

# HARBOR LIGHT

Muskegon Rescue Mission



JULY 2018



"I KNOW THAT I AM  
SAVED AND DO  
NOT HAVE TO  
FEAR DEATH."

– RYAN THOR >>

*a publication of*



**MRM**

Muskegon Rescue Mission



# CELEBRATING CHANGE



Dan Skoglund  
Executive Director

If you look up the word “change” in the dictionary, you will see this definition: to give a different position, course, or direction: to make radically different to TRANSFORM.

Looking at our guests in the past, now, and future I could not think of a better description of them at Muskegon Rescue Mission.

Completing a class, or program is a huge accomplishment for each of our guests. For most of their lives, accomplishments have been few and far between. Usually tragedy, hardship, broken relationships, abuse, and poverty are their identity.

But when caring individuals like you come alongside men and women in long-term or emergency care, you help them see a light at the end of a dark tunnel. You help them fight, endure and push through to the end. Your compassion and prayers encourage them to keep moving forward.

Throughout this issue you will celebrate everlasting change by reading about Ryan Thor on page 5. Ken Wyman a man who uses his testimony to mentor others. On page 4 you will be able to rejoice with us in 6 people committing their lives to Christ.

We could not be more proud of the men and women who choose to change and transform their lives while at the Mission. But there are thousands of people in our community who have not yet chosen to transform their lives. Through your support, we will be here to help them see life change, no matter how difficult it may seem.

Thank you again for joining the homeless, and less fortunate on their journey towards true change and transformation. Your partnership strengthens individual lives, families and our entire community.

In His Name,  
Dan

# TWO NEW FACES

We are excited to have Emily Umstead, and Kurt VanNoord join the team here at Muskegon Rescue Mission.

**Emily is the new Volunteer and Event Coordinator.** She is a recent Aquinas College graduate with a Community Leadership degree. Volunteers are a vital part of our ministry. She will be working daily with our team and volunteers to help keep the programs and events running smoothly. If you would like to know more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Emily at 231.727.6090



Emily Umstead

**Kurt is the new Director of Men’s Ministries.** Kurt has been working in Maurice, Iowa serving at a church as the Equipping pastor, and most recently served as a mentor, and interim Director at Atlas a homeless shelter in Spencer Iowa. This is an important role for Muskegon Rescue Mission. He will be implementing and managing ministry programs that provide hospitality, care, dignity, and hope to all men that come to our doors. Most importantly he will provide services that result in an atmosphere of spiritual care, and foster healthy relationships to share the gospel with our guests.



Kurt VanNoord

WELCOME

# A PATH WELL CHOSEN

Ryan Thor’s testimony starts with a broken home. As a toddler he witnessed physical abuse within his parent’s marriage that eventually led to a divorce. At 6 years old Ryan was forced to choose between living with his mother or his father which caused a lot of confusion.

“Even though I went to church as a child, I did not have enough biblical knowledge or faith to ask the Lord for help, so I walked away from it all,” Ryan said.

Carrying the weight of a broken family, Ryan started to turn to material things to fill the void inside. He quickly learned that material possessions were not filling the God sized hole in his heart. In an attempt to fill the emptiness, Ryan turned to drugs, friends, women, and adrenaline sports.

Ryan was broken, but had not hit rock bottom. “I was damaged inwardly, I could hide my pain so that no one would know except me and God,” said Ryan. At 17 years old Ryan received \$55,000 from a lawsuit that allowed him to travel across the country multiple times. “I had my own car, my own money, and if I ever needed more money I would just pick up an odd job for extra cash,” said Ryan.

“My family found the New Life program and gave me an ultimatum. Start and Finish the program or we will be hard pressed to talk to you again,” said Ryan.

Reluctantly Ryan joined the New Life program at Muskegon Rescue Mission the day after his 30th birthday. Just two months of being in the program Ryan started to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and decided to follow Christ.

“The best part is the finishing point does not look bleak anymore. I know that I am saved and do not have to fear death,” Ryan said with a smile.

After years of searching, and wandering Ryan is experiencing lasting change through Jesus Christ. Through the New Life Program Ryan has learned to be more patient, caring, and understanding of people. He is active at his church First Wesleyan, and has a full time job in Muskegon.



“ALL OF US LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY, EACH OF US HAS TURNED TO HIS OWN WAY; BUT THE LORD HAS CAUSED THE INIQUITY OF US ALL TO FALL ON HIM.”

— ISAIAH 53:6

After 10 years of wandering, Ryan’s dad offered him a job in Muskegon, Michigan. Soon after moving to Muskegon, Ryan felt depressed and started socially drinking, which led to his alcohol addiction. Ryan finally hit rock bottom after getting pulled over while driving intoxicated and having drugs in the vehicle.







# SIX LIVES TRANSFORMED

With 40,000 people living in The City of Muskegon, statistics show that 58% are unchurched which narrows down to 23,200 lives. Statistics also show that 35% of The City of Muskegon is living in poverty which comes down to 14,000 lives. Sadly Muskegon's poverty level is 147% higher than the national average.

However when there is darkness there is also opportunity for great light. Isaiah 9:2 says "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them."

Muskegon Rescue Mission recently launched Project Connect. Through this initiative church's come to help build relationships with our community guests. This is done by engaging with the guests while they are at the Mission, through leading a chapel service, providing prayer support, and connecting guests with a local church.

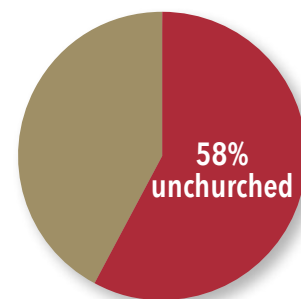
Staff and volunteers are already seeing Gods hand in Project Connect. This past week six people came forward during chapel service in Community Ministries to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Please pray for these six individuals as they start their walk with Christ. Some are dealing with addictions to alcohol, and others are struggling with family relationships. We know God has a plan for them and the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts.

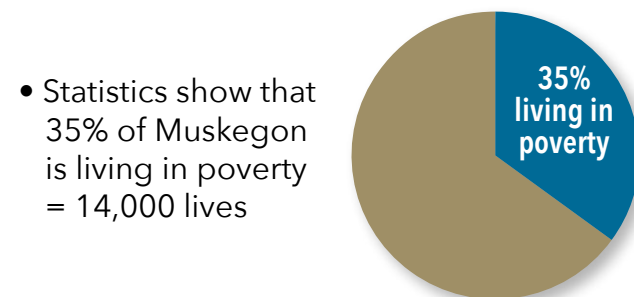
Muskegon Rescue Mission is excited about the future for Project Connect and how we believe God will use it to help us see more of our City transformed with the wonderful message of the Gospel.

## THE NEED

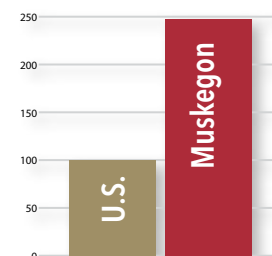
Muskegon - population 40,000



- Statistics show that Muskegon County is 58% unchurched = 23,200 lives



- Statistics show that 35% of Muskegon is living in poverty = 14,000 lives



- Statistics show that Muskegon's poverty level is 147% higher than the national average

To learn more or to get involved with project connect please contact Jen Wagenmaker at [jwagenmaker@muskegonmission.org](mailto:jwagenmaker@muskegonmission.org).

"OUR VISION IS TO SEE LIVES TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL. BY CONNECTING OUR GUESTS TO A LOCAL CHURCH WHERE THEY WILL CONTINUE TO HEAR THE MESSAGE JESUS."

— JEN WAGENMAKER, COMMUNITY MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

# A LIFETIME OF CHANGE

"AND WE KNOW THAT FOR THOSE WHO LOVE GOD ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD, FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE" – ROMANS 8:28

Ken Wyman made a decision that has impacted his life and others, a choice that led to a moment of life change. Ken struggled for years with



alcoholism. After his wife threatened to leave him, he decided to go to treatment. While in treatment Ken realized he had a big problem, and treatment alone was not enough to create a lifetime of change.

Six months into the treatment, Ken had a relapse that almost took his life. This time his addiction took him to the hospital where doctors did their best to stabilize him. Ken's wife Linda was broken hearted and ready to walk away from the marriage. On her way out of the hospital, she decided to stop by the doctor's office, and he told her, "I don't know how I know this, but this man will never drink again."

After leaving the hospital Ken knew he had to change. He knew this change would be tough and that he needed to go back to the Lord. Ken and his wife chose to get involved at First Wesleyan Church. After being there a short time, he felt God tugging on his heart to do more.

"God wanted me at Muskegon Rescue Mission. God was telling me to go mentor the men at the shelter, and I did not want to," said Ken.

Ken knew he was being called to serve, and decided to contact Kevin Newton the Executive Director at that time. Kevin informed him about a new Men's Discipleship Program and the need for mentors. He knew this would be the perfect opportunity for God to use his story.

Ken continued, "It has been awesome watching the guys in the program change, and create a relationship with God." Two men Ken had the privilege of mentoring have graduated, and are thriving, and growing in their relationship with Christ.

It is not just the program guys whose lives have seen change, but Ken has been able to experience change in his life as well. Ken has now been sober for over 35 years! "By God's grace through Muskegon Rescue Mission, he has helped my wife Linda, and I with our marriage that was affected by my drinking in the past," said Ken.

For the past several years, Ken and his wife Linda volunteer at Muskegon Rescue Mission and share the life changing love of Jesus Christ with others who are broken hearted.

If you would like more information on volunteering, or are interested in becoming a volunteer please contact **Emily Umstead** at [eumstead@muskegonmission.org](mailto:eumstead@muskegonmission.org).







# GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

**M**uskegon Rescue Mission was able to celebrate another New Life Graduation. This summer we had two graduates, Tom Stone and Ryan Thor. (Ryan's story page 5) Both men spent the past year, working within the Mission, helping at Mission events, and growing in their relationship with the Lord.

Tom Stone came to Muskegon Rescue Mission a year ago after losing everything. He lost his house after he fell behind on payments, and his health started to decline so he was unable to work. In an effort to get his family back on solid ground Tom joined the New Life Program.

"A verse that helped me get through the program was Psalm 23:6 surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," said Tom.

Through the New Life Program Tom was able to work on his character. He has learned to be more loving, patient, and understanding with the people around him. Tom is active at his church Shores Community Church and enjoys the interactive sermons.

After graduation Tom plans on staying in aftercare while he searches for his new house. Please continue to pray for Tom as he transitions into after care and finds a place of his own.



## CAMP UPDATE

This year Muskegon Rescue Mission was able to send 32 kids to Grace Adventures Camp. The theme this



year was True North, learning how to stay on God's path as you climb your mountain. The camp shared truths about how God has a plan for you, how God knows you, how you can trust God and how God will take care of you now and forever.

Some of our campers shared their favorite memories of jumping off the blob, playing with new friends and learning that God is with them wherever they go.

Thank you to all of our camp sponsors for providing these children the opportunity to experience camp, it was another life changing and impactful year.

**HL**

*Harbor Light* is a publication of Muskegon Rescue Mission and is produced quarterly.

**Muskegon Rescue Mission**

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