

HELP US MAKE THANKSGIVING SPECIAL FOR THOSE IN NEED

As Thanksgiving approaches, the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake is once again preparing to serve a community banquet for the homeless — but we can’t do it without you.

This year, we are seeking to provide thousands of meals to our homeless friends and neighbors. But more than just food, this event is about community. Your support enables us to offer not just a meal, but the opportunity for spiritual renewal through the message of Jesus, and a chance at a new life for those struggling with addiction and homelessness.

What Your Support Provides

Hot Meals & Dignity: Last year, your generosity helped us provide 1,500 meals to men, women, and children in need on Thanksgiving Day and over 30,000 meals during the Thanksgiving season, including family food boxes to the working poor so they could celebrate at home with family and friends. This year, we’re hoping to serve even more.

Spiritual Hope: Volunteers and staff will share the Gospel with attendees, and we are praying for another 100 professions of faith like we saw last year.

Ongoing Support: Through our New Life Recovery Program, those who attend our Thanksgiving Banquet receive more than just a meal — they receive life-changing opportunities for faith, employment, and recovery so they can leave their life on the streets behind them



Here’s How You Can Help:

Give Every dollar you give goes directly to serving meals, providing shelter, and offering ongoing support. Your gift could provide a Thanksgiving meal for a struggling individual and a new beginning for their future. Call 801.746.1006 or visit RescueSaltLake.org.

Volunteer Join with us and serve directly to those in need. Your presence will remind them they are not forgotten. Email: Volunteer@RescueSaltLake.org.

Donate Food or Supplies We need everything from turkeys to side dishes to drinks. Your donations will help us make this event special.

Pray The power of prayer is real. Please pray for the individuals we’ll serve, and for the Gospel to reach hearts and change lives.

We know that with your support we will provide a Thanksgiving to remember. It will be filled with hope, grace, and transformation. We look forward to seeing lives changed this season through your generosity. Thank you!

RESCUER

OCT/NOV
2025

The Monthly Newsletter of the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake



RescueSaltLake.org



Steven Defa was struggling with homelessness for over a decade until he found a new life of hope, faith, and redemption at the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake.

I grew up on a little 13-acre farm in West Valley City. My parents lived on the farm and my grandparents lived next door. I had a good childhood and loved working on the farm. You might say I was the golden child, really. My parents were happily married, and I had a strong work ethic from the start. My dad was a general contractor, and I worked with him for years. We ran jobs together, fixed our family rental units, did plumbing, painting, and repairs. We did all of it as a team and life was good.

LOSING MY WAY

With my dad’s help, I purchased land next to the family farm and we continued to work together. But in my mid-30s, things started to unravel. I was in a long-term relationship that started falling apart. I started dabbling in drugs for fun and stress relief, yet I grew increasingly dependent on drugs. Even though I was blessed, had a good family, and a nice job, my drug use took

everything. I was about to lose my house and property in 2012 but signed it over to my dad because he had helped me buy it.

I stopped performing at work and lost my job. My family lost trust in me since I put them through a great deal of pain. Eventually, I became disconnected from my brothers and sisters. For nearly 15 years, I was estranged from most of my family, except my mother

During that time, I was living in my van and unemployed, which still blows my mind. I’ve always been a hard worker, and it makes me sick to think I went so many years without a job. Living out of my van, I picked through dumpsters in the industrial parts of Salt Lake to find scrap metal to salvage. I was frugal, trying to survive. At my lowest point, I weighed 105 pounds (and I’m 5 foot 9). I experienced chronic abdominal pain, and I medicated with heroin, thinking it would

Please see “Steven” on page 3.

THE OUTCOMES OF THE OUPUTS YOU MAKE POSSIBLE

I am continually amazed by your kindness and generosity. As always in this newsletter, you'll find a detailed tally of the ways your support reaches our homeless friends — providing warm meals, safe shelter, hot showers, clothing, and, most importantly, the good news of Jesus Christ.

This month, however, I want to move the focus from outputs (our everyday efforts to help people) and instead highlight the outcomes, the actual changed lives, your support and God's enabling is producing.



Year to date, as of the end of September, your generosity helped 65 individuals obtain housing and 62 gain full-time employment (Note: there is some variance in those who have jobs and those who have housing because we run a 13–18-month program). These individuals either made the transition from life on the streets or are growing in stability with a renewed sense of purpose. Most are reconnected with their family with rebuilt relationships and societal contributions.

Because of your gifts, our Emergency Shelter Program continues to provide ongoing support. Over 69% of the adults who are staying with us in emergency shelter are employed but cannot afford housing. They are not panhandling but striving for livable wage increases so they can afford to rent an apartment. You help us offer not just shelter, but the tools and encouragement needed to sustain success. In addition to housing and employment, your

generosity enabled our staff and an army of volunteer chapel providers to share the Gospel, leading to 253 professions of faith so far this year. These decisions to follow Christ are the most important outcomes of all. Beyond the eternal blessings, we believe that spiritual renewal is the foundation for lasting recovery and a restored life. The transformation of the heart is essential for healing from addiction, homelessness, and brokenness, and your support is directly contributing to the spiritual renewal of so many.

Finally, because of your gifts, many who graduate from our New Life Program return to serve others. Having experienced life-changing transformation themselves, our graduates return as mentors, volunteers, and even serve as staff members of other homeless service providers or the Rescue Mission (see Steven Defa's life story in this month's newsletter). Their journeys from brokenness to wholeness inspire hope in others and demonstrate the enduring power of recovery and faith.

Thank you for making possible not just outputs, but also the God-honoring outcomes that the outputs lead to. While God is the one who changes lives, I am blessed to witness firsthand how He uses your support, prayers, and volunteering to restore broken lives and create outcomes that bring glory to Himself.

Thank you and may God bless you,

Chris D. Croswhite
Executive Director

STEVEN: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

help. But God told me it was my poor choices that was causing the pain. I just didn't want to hear it. Last year, I was arrested while salvaging from a dumpster. It was the day before Mother's Day, 2024. I had picked up some salvageable metal and someone called the cops, who showed up and booked me. For the first time, I didn't cry when I went to jail. I was almost relieved. I surrendered everything, including my life and my future, to the jail, the judge, and God.

THE GRACE I NEEDED

The judge wanted to throw the book at me since I had a long record of misdemeanors, including trespassing on my own family farm. That charge really hurt. I had a deep attachment to that place, and it was painful knowing I was no longer welcome at my childhood home or on the land I once partially owned. But the judge gave me a last chance. She let me enter the Rescue Mission's New Life Program, which changed everything for me.

The Mission gave me my life back. The structure, friendships, counseling, and faith all worked together. I reconnected with God and can truly say Jesus is my best friend and my Savior. During my days of using, I lost prayer from my life. I stopped talking to God. But now, I pray again. I worship again. I feel alive again.

RESULTS OF A CHANGED LIFE

I've also reconnected with my family. I can't believe how quickly they welcomed me back. I thought that trust was gone forever, but God restored it. My probation officer has been impressed with my progress. I graduate

from the Mission's program in November, and I'll be able to submit my graduation certificate to the judge. I may even get off probation early.

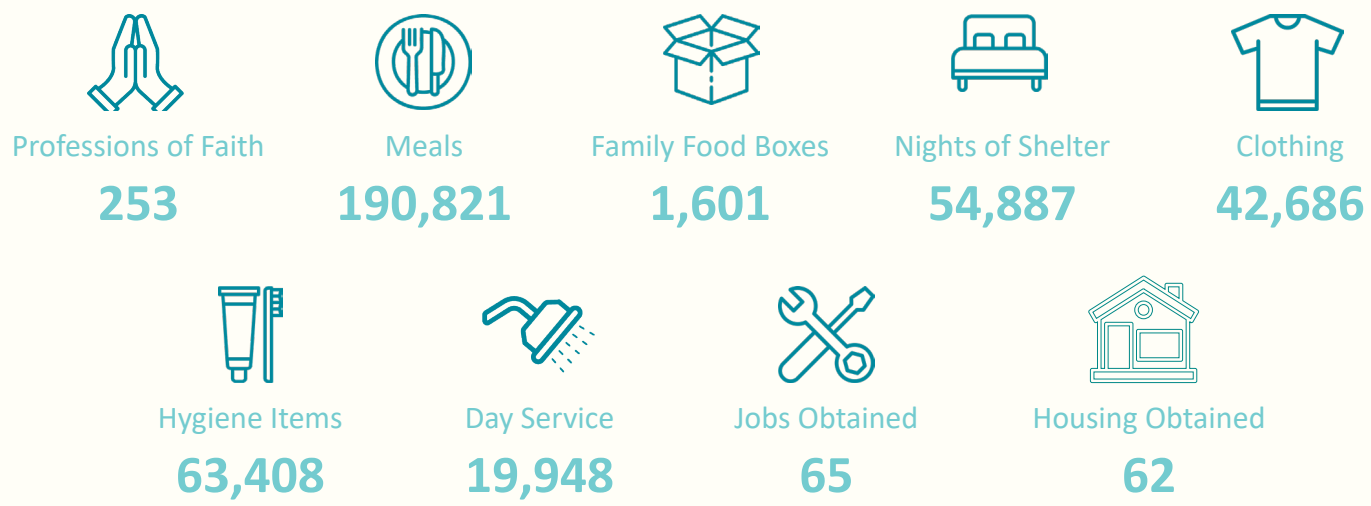
The Mission offered me a full-time job at the Ogden Rescue Mission as a maintenance technician after I graduate. I'll live onsite and do what I've always done — repairs, plumbing, painting, whatever needs fixing. It's a perfect fit for my skills and I feel proud of the work I will be doing. It's funny because my mom told me she never wanted me to leave the Mission because I was doing so well. Maybe that was a sign from God, because now I get to be a part of the Mission.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Even though I'll be living in Ogden, I still plan to drive down to Salt Lake every week to attend Calvary Chapel in Murray. That's my home church. I take a group of guys from the New Life Program with me in my van for Bible study and recovery meetings every Thursday. It's one of the highlights of my week.

I'm back up to 140 pounds now. I look healthy again. I feel healthy. I've been incomprehensibly blessed. God has opened doors I never thought possible. I'm living proof that it's never too late to turn your life around. The Mission gave me a new life, and I'm not letting go. Thank you for your faithful support of the Rescue Mission. God has used your generosity to transform my life, and I see that same impact in the lives of so many others.

HOW YOUR GIFT HELPS: OUR YTD STATS THROUGH SEPTEMBER





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