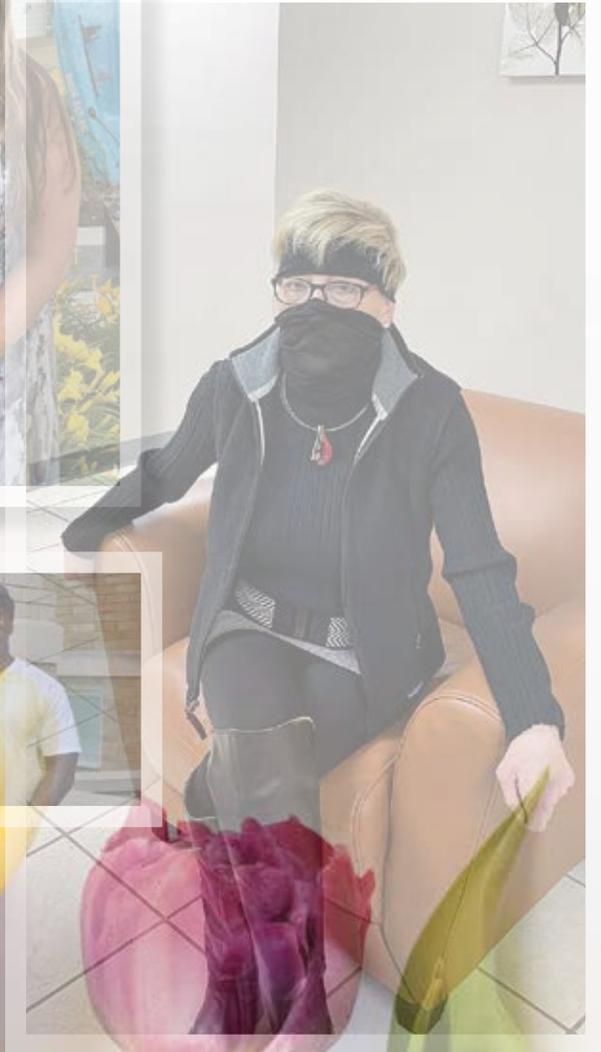


HARBOR LIGHT

Muskegon Rescue Mission

APRIL 2021



"ANYONE WHO BELONGS TO CHRIST HAS BECOME A NEW PERSON. THE OLD LIFE IS GONE, A NEW LIFE HAS BEGUN."

—2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

a publication of



MRM
Muskegon Rescue Mission



Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV
*Trust in the Lord with
 all your heart, and
 do not lean on your
 own understanding.
 In all your ways
 acknowledge him, and
 he will make straight
 your paths.*

This verse speaks to
 Kristine's soul and it
 has become her
 life verse.



Kristine grew up in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, the youngest of five children, her father a doctor and her mother a nurse. She led a comfortable and privileged life, with a good family and good schools. She studied business in college and worked in couture for Neiman Marcus; she traveled extensively for her job and worked hard all her life.

She later moved to Golden, Colorado, where she met and married the love of her life. They were together 10 years and enjoyed the outdoors - camping, hiking, fishing, skiing, and their condominium in the mountains. When her husband became ill and was no longer able to work, Kristine worked two jobs, six days a week to keep bills paid and a roof over their heads. At the time of his death, their savings had dwindled due to high medical bills. She was alone, grieving and heartbroken.

Shortly after her husband passed, she came to Muskegon to help her daughter. After arriving, she learned just how bad her daughter's drug addiction truly was and how desperate the situation had become. To help, Kristine sold her truck, emptied her bank accounts, and did whatever she could to get her daughter the help she desperately needed. Kristine shared, "I did everything possible I could to help her, to help my child. I helped myself right into the poor house."

Grieving the loss of her husband and failing to end her daughter's addiction, she was drowning in sorrow. Kristine started drinking heavily to ease her heartache. Her life quickly spiraled downward, and she became extremely depressed. "I had thoughts I never thought I'd have. My family didn't believe in depression because my father was an old school doctor, but depression is very, very real." She continued quietly, "I never thought I would be in a position where I'd want to hurt myself; I almost did on July 4th last year."

Thankfully, Kristine called 911 for help and ended up in Pivot Crisis Center for a short time. Leaving Pivot, she was homeless and found

RICHES LOST, LIFE FOUND!

herself camping in the Manistee forest for months. She was happy camping in the woods with no electricity or running water, but with the weather changing, she knew that she had to do something about her living arrangements. In October, she came to Muskegon Rescue Mission. Kristine shared, "Never in a million years did I believe I'd end up in a shelter, but it has been the BEST thing that has ever happened to me!"

At MRM Kristine got involved in the "Women at the Well" program designed to help women make lasting lifestyle changes by learning and believing that God has a purpose for their life. She shared, "I am so full of the Holy Spirit, and it's very, very exciting! I'm still very new to it, like a baby Christian, but my faith is so strong."

Her studies have helped her deal with her daughter's problems and the separation that has grown between them. They used to be very close, talking 4 to 5 times a day, she still sees her but now their visits are always brief, and that breaks her heart. She has put it in God's hands and has a personal peace. Kristine said, "I'm trusting God will mend our relationship. My guilt over not being able to change my daughter's life or help her was eating me alive. I have stopped being heartbroken, because I put my faith in God. I no longer carry the burden. He does."



She gushes about her new church, Mt. Zion Tabernacle by saying, "The worship there is wonderful, they've really opened their arms to me, accepted me, I absolutely love this church, and now I'm a member."

When asked what her biggest encouragement has been, Kristine quickly replied, "It's been the people here at the shelter. They want to make sure you are strong enough and that you are in a good position - they really do care about that; they want to see you succeed."

Kristine considers the other women at MRM shelter her family. She shared, "All of our stories are unique, but we are all here for the same reason, there's nothing that makes me different, just different circumstances." She went on, "This could happen to anyone at any time. At my age, I never thought this would

ever be my life. I've always worked hard, owned homes, been successful; I never thought life would lead me here."

Her roommate recently gave her a necklace that reads - Be Still, and that means a lot to her. Kristine shares, "I am learning to put it in God's hands and do it in God's time, and that is hard for me! Before, I always worried about this and that, I needed to control everything, and I never had a peace inside of me. But I have peace now, a peace I've never known before." She assures, "God has a plan for me. I have to stop thinking, stop trying to control it, just get out of my own way, and let it happen. I have to trust God."

Her immediate goal is to find a job so she can get back on her feet and "make room for someone else who needs her space" at the shelter. She shared this is the longest she has ever gone without working and that she has always been hired by the first place she has applied to. Kristine shared her concern with everything online now, "When I put down I have 35 years of experience I think employers wonder how old I am, so that's been a bit of a challenge!"

She shared that she is so grateful for MRM and for all the help and love shown to her. In response to how "put together" she looked, she proudly beamed, "Everything I have on came from the Mission's Thrift Store, right down to my boots!" One can easily see her fashion background shining through!

For now, she is focusing on getting back on her feet, finding a little home with a garden, and having her children back together for holidays and family gatherings. She shares, "I feel really good, and I can't wait for the next chapter - I just have to get that job!"

Kristine is learning to lean on the Lord and trust that he will straighten her path. She is very grateful to those who support MRM; she appreciates that their devoted giving helps provide this life-altering opportunity. This stylish, petite woman graciously shared her story with the hope that others would hear her testimony and know that they too are not alone. She wants them to know that God loves them right where they are and will care for and guide them through whatever they are facing. Nothing is too small or too large for God!

"Never in a million years did I believe I'd end up in a shelter, but it has been the BEST thing that has ever happened to me!"

– Kristine



A SEASON OF RENEWAL

After a long, gray winter, spring bursts onto the scene bringing a season of rebirth and renewal!



Dan Skoglund
Executive Director

Spring; a long awaited breath of fresh air, a time of the year when grass starts to green, trees start to bud, and we see signs of new life beginning to sprout all around us. It is a time to see God's beauty and a time to be inspired.

You will read about lives of heartache and homelessness being transformed and renewed, as evidenced by the inspiring stories shared within this issue. Thanks to you, our generous partner, shelter guests are finding rebirth and they are excited to continue their journeys and rewrite their life stories.

2 Corinthians 5:17 proclaims, "Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun."

When apathy, discouragement, or hardship leaves us battered and feeling alone, God finds within us a bulb of faith, dormant from the cold, and resurrects it like a spring bloom ready to grow again.

Enjoy God's masterpiece as he paints our world with the renewing colors of spring!

Together in Christ,



IMPACTFUL TRANSFORMATION

He's been there, done that and lives to tell others about it! Carl has walked in the shoes of the homeless, showered with 30 other men, and wondered where his next meal would come from, that's why sharing his story with the men coming to Muskegon Rescue Mission is so impactful.



You may remember Carl, featured in our August 2020 Harbor Light article Transformed Heart. His story began with his arrival at MRM after his release from jail in January 2019. While in jail, Carl's wife divorced him and he had nowhere to go, so his best friend picked him

up from jail and brought him to the mission.

Carl believes events that night led him to, "Where I needed to be, to get to who I needed to be." He said his friend has a license to carry and in the 20 years he has known him, he has never seen him without it. That night, Carl asked him for it, he said, "I was going to shoot myself, that's how I thought I needed to resolve my problems, but that was the one night he didn't have it on him!" Later at the mission, he found a pamphlet for the Men's ministry program on a table and he knew, "It was no mistake, no

accident, I needed to see it. I was a broken man with nowhere to go, I had no hope and this program was my answer."

He spent a couple of weeks as a shelter guest before entering MRM's Man of Integrity program. He credits this program with getting his life back. Carl shared, "I absolutely, 100% recommend this program. It was not easy. I still had struggles, I still had times I questioned things. If it wasn't for the program, the leadership, and the help I got learning how to trust God, I don't think I ever would have restored my relationship with my father and gotten my life on track."

In March 2020, Carl graduated from the program, found a place to live, and became a Supervisor at the Men's Shelter; MRM recently promoted him to Lead Supervisor in February 2021. Carl shared how being a graduate of the program has helped with his new role at the mission, "It shows the guys this 'Jesus thing' actually works if you allow it. There is a way out! I am living proof that lives can change!"

Carl shared, "If 4 or 5 years ago you would have said I'd be doing this, I'd have laughed and called you crazy! Now, in less than two years' time, I went from being homeless to holding the position I have now— that's all thanks to God, only accomplished through God." Carl continued, "I am not done; I have more to do. My path through this building, this shelter, is just beginning."

SWEET UPDATE

William, featured in our November 2019 Harbor Light – Receiving the Armor of God article, recently visited the Women's & Family Shelter armed with boxes of Ryke's donuts, and loads of thanks, praise, and appreciation for all that the mission has done to help him get back on his feet.



save money and find stable housing. In late-August 2019, William moved into his own place without any financial assistance – doing it with just his income and the money he saved. MRM helped him get started in his new place by providing household supplies and furniture from the Mission Thrift Stores.

In July 2019, William and his 16-year old son came to stay at the Family Shelter. He took financial classes, health classes and bible classes at MRM and did everything he could to achieve his case goals –

February 2021, William stopped in to the shelter to share his appreciation for everything MRM has done for him. He expressed how grateful he is that MRM opened their doors and hearts



to a single father trying to raise his son. He went on to say he is still living in the house and that life is going quite well. William stopped in to share just a little sweetness with those who showed him such kindness.



I ADMIRERD THOSE WHO HELPED ME

Audrey grew up in and out of shelters, in six different states so she knows exactly how it feels to spend Christmas in a shelter! That is the reason she called MRM after receiving an email-requesting sponsors for MRM's Guest Christmas Wishlist. It was her time to give back and be a blessing to others.

Those lists triggered her childhood memories. As she read the guests detailed lists, one in particular stood out and touched her heart, she said, "It was a woman who had needs, not just wants – and I knew that she was my person!" Audrey shared, "I felt the items she was asking for could really help this woman achieve things." Better still, Audrey knew that she was providing more than just gifts, she was giving this woman hope by showing her others truly care.

She shared how 2020 had been a rough year, losing 13 people close to her and that she was struggling with sadness and the loss of having a "normal" Christmas. She told herself, "I may be miserable, but someone else is going to be happy if I have anything to do about it! And in turn, I made myself happy by blessing her!"

Audrey recalled her excitement shopping for this woman, how she scoured the internet for the best deals and coupons to use so she could multiply her gifts. She noted that she had coveted the warm, sensible boots she purchased for her, and when she went back to order a pair for herself, they were no longer available. Audrey shared, "I loved those boots! They are on my list for next year!"

On Christmas day, Audrey was excited just thinking of this woman opening all her gifts. She wondered if everything fit and hoped she was happy with what she had received. She shared, "This was the best part of MY Christmas!" Audrey figured she would never know, and with a smile said, "I received a handwritten thank you note from her telling me that everything fit, how much she loved it all and how well she was doing." She



"I MAY BE MISERABLE, BUT SOMEONE ELSE IS GOING TO BE HAPPY IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO DO ABOUT IT! AND IN TURN, I MADE MYSELF HAPPY BY BLESSING HER!"

received the note on a "blue" day and said, "I was so happy to hear from her, it really made my day! You have no idea how much that card means to me, I still have it on my mantle."

No stranger to helping others, Audrey was a Big Sister until last year when her little sis moved away; she has kept in contact with her, befriended her 87-year old great grandmother and is really enjoying their growing friendship. Audrey eagerly volunteers and donates to various groups and local causes. She states, "I have helped for years because when I was younger and in this situation, I admired the people who tried to help me." Although this was Audrey's first time participating in MRM's Christmas Wishlist, she assures us it won't be her last!





SUMMER CAMP IS ON OUR 2021 CALENDAR

MRM is partnering with Grace Adventures to send 31 children to camp for a week. We hope you will consider supporting this valuable program and sponsor a child with your \$275 gift. Your gift provides one week of summer camp, transportation to and from Grace Adventures, a new Bible and other essential camp supplies. Remaining funds, if any, will continue to provide safe shelter, meals, and other resources for the children currently staying at the mission. Children attending summer camp are current MRM guests or have recently stayed in our shelter, for many this will be their first camp experience! Throughout this fun week, they'll be immersed in biblical teaching and activities, adventures, and form new friendships. They will treasure this life-changing experience for years to come. Thank you for giving these children a chance to be kids!



Saturday May 22, 2021
REGISTER AT FORESHORE.ORG

- Over 20 obstacles through beach, park and trails
- Participants receive: shirt, medal, window decal
- Competitive and non-competitive flights
 - Enter as teams or individuals
 - Friday night early check-in
- All runners will be chip timed
- Family-friendly Kid's Zone
 - All proceeds benefit Muskegon Rescue Mission

5K ADVENTURE RUN

SAND SURF SWEAT

Over the Edge is coming to Muskegon on July 31!
 This signature rappelling event, hosted by Muskegon Rescue Mission at HighPoint Flats, will provide a life-changing experience for participants and those in need in West Michigan. For information regarding sponsorship opportunities, or to secure your place as a participant, contact Donna Joyce at djoyce@muskegonmission.org or (231) 727-6090.

2020 GIFT & IMPACT RECAP

	
32,511 NIGHTS OF SHELTER	105,003 MEALS SERVED
	
3,606 COUNSELING HOURS	1,404 LIFE SKILLS CLASS HOURS
	
223 JOBS FOUND	89 AVERAGE DAILY OCCUPANCY
	
9,795 CLOTHING ARTICLES GIVEN AWAY	242 HOMES FOUND



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Mission Statement - We exist to demonstrate and proclaim God's love to the less fortunate and homeless people of West Michigan.

Muskegon Rescue Mission
 1715 Peck Street
 Muskegon, MI 49441
 (231) 727-6090
 FAX (231) 722-7030
www.muskegonmission.org



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 Muskegon Rescue Mission is a 501 (c)(3). **86% of all gifts are put back into life-changing programs.**

