

OUR PEER COUNCIL IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In continued pursuit to improve the New Life Program and help people become the men and women God intends, the Rescue Mission created a Peer Council. Even in a Christ-centered environment that welcomes all people there is tension with honesty, trust, accountability, and grace, when people don't know each other.

The Peer Council, which is made up of students on the New Life Program, who are chosen by their fellow students and approved by the staff, helps with this tension. Those on the Peer Council are elected men who have shown growth and maturity on the Program. They are individuals to whom their peers look up to and find solid advice.

The Peer Council helps to create an environment where the leaders reach out to others on the Program, especially new members, with whom they might not otherwise build relationships.

“Every council member is still on the program,” council member Sam Wright said. “Being on the council forces me to see things from a different perspective which has been good for my personal growth.”

One time, council member Steven Sell encountered a man who had decided to leave the New Life Recovery Program. “I approached him and tried to share with him that he mattered and that he could do make it, if he kept trying” Steve said. “That’s not normal for me. I wouldn’t have done it if I wasn’t on

the council.” Another time, a man who struggled with alcohol abuse came to council members and told them he had relapsed. The man went to his room and packed up his things, expecting to be removed from the program. But the council members asked him if he was serious about changing his life and if he wanted to continue his program.

The man said he was. The council, along with the Mission’ staff, decided to give him a second chance. He later graduated from the New Life Program, has a job, a place of his own, and continues to live a life of sobriety.

Program Director Cassie Warner, who created the Peer Council, said the council can address issues from a peer-to-peer perspective, which can be helpful in facilitating personal growth. The council has grown to become a successful part New Life Program and seeks a balance between discipline and grace, in a Christ-centered environment where trust is critical.

Thank you for your support of the Rescue Mission, which allows us to create innovative, faith-based approaches to help people address their life issues and be rescued off our streets. Your continued support is making a difference and bringing people out of homelessness.

JOEY & SARAH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Sarah recalls that after the trip, “it was like I had my old Joey back.”

In the three years since, one of their six children, now ages 13-28, was married and Joey obtained a permit from the state to officiate the wedding.

“Especially in the beginning, the cards were stacked against these kids,” Sarah said. “But none of them struggle with addiction and all of them are either working or doing well in school. I am so proud of Joey for stepping out of addiction. He grew up in a family full of addiction and it took him stepping out to break the cycle for our kids. We were able to provide the stability for them that neither of us had growing up, and it was all from God. All because of Him.”

Joey and Sarah want to thank the supporters of the Mission, and also encourage those who are in recovery and those still struggling with addiction. Their message is that recovery is a long battle, but even if a person slips up or falls back, there is still a path forward and the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake is always there for people who need help for the first time or with a relapse.



RESCUER

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The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org

Editor’s Note: while most of our life stories are shared in the first person, we are using a different style in this edition, since both Joey and Sarah Morgan helped share the story of how God brought a man out of homelessness and into the role of husband, father, and provider.

Set on a nice beach between Biloxi and New Orleans, Waveland, Mississippi was a perfect spot for Joey and Sarah Morgan to raise six kids. But when Joey started slipping back into addiction, the Morgans took a family vacation to an unlikely place – the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.

Joey, originally from Payson, Utah, had been to the Mission before, in the mid-2000s. Then it was the height of the opioid crisis and Joey had injured his back at his machinist job. He kept working but was referred to a pain clinic covered through his workplace insurance. The clinic prescribed him opioid pills and for two long years Joey kept going to work and kept taking his pills, as prescribed. Eventually, Joey couldn’t function anymore. He lost his job, lost his house, and everything else he owned. Still addicted, he turned to the streets and started using heroin.

After two years he hit rock bottom. It was 2006 when he walked up the stairs to the Rescue Mission’s front door and joined the New Life Program. At the Rescue Mission Joey became sober, found a relationship with Jesus, met his new wife Sarah, and got a job. Still his new life was not without hardship. While at the Mission Joey connected with a free healthcare clinic and was diagnosed with testicular cancer. He went through the pain of radiation and surgery, all the while fighting the urge to return to his addiction to pain killers.

But God helped Joey through and he was healed. He became stable and took custody of his three children again, since their mother (Joey’s first wife who he married in high school) was still stuck in addiction.

“It was awesome that I could teach my kids about Jesus,” Joey said. “I sat them down and said, ‘it’s about your relationship with Him and your prayer life.’ I feel like they have a strong relationship with Jesus. . I really do.”

When they were married, Sarah brought a fourth child to the family. They expected no more since doctors told Joey it



Joey and Sarah Morgan share a selfie from their hometown of Waveland, Mississippi where they moved after Joey got help at the Rescue Mission.

Please see “Joey & Sarah” on page 3.

OVERCOMING THE FEARS OF HOMELESSNESS

Some of our homeless friends have apprehension, even fear, to walk inside of the Rescue Mission, or other service providers, for the first time. Often our friends are walking through our doors because they know they need help, perhaps a bed to sleep in, a meal to eat, or assistance with an issue that is destroying their life. Other times the person who walks through our door does not truly know the help they need.

They may not know about all the services we provide, and if they will be welcomed. They might wonder, "Will I be safe and will receive help?"

This fear not only rests with our friends who are homeless, but others as well. One friend of mine from church set an appointment with me to learn about volunteer opportunities at the Rescue Mission. When he arrived at the Rescue Mission there were a few homeless people gathered on the sidewalk outside. His anxiety got the best of him, and he drove around the block three times hoping the small group of people would move on, so he would feel more comfortable. Now late for the meeting he called the Mission. We met him in the parking lot and walked through our doors together. Today this person actively tries to help our homeless friends including hiring them on construction projects.

So how can we lose our fear, fear of the unknown,

fear of change, fear of the homeless, or anything else? When a person has a relationship with God through His Son Jesus, God gives them not "a spirit of fear, but power, love, and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7. Elsewhere, God tells His people, "Fear not, for I am with you ..." Isaiah 41:10.

Here at the Rescue Mission, we need your prayers. Pray that more of our homeless friends will have the strength and desire to get the help they need to change their lives. We seek prayer that there would be more people like the volunteer who eventually got out of his car and become key collaborators.

We ask that God would connect us with businesses who will hire formerly homeless individuals. We seek churches who are willing to genuinely accept formerly homeless men and women into their church families. We pray for specific individuals who can, without fear, make real friendships with people transitioning out of homeless.

Please join us in praying that all of us could interact with our homeless friends without fear and in discernment. Pray that people will be able to walk fearlessly into the Rescue Mission. And pray that once our homeless friends find life change and stability, we could all welcome them into our lives.

Thank you for all your prayers and support in 2024,

Chris D. Croswrite
Executive Director



JOEY AND SARAH: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was unlikely he would be able to have children following his cancer treatment. And Sarah, who had tumor surgery herself, was told she likely couldn't have more children either. But then Sarah became pregnant with child number five, and then number six.

Joey worked hard so Sarah could stay home and take care of the children, but with six kids, they struggled to make finances work. They started praying and found a place for sale in Waveland, Mississippi. Joey liked Waveland's small-town vibe since it reminded him of the small Utah town where he was from. Sarah, who has family ties in both Utah and Mississippi, recalled: "Joey had a job opportunity there and I had family in the area. The cost of living was way less. The house was only 1,500 square feet but we had prayed for it and it seemed like God was just saying 'here it is.'"



The six Morgan children, ages 13-28, celebrated a recent family wedding together.

Added Joey: "My credit was still in shambles, but we got a good deal, like it was meant to be."

The family moved to Waveland in 2013 and had seven good years. Until, like it did for many people, the COVID pandemic changed things. Joey worked for a Department of Defense contractor and his job was considered essential, meaning he couldn't stay home.

He was working 12-hour days and Sarah could see the stress. He started having a beer after work. Then it was two or more and soon Sarah saw a change in her husband. He didn't seem like the same Joey. So in 2021, the family planned a week's vacation, to visit the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.

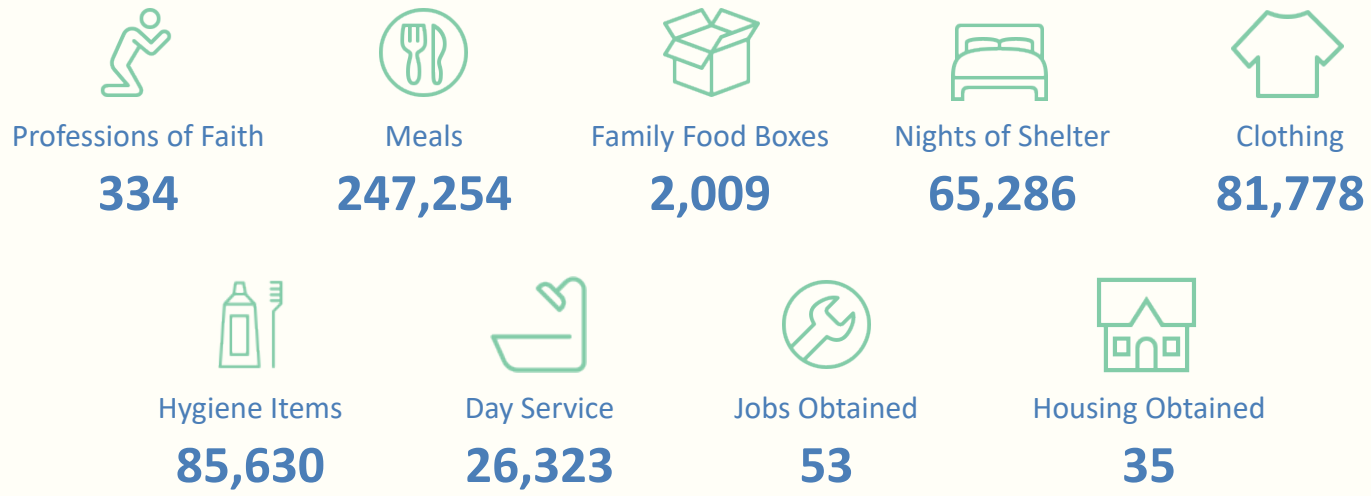
"We had to really stand up and say, 'you are in relapse,'" Sarah said. "And we went back to the Utah Mission."

They spent a week in a downtown hotel within walking distance of the Rescue Mission. Joey was able to connect with the Mission staff and get the support he needed to get back on track.

"I remember taking a picture of the stairs leading up to the Mission's door and thinking about all the men who had walked up those stairs," Joey said. "I took my kids all around the area, to the Mission and other places and shared some of my story with them. It was during that week I realized I could not continue to drink, because I would end up in addiction again. I haven't touched a drop since."

Please see "Joey & Sarah" on the back page.

HOW YOUR GIFT HELPS: OUR YTD STATS THROUGH NOVEMBER, 2023



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