

THE REAL NEED: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

appreciate is its focus on addiction and mental health. In my experience, hurts run deep, and people often turn to substances to escape pain. Substance abuse often leads to a life on the street.

That said, there is no one single strategy God uses to change lives, so the Rescue Mission uses multiple tactics:

1. **Faith in Jesus Christ.** We share the Gospel. Everyone needs Jesus for transformation in this life and for eternal hope. Real change doesn't happen without spiritual renewal.
2. **Support for Situational Homelessness.** Some lose housing due to job loss or rising rent. Our transitions program helps people get back into housing once employment and affordability return.
3. **Comprehensive Healing for Chronic Homelessness.** Most people need more than just shelter. Our New Life Program includes counseling, prayer, journaling, work therapy, forgiveness, Bible study, life skills, and healthy relationships. Ruth 2:20 shares how God used Ruth's relationship with Boaz to bless Naomi and Ruth, who could have slipped into poverty and homelessness.
4. **Outreach to Camps and the Streets.** We meet people where they are. Outreach teams connect with individuals living on the streets and guide them to the help we offer.
5. **Jail and Prison Transitions.** We support those who are in poverty and walk out of jail or prison with literally no place to go. The Mission provides accountability, addiction support, and stability to reduce recidivism.
6. **Medical and Mental Health Care.** Some need clinical treatment and behavioral health support. We partner with organizations such as the Fourth Street Clinic, Sacred Circle Healthcare, Valley Behavioral Health, and the Salt Lake County Health Department to meet these needs.

Government alone can't heal all the pain and problems of homelessness. But God can. Jesus is the one true Executive Order we all need.

Please join me in prayer—for wisdom among elected leaders, for policies rooted in compassionate accountability, and for our homeless friends to find healing and new life through the Gospel and the work of the Rescue Mission.

God bless you,

Chris D. Croswhite

Executive Director

While this summer has been one of the hottest and driest in Utah's history, your generosity is helping to transform it into a season of relief and hope for many. Outreach teams have connected with 826 unique individuals on Utah's streets so far this summer. More than 3,000 people walked through our doors for a bottle of water or to ask for help. In total, we served 3,953 individuals so far this summer. Thanks to your support of Operation Hydration, you are making a life-saving difference for our homeless neighbors. Through the end of July, you helped:

Provide 15,954 bottles of water

Distribute 3,717 reusable water bottles

Refill 12,000 water bottles at our hydration station

Hand out 962 hats

Share 1,736 sunscreen items

Deliver 1,463 sticks of lip balm



Most importantly, your support has shared the love of Jesus through action, compassion, and just being there. You are helping reach those in need and shine a light during a difficult season. From all of us at the Rescue Mission, thank you for standing with us this summer. Your kindness is saving lives and renewing spirits!

RESCUER

AUGUST
2025



RescueSaltLake.org

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake

I remember standing on a sidewalk in Las Vegas with only \$110 to my name. I'd gambled away almost everything, chasing wins on slot machines that never paid off. That day, I looked up bus prices to places that might take me out of Sin City. I saw that a shuttle to Salt Lake City cost \$108. It felt like a sign—divine intervention, I believe now—and I bought the ticket. I knew I wouldn't have anything left when I arrived, but I also knew I couldn't stay in Vegas. If I did, I'd keep chasing the next machine and lose everything for good.

I'm originally from Michigan. My mom moved to Vegas about 20 years ago, and I followed her there. I never gambled back home, and it wasn't until the last few years in Nevada that my gambling addiction took hold. I had been sober from drugs for four years and gained a good job working at a Vegas hotel, but slowly, over time, gambling consumed me. Eventually, I lost my job, my apartment, and ended up broke. The city knows its locals struggle with gambling, and I became one of them. Even when I received my last paycheck, I couldn't stop and gambled all but that final \$110 away. It does not make sense—I just could not stop.

I'd been to Salt Lake City before and remembered it as a beautiful place. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision to leave, and I'm so grateful I did. When I arrived, I had a place in mind where I could go. I had scouted the place out on the internet. However, I couldn't figure out Salt Lake's street system, and the only place I could seem to get directions to was the Rescue Mission. I eventually attended an evening chapel service at the Mission and had a place to sleep that night. I didn't know what to expect, but it was better than sleeping on the sidewalk.

The next morning, they told me about the New Life Program, and I asked if I could join. The Mission's staff told me to take a little time to think if I was really ready



David Mithofer has overcome a gambling addiction and is rebuilding his life with God's help.

to make a commitment. Then, if I was still interested, we could talk. I'll admit I was hesitant—a 13-month program sounded like a long time. But deep down, I knew I needed help. I joined the program and found the structure to be exactly what worked for me. Through classes and case management, everything felt less overwhelming—I learned how to create goals and take real steps toward independence.

Please see "David" on page 3.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE EXECUTIVE ORDER WE ALL NEED

Many people have asked me about President Trump's July 24, 2025, executive order titled "Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets."

When asked, I emphasize that the Rescue Mission strives to remain apolitical. We don't endorse



candidates or suggest how anyone should vote. However, we do offer our thoughts on public policies that affect our homeless friends.

In my reading, the July executive order is an attempt to address chronic homelessness by reevaluating previous government strategies. Past approaches, while well-intentioned, have not worked because homelessness, at its core, is

not a problem the government can solve alone.

Chronic homelessness is a spiritual issue—rooted in trauma, abuse, addiction, mental illness, poverty, and broken relationships. No government, no matter how capable, can mend what is wounded in the human heart.

Only Jesus Christ can truly change hearts. Faith in Him for forgiveness and new life is the true solution.

When I first joined the Rescue Mission two decades ago, "Housing First" was emerging as the dominant philosophy to address homelessness. It began in Seattle and was adopted nationwide by the Bush-Cheney administration. Subsequent administrations continued to embrace it.

Housing First is built on the idea that homelessness

equals chaos, and housing removes chaos. Once housed, individuals are expected to voluntarily focus on employment, healthcare, and recovery. Utah was praised as a national model. Outlets like The San Francisco Chronicle, NPR, and The Washington Post shared glowing reports about Utah's Housing First successes. However, the model seemed to miss the point that there were reasons a person becomes homeless in the first place.

Years later, reality caught up. Utah's "success" proved largely overstated. According to a 2023 Cato Institute report, homelessness in Utah remained virtually unchanged between 2005 and 2022.

In reaction to Housing First's eventual shortcomings, many cities pivoted and adopted libertarian-style policies. These de-emphasized enforcement of trespassing laws and allowed homeless encampments to grow. While motivated by compassion and respect for personal liberty, such approaches often backfired. Frustration grew. Property owners felt ignored, public health concerns increased, and communities struggled with safety.

All this led to the July 2025 executive order, emerging from two key realities:

First, the failure of non-enforcement policies and the growth of homeless encampments across the country.

Second, the disappointing results of a primary focus on Housing First investments that had not sufficiently addressed root causes such as historical abuse, mental illness, addictions, and a lack of life skills.

One aspect of the July 2025 executive order that I

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DAVID: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Spiritually, the program helped me reconnect with my faith. I was raised Lutheran but hadn't regularly gone to church in years. Bible studies and chapel services engaged me in ways I hadn't expected. I started looking for a church and found one that suited me well. The spiritual support at the Mission really grounded me—it gave me clarity and strength to stay clean. I've been free of drug use for four years, and now I've been free of gambling since joining the program. Being out of Vegas and away from the casinos helped, and it felt good to live in a place with no gambling.

As part of the New Life Program, I loved working in the food pantry and the laundry. Giving out food boxes to families and the elderly was especially meaningful. One elderly woman came in and asked for three days' worth of food, just needing enough until her next Social Security check arrived. I asked her how long it would be until her check arrived, and she said one week. I filled her box with a week's worth of food, and she was so appreciative.

Other times, when kids would come with their families and need food, I would pick out cereal that I knew they would enjoy. Moments like those reminded me why I was there and helped me realize my life could be about more than just me and gambling. In the laundry, I helped guests with clean towels, bedding, and clothes—managing showers and doing nightly laundry service. It could get hectic, but I found peace in the interactions.

One winter night, when it was about 10 degrees outside, a homeless man came in wearing only a T-shirt. I was able to get him a coat and help him warm up.

Many of the homeless people around town recognized me and would say hello, even calling out to me by name: "Hi David!" I hope I can be an encouragement and example to them.

I progressed through the phases of the program and recently reached Phase 3. That means working outside the Mission and saving money. It removed so much stress from my life when I gained work as a server at a sushi restaurant where I genuinely enjoy the job and am well paid. It feels good to be employed again after months without work, and I've started thinking seriously about long-term stability—housing, transportation, financial planning.

My immediate family, including my mother who I followed to Vegas, have all passed away, and I don't have deep roots in Michigan anymore. Salt Lake has become a new kind of home for me. I've been speaking with my boss about future opportunities—perhaps training new hires or helping with store openings. The sushi restaurant where I work is a national company with over 80 locations, so there's room to grow.

My journey hasn't been easy, but renewing my relationship with God at the Rescue Mission changed my life. The Mission gave me structure, spiritual guidance, community, life skills, and a way forward. I used to live in chaos, gambling everything away to the point of homelessness. Now, I have purpose, direction, a new life with God, and hope. I'm ready to see what's next, and I can't thank you enough for supporting the Mission and people like me.

HOW YOUR GIFT HELPS: OUR YTD STATS THROUGH JUNE



Professions of Faith

186



Meals

132,693



Family Food Boxes

1,244



Nights of Shelter

37,420



Clothing

32,531



Hygiene Items

44,729



Day Service

13,528



Jobs Obtained

47



Housing Obtained

43



WEB, SOCIAL, & EMAIL

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Physical Address: 463 S. 400 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84101