

HARBOR LIGHT

Muskegon Rescue Mission



AUGUST 2021

LEFT AT THE SHELTER DOOR
ON HIS 18TH BIRTHDAY.

> READ SAM'S STORY
Make a Wish



a publication of



MUSKEGON
RESCUE MISSION



NO ONE PLANS ON BEING HOMELESS



Dan Skoglund
Executive Director

You never know who may be homeless! They could be the person who waited on you this morning, the cashier at the grocery store or even your child's best friend, you never know who needs a helping hand.

Our concept of who a homeless person is may not be accurate. The homeless population is incredibly diverse; there is no *one-size-fits-all*. They are sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers who need a helping hand. Young or old, married or single, working or unemployed, homelessness can happen to anyone. Life-altering events have changed their lives and each has a story to share.

No one starts life with a goal of becoming homeless, as evidenced by the stories featured in this issue. Sam and Lily represent a growing number of young adults within our community who are

struggling to make it on their own. Both are working hard to gain their footing and follow a path that leads them to happy, productive and successful futures. Sam and Lily are the fortunate ones, for they are learning early on to follow God's path and to rely on Him.

Muskegon Rescue Mission has been honored to serve as a beacon of hope within our community since 1907. Much has changed over 114 years, but MRM has remained a constant source of hope and refuge for the hungry, hurting and homeless. **By partnering with MRM, you offer those we serve young or old hope and a hand up!**

Serving Together,



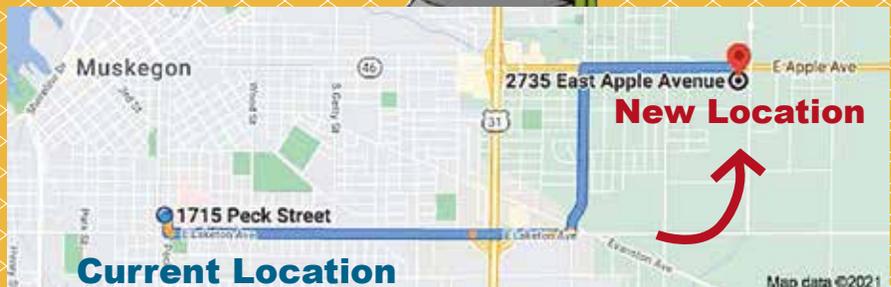
We are moving!

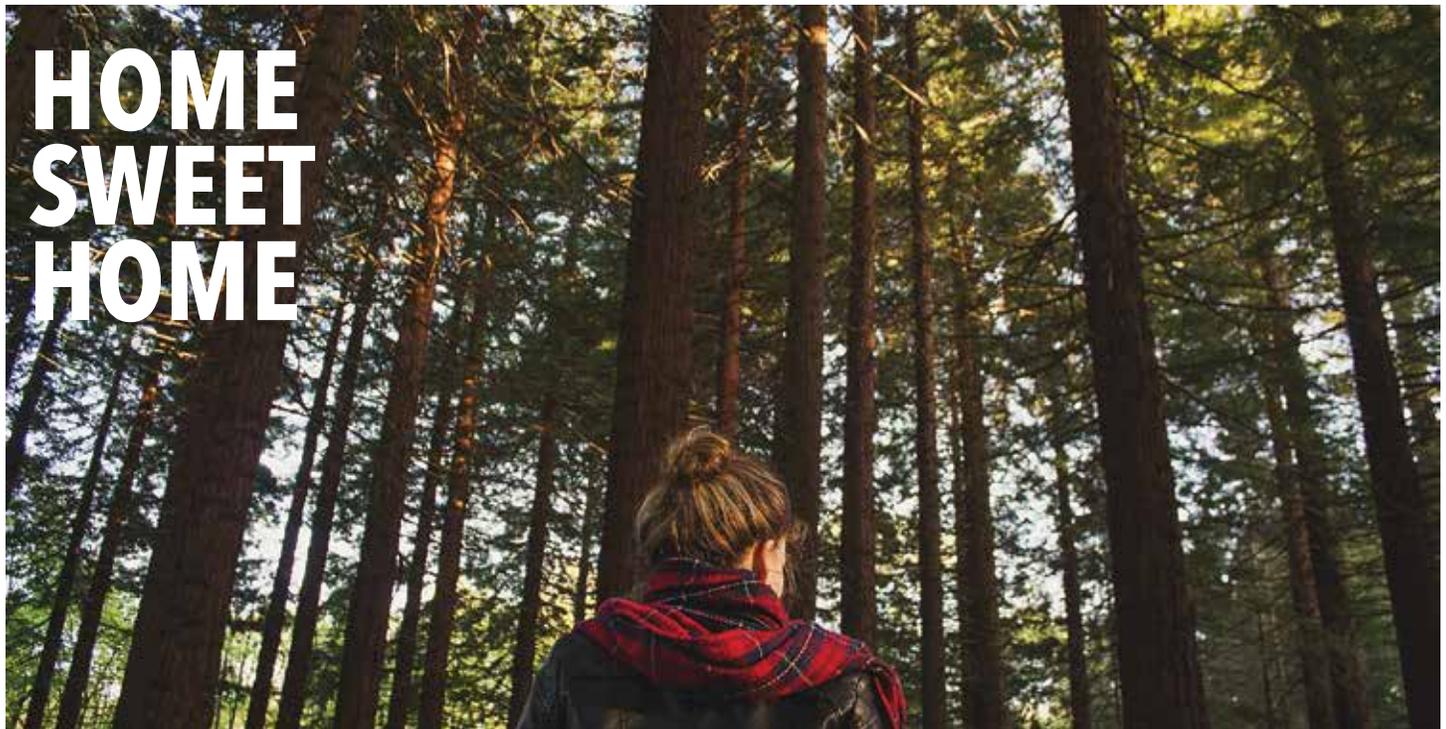
MRM Administrative Office will be moving to a new location!



We're Moving to:
2735 E Apple Ave Ste D
Muskegon, MI 49442

Starting
September 1, 2021





DID YOU KNOW?

3.5^{MM}

Young adults are affected by homelessness.

25%

Of homeless population is under 24 years of age.

16%

Of homeless population are college students.

No HOME SWEET HOME sign hangs in the entry because she lives on the street.

Meet Lily, a young twenty-year-old trying to make her way in life and struggling to make ends meet. She attends college classes, works a minimum wage job and must be creative when it comes to her living arrangements. With low wages and the lack of affordable housing, her options are bleak.

Currently, she is camping in the woods without running water and is thankful for the warm Michigan weather. She is very grateful for the food she regularly receives from Muskegon Rescue Mission's pantry and appreciates those who donate and support this important program.

Lily knows firsthand how stressful, humiliating, and dangerous being homeless is. It is a hard day-to-day existence and not one that she would choose. She is already making plans for when cold weather will force her from the forest and takes comfort knowing she will find safe shelter and kindness at MRM's door.

She is part of the growing number of young adults forced onto the streets before they are financially ready to support themselves. Instability at home and family

issues, such as abuse, neglect, parental substance abuse or family conflict lead many young adults to homelessness. Surprisingly, approximately 25% of America's homeless population is under age 24, and college students like Lily, represent 16% of that population, as reported in HUD's 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.

After leaving an abusive home, Lily found herself sleeping in her car, staying with friends for short periods, and she's now living in a tent until the weather drives her inside. She prefers to be called *unsheltered* rather than homeless, as it carries less social stigma. Shame has driven her to hide her living situation from her employer, co-workers, teachers, and even some friends. She doesn't want their pity or for them to look at her differently. She works hard to blend in and to remain unseen.

Lily goes to sleep without the safety, stability and support of a family or a home. She knows she can't go back and change the beginning of her life, so she's determined to change her future. She dreams of one day living in a warm, loving home where she can hang her HOME SWEET HOME sign.



DID YOU KNOW?

50%

of adolescents aging out of foster care and juvenile justice systems become homeless within six months.

EIGHTEEN is one of those special milestone birthdays. It is a coming of age per se, an entry into adulthood, and a starting point on the road to your future.

Do you remember your 18th birthday? What you did and how you celebrated?

Now stop and imagine yourself being dropped off at the shelter door on your 18th birthday, because you had “aged out” of the foster care system. This day holds no celebration, no cake or candles, simply the harsh reality of being homeless and unwanted.

This startling face of homelessness is not fiction; it is happening within our community and the number of homeless young adults are a rising statistic. Studies report that 50% of adolescents aging out of foster care and juvenile justice systems become homeless within six months.

Recently, a man came into MRM’s administration office along with his older adult son, to inquire about the Men’s Shelter. He shared with staff that he had a foster child at home who was soon turning eighteen and said, “If he doesn’t have a job by the time his birthday comes around then, I’m dropping him off at your door, I just thought you should know.” Stunned, staff responded, MRM’s doors are always open to those in need.

True to his word, a quiet, introverted boy was dropped off at MRM’s Men’s Shelter by his foster dad on his 18th birthday. Sam arrived at the shelter with all his belongings stuffed into a backpack and was questioning what life held next for him. He was told, “Now that he was no longer an income for his foster family, he had become an unwanted burden.”

Sam had no life skills, no job and no idea how to navigate adulthood or what

that even meant. Left alone to fend for himself, Sam found the help he needed to thrive. Not only did he find nutritious meals and a safe place to lay his head, he found people who actually cared about him and were willing to teach him the life skills he lacked. He found help, compassion, acceptance, and God's love at MRM.



While staying at the shelter, Sam helped out in MRM's pantry, processing donations and organizing shelves. He discovered he had a knack for this type of work, and it became his job training! With the help of MRM's job search assistance, a local grocery store hired Sam to stock shelves on 2nd shift. Being a loner, this job was a perfect fit for Sam. He'd put in headphones, turn on music and get busy cleaning and restocking shelves. He was proud he had gotten his first job.

MRM's money management class taught Sam how to budget his money, how to pay bills and he opened his first savings account! More importantly, bible study class helped him realize he was not alone – he has a heavenly Father who loves him and will always be there for him. This particular lesson was a life-changer for Sam, "I never had a father in my life who cared, a father who loved me no matter what, and now I know I do!"

Looking back, Sam is thankful he celebrated his 18th birthday at Muskegon Rescue Mission. He believes it saved him from a lifetime of hardship and heartache. He credits MRM's counselors with helping him grow into the responsible young man he has become. He now has a steady job, shares an apartment and is enrolled in college. **Sam's future is brighter than he ever imagined, all because he celebrated his birthday at MRM!**

No one should feel unloved, unwanted, or hopeless, especially at the start of their young lives. Muskegon Rescue Mission is grateful that your faithful support gives young people like Sam, hope for the future and helps provide guidance, counsel, and life skills to help them navigate adulthood successfully.

Now close your eyes and make a wish. Homelessness does end – one life at a time! With your help, MRM continues to restore the lives of the hurting every day!

Life Skills Teens Need

Eighteen isn't a magic number that turns a teen into an adult ready to live on their own. Unless teens are taught life skills to help them navigate the real world they may struggle to be a successful and independent member of our community. Here are some basic life skills every teen should learn:



WORK SKILLS – how to complete a job application, attend an interview and follow supervisor's instruction, importance of punctuality and reliability.



GOAL SETTING SKILLS – how to establish a goal, actions needed to achieve, and how to track progress to stay motivated.



BASIC HOUSEHOLD SKILLS – basic meal preparation skills, how to do laundry, sanitize a bathroom, do dishes and clean up after themselves.



FINANCIAL SKILLS – basic money skills should include how to create a budget, balance a checkbook, dangers of credit card debt and the importance of saving money.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FILL THE PLATE FOR SOMEONE ELSE?



You provide breakfast, lunch and dinner to someone in shelter.



You provide a week's worth of food for families in our community through our weekly pantry service.



You provide sack lunches for school age children and working adults staying in our shelters.

This summer, will you **FILL THE PLATE** for someone else? **Any gift you make between July 24 – October 31 will help us reach our goal of 200,000 Meals in 100 Days.**



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



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

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