on-site, spiritual and life skills mentors. We help people find jobs and long-term housing. We enable people to address their life crises and become self-sufficient members of our community. We feed, clothe, and care for people, just like a family sharing a house would.

We don’t want to be anyone’s permanent home, but it’s a fact that while people are with us, they have one. Inflation, housing costs, food costs, increased addiction, and declining mental health due to the pandemic, and the general population increase in Utah have likely all contributed to the increase in chronic homelessness since 2019. But please know your support is helping people and allows us to reach this population in a faith-based way that other organizations can’t.

We appreciate your continued support and prayers as we work to restore broken lives while record numbers of our homeless friends come to our door. With your backing, we trust that God will use this ministry to help those who seek our assistance off our streets and into self-sufficiency.

God bless you,

Chris D. CroswHITE
Executive Director

CONNIS: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was September, 2021 and I decided I would try a second “change of scenery.” I wasn’t sure where I would fly to, but considered Las Vegas, my original home.

As I waited at the airport, I continued to check my phone for the deposit to hit my account. The check never came, and I could not buy a plane ticket. I slept on the streets for the first time that night. The next day: still no deposit and another night on the streets. I came to realize that final check, for whatever reason, was not coming. Today, I consider it divine intervention, because when I realized I was homeless and broke, I searched the internet to find a place that could help me. As I searched, I discovered the Rescue Mission.

THE CHANGE I NEEDED

I came to the Mission and told them I needed help. Through my experience here, I realized I didn’t need scenery changes, I needed a change in my heart.

Today, I have direction and goals. God has blessed me with a great Christian family at Potter’s House Christian Fellowship where I feel welcomed and learn more about God and His son Jesus. I have progressed through the New Life Program, including work therapy. One of my work therapy jobs was checking homeless men in for shelter beds at night. It encouraged me to see so many (over half) of the homeless men working each day and coming back at night to sleep.

They were not lazy but needed a place to stay while they worked to save money and find affordable housing. Their work ethic inspired me and when it was time for me to phase up to the employment phase of the New Life

Program, I quickly got a job at a local Amazon warehouse. About two months ago, I moved to another warehouse company that offered me full-time work.

It has been a blessing to be sober and working again. I have paid off my credit card debts. I began paying child support again and am almost caught up. I am close to having enough money to pay off the last of my fines that will enable me to get my driver’s license back. All the while, I have been saving so I can move into the Freedom House, the Rescue Mission’s transitional housing for men working their way out of homelessness.

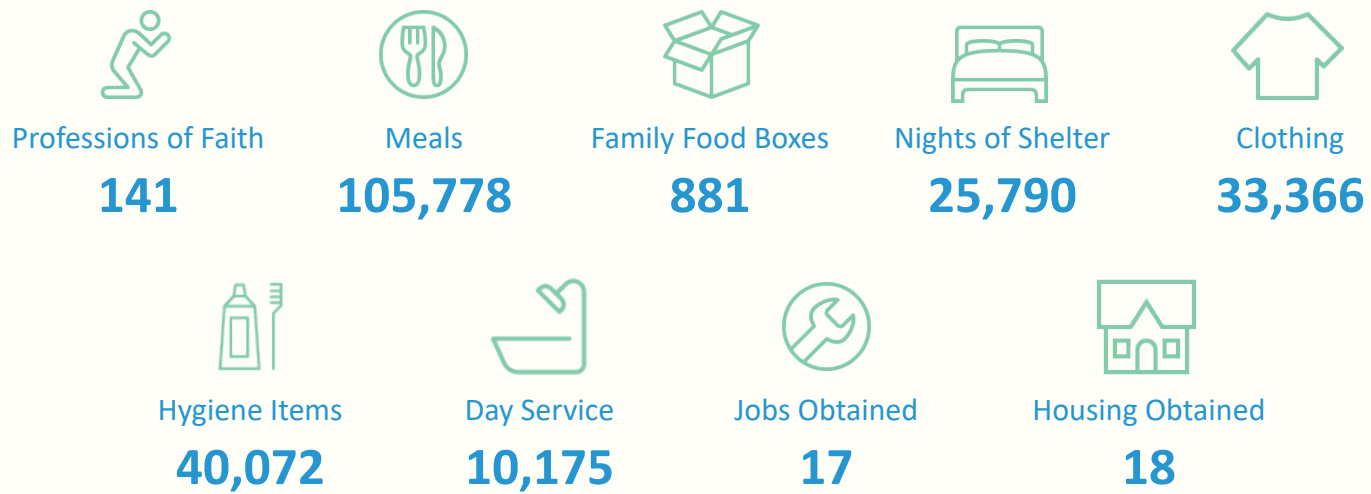
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

I will move into Freedom House this month and have been growing pepper plants, like jalapenos, on my room windowsill at the Mission in preparation. I will transplant them into the Freedom House Garden when I get there.

Please pray for my family relationships. I have reached out to my three daughters (two live in Maine and one in Las Vegas) but now am waiting for them to want to contact me. I hope the child support and back child support I am paying will be one way I can show that I am different and want to care for and have a relationship with them. At the same time, I understand their reluctance to connect with a dad who hasn’t been there. But I hope they forgive me, and we are able to reconnect.

Thank you for supporting the Rescue Mission, the place where God led me to find the help I needed. Your support helped save me from my lowest point.

HOW YOUR GIFT HELPS: OUR YTD STATS THROUGH MAY



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