

PLEASE SUPPORT OPERATION HYDRATION!



There is very little that is more essential to physical life than water and so providing water is a key part of our ministry during the summer months.

But it is also true that there is nothing more essential to spiritual life than the living water a relationship that Jesus brings into a person's heart.

Living water is more than just a physical thirst quencher. Sharing living water can build a relationship with the source of living water, Jesus. To share living water with a person is to show care, build trust, and create respect.

Still, a cool bottle of water on a summer day is a great conversation starter. Giving an cold beverage under the blazing sun makes our homeless friends feel seen, cared for, and respected. This simple act leads to trust and conversations that our Seek and Rescue Teams use to attract our homeless friends into our programs that create pathways off the streets.

Whether it's our full New Life Program for those who are stuck in addiction, or our Transitions Program, for those who have lost jobs and need a temporary place to stay as they seek employment, or those who just need housing referrals, we are here to help. After all, a chilled bottle of water on days nearing 100-degrees (days we have termed at the Rescue Misson to be Triple Digit Danger days) can start a life changing relationship.

We are in need of bottles of water to hand out to our homeless friends, also small bottles of sunscreen, brimmed hats, lip balm, refillable water bottles, bath soap, shampoo, socks, and underwear (all sizes). Our water bill goes way up in the summer, as people come to us to take a cool shower and escape sweat-drenched clothes.

Thank you in advance for your support for our homeless friends this summer!

Donate Now.

- Use the enclosed envelope
- Give online at RescueSaltLake.org
- Call our Donor Relations Office at **801.746.1006** for secure over-the-phone via credit card
- Scan the QR code in this newsletter

RESCUER

JUNE/JULY
2024

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org



Brandon Murray had nowhere to go when he needed help the most, so God sent him back to the one place he didn't want to go, the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.

One of the most difficult things I have done was walk up the stairs to the Rescue Mission's front door for the second time. I felt as if God had pulled me there against my will, but I realize now He was bringing back. I was one of His sheep that had gone astray.

The first time I sought help from the Mission in 2019 I became sober and gained a good job working at the front desk of Marriott-branded hotel in Salt Lake. I had rekindled my relationship with God after struggling with alcohol abuse and had my own apartment.

But then the COVID pandemic happened. Our hotel was typically packed full of business and vacation travelers, but during the pandemic it came to the point where we would only have four or five reservations a night.

The hotel had to let almost all the staff go, including me. I struggled to stay in my apartment. I made a deal with my landlord that I would do the landscaping for our apartment building in exchange for rent. When I was younger, I went to art school in Seattle and developed a unique painting style. During the pandemic, I posted pieces on social media and people would buy them. One local client paid me \$3,000 for a few pieces of my original art. I didn't make huge profits, but it was enough to pay my bills and live a frugal lifestyle.

Please see "Brandon" on page 3.

GOD WORKS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO HIM

I heard a sermon recently that reminded me of Brandon Murray, who shares his life story in this month's newsletter.

The sermon was from Matthew 18:10-14, and it was contrasted with Luke 19:10, when Jesus says He came to seek and save the lost. By way of contrast, the story Jesus shares in Matthew does not address "the lost"



(i.e., those that don't already have a relationship with God), but instead talks about "lost sheep" (i.e., ones who have relationships with God already but are wandering away from Him).

In the Matthew passage Jesus says that God, our Good Shepherd, will gladly leave 99 sheep who haven't wandered from Him, to bring back the one who has wandered off and

gotten lost. Even more amazing is the great celebration over the return of the one who was lost.

This sermon was like Brandon's story. He was raised in a Christian home. He strayed and became consumed by addiction. He then found healing and new life at the Rescue Mission four years ago. But then (as you can read in his life story), he fell back into addiction, despair, and homelessness.

Brandon's story should have had a sad ending, if not for the Good Shepherd. When His people are unfaithful to Him, God is always faithful to us and comes after us. He finds His people in their darkest times and brings them back to Him, like a shepherd brings a lost sheep back to the flock.

Jesus will never leave nor forsake His people and I am

convinced that Brandon is one of His. It is amazing that God will always bring us back to Himself. He brings us back to not only restore joy and happiness but to help us become the person He has create us to be, to the praise and honor of His glory.

In fact, God's desire to seek and save the lost is why the Rescue Mission started our Seek and Rescue Outreach. We go out to the homeless and hurting living on our streets to take life-saving basics (like cold water) to hurting people and encourage them to come (or come back) to the Rescue Mission.

Thank you for supporting this amazing ministry that God uses to save so many lives and rescue people from homeless and addiction. Brandon's story helps us see that God's grace is big enough to help through the pains and sufferings of this life, even when we are weak and fall back into sin and addiction at times.

Please pray that lives would be turned around this summer and people would return to Jesus or come to Him for the first time.

God bless you,

Chris D. Croswite

Executive Director

P.S. Thank you for reading our combined June/July newsletter. Given summer vacations and the cost of printing, we are testing the idea of combining the June and July newsletter into one "summer" edition. We will continue to share monthly newsletters as normal for other months. Let me know what you think about this change by emailing me at chris@rescuesaltlake.org.

BRANDON: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One day my ex-girlfriend asked for help and a place to stay. She had a young child, who had never really had a father and I knew they were in need. I told them they could stay with me for a few days. That turned into weeks, and then months. My ex-girlfriend was using drugs at the time, and I started drinking again.

Soon my apartment manager said I needed to remove my ex-girlfriend and her child from the apartment. I tried, but she refused to leave, so he evicted me. With nowhere else to go, I began staying at low budget motels downtown.

I don't know if it was the stress of the situation, or my years of alcohol abuse but I had two seizures. The paramedics came and I spent a day in the ER. During my time there I talked about my hopelessness and despair and was transferred to a mental health facility for eight days.

Eventually the staff at the facility told me they needed to release me, but I informed them I had no place to go. The workers left and came back a few hours later. They said they had found a place for me at the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake. My pride would not let me return to the Mission. I knew if I walked into the Mission everyone would see what a failure I was. I told them I wouldn't go.

About 30 minutes later, a second group of staff came to my room. They told me that had arranged a place for me. They said they had a cab that would take me there at no cost to me. I asked where it was and they once again said, "The Rescue Mission of Salt Lake." At that point I knew God wanted me to return to the Mission, whether I liked it or not. It was December 23, 2023, and pitch dark when the taxi dropped me off at the Mission.

The staff welcomed me back and I came to realize the Mission was the perfect place for me. I started working in the laundry and returned to daily prayer, bible studies, and

life-skills meetings.

I developed a great church family at Gospel Grace, near Liberty Park. I help with Saturday Church in the Park. My mom, who lives with my dad in Montana, watches all my church's sermons online and we talk about the messages. I typically go to my church's morning service, but one Sunday I went to the afternoon service. That day I had many text messages from my church family asking if I was OK. I felt blessed, because that is the kind of accountability and support I need.

Today I am an intern at the Rescue Mission and, if it is God's will, I hope to help other hurting people off our streets. I am fulfilling some of that role in my internship by setting up our evening chapel stage based on the church's specific needs.

I have a daughter who lives here in Salt Lake. Her mom let me bring her to Church in the Park a few Saturdays ago and it's great to have a good relationship with her and her mom again. My seizures have stopped but I still take some medications to ensure they don't return. I am thankful for the medication and have follow up visits scheduled.

I thank all of you who support the Rescue Mission. Most of all I thank God. He is truly like the shepherd of Matthew 18:10-14, who went after the one sheep who had gone astray. And even as I protested returning to the Mission, He brought me back. It seems crazy to say, but there is no other place I would rather live or be. I know most people would dislike living in a homeless shelter, but I know now this is the place God wants me to be to find joy and serve Him. I could not be more excited about His plan for me. Thank you again for your support that God has used to change my life!

HOW YOUR GIFT HELPS: OUR YTD STATS THROUGH MAY



Professions of Faith

137



Meals

122,764



Family Food Boxes

1,164



Nights of Shelter

30,827



Clothing

40,128



Hygiene Items

42,588



Day Service

11,062



Jobs Obtained

43



Housing Obtained

28



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