

HARBOR LIGHT

MUSKEGON RESCUE MISSION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

**84-year old shares
why he volunteers**

p. 7

**Fill the Bowl
raises money
and awareness**

p. 6

**A second chance
changed her life**

p. 4



SPRING 2022



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.

Muskegon Rescue Mission

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Your Donations Count

Muskegon Rescue Mission is a 501(c)(3). 88% of all gifts are put back into life-changing programs.



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

Dear Friend,

As the earth wakes from winter's slumber, spring greets us with a season of new beginnings. We rejoice in the miracle of Easter and celebrate how God is working in the lives of those He's led to Muskegon Rescue Mission. These men, women and families have found a safe place to shed the weight of their past and rely on God's strength to rewrite their stories.



Transitioning individuals and families out of hunger and homelessness is a priority for MRM. Recurring issues

make it difficult for low-income families to break free of poverty. Recognizing the need to do more, MRM has launched a \$5M RISE UP TOGETHER Capital Campaign to build a Daycare, Preschool and Community Resource Center. This new building will integrate services from over twenty partnering agencies to offer support and empower our community.

MRM believes the cycle of poverty can be broken, and with support from our donor community, TOGETHER, WE CAN REWRITE STORIES AND EMPOWER FUTURES!

Rising Up Together,

Dan Skoglund
Executive Director

THE PROMISE OF EASTER

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."

– John 11:25 ESV

Hallelujah, He is risen! Jesus' resurrection gives us undeniable proof that He is the Son of God. It is His glorious promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him. He takes our sins, pronounces us forgiven and gives us the power to change! Easter is a celebration of renewal and rebirth.

We celebrate Easter in our shelters by sharing the story of Jesus' persecution, His death on the cross and His resurrection three days later. Our guests share a delicious holiday dinner, and everyone – child and adult, receives an Easter basket. Guests paint and decorate hard-boiled eggs during the days leading up

to Easter. In addition, children staying at the Women's and Family Shelter participate in a traditional egg hunt in the courtyard. Although MRM combines non-religious traditions into our celebration, our focus remains on Christ's death and resurrection and what it represents to us as believers. We share the beautiful message that hope is never out of reach because God can turn any tragedy into victory.

We praise God for the good news of Easter – that a new life is possible through Jesus. Because He lives, there are no last chances. Christ loves us through all the extra chances we need! Hallelujah, Jesus is alive!

THE HANDS OF GOD ARE reaching out

Moving to start a new life should be exciting. She never expected she'd be homeless!

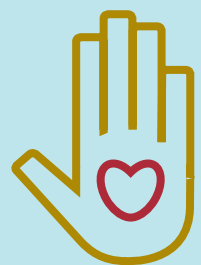
Five years ago, Valerie, a young woman born and raised in California, drove to Michigan with a friend who brought her ailing sister to live with family in Muskegon. Once here, they decided to stay and start a new life. Excited for the future, they quickly found jobs, an apartment and happily settled in.

Unfortunately, life unraveled two years later, and the duo found themselves homeless, sleeping in a tent in January! Each night they'd wait until the park was vacant before setting up their tent. Valerie explained, "Being homeless is hard work. You have to figure out where a safe place to sleep is, what to do with your stuff during the day, how to shower, eat and survive."

During the three months they lived outside, they experienced the hand of God. They hadn't made their homelessness known to others, yet God placed people along their path to show them His love. She expressed gratitude for an elderly woman who invited them into her home regularly to get warm and for a neighborhood pastor who offered them meals. She remains humbled by the way people reached out and knows God orchestrated these encounters.

After receiving Section 8 Housing Assistance, they were finally able to move into a house in Muskegon Heights. In October 2021, Valerie decided it was best for her to leave the home, and she struggled with where she should go. She had been to Muskegon Rescue Mission before and quickly left after a few days because she couldn't handle the rules; she wasn't convinced this stay would go any better.

This time, she came with a completely different attitude and mindset and MRM staff immediately commented on the change they saw in her. She now had a smile on her face, she was engaged and participating and seemed happy to be here. When asked what made the difference, Valerie



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"I am thankful for a second chance and want those who support MRM to know they are changing lives forever."

- Valerie

explained, "I see things differently now; it's like the Lord erased all the negativity in my heart. God is taking care of me." She continued, "I knew it before but never really felt it; this time, I feel it!" She credits MRM staff with providing emotional support, for believing and trusting in her – that meant a lot to her. She shows her appreciation by helping out however she can – shoveling snow from around staff cars, leaving other guests inspirational notes and small treats, or by holding a crying child's hand. Through her journey, she's now able to handle life's stresses and challenges with a smile, grace and sense of humor.

Working full-time for a company in Spring Lake, she's ready to leave the shelter daily by 4:15 a.m. to walk to the Heights to catch a ride into work. She recently discussed her Covid conscious living arrangement with her coworkers. She explained how important

it was to her to keep the other women and children living at the shelter safe. Her coworkers were very supportive, and she answered all their questions about living at the shelter.

"God puts people in your life for a reason, maybe it's just for a short time, but we are all where we are supposed to be. Each person at MRM has impacted my life and helped me see things differently. **I am thankful for a second chance and want those who support MRM to know they are changing lives forever!**" Valerie shared, "To them, it may seem small, but to me, it's huge to know someone cares. They are the hands of God reaching out to me!"

 **Visit our website for more stories**
muskegonmission.org/changed-lives/



FILL THE BOWL 2022 RAISED

10,000 MEALS!

It felt wonderful to host our annual Fill the Bowl B2B luncheon in person this year! We had a great turnout and enjoyed networking with many local business teams. Together we reached our goal of providing 10,000 meals for those experiencing hunger in our community.

We couldn't have done it without the generous support from local business partners. Special thanks to our co-presenting sponsors, Independent Bank and DaySpring Services. Thanks to Grand Traverse Pie Co. for the delicious lunch of soup, bread and pie, and Pepsi and Starbucks for providing beverages. A warm thanks to the team of MRM volunteers who served at this event.

We want to express our gratitude to the following businesses who donated items for our gift basket giveaway: Aldea Coffee, The Cheese Lady Muskegon, Mr. B's Pancake House, Brunch House, Toast 'N Jams,

Fruitport Grads Give Back, Bittersweet Coffee Roasters, Chick-fil-A Muskegon, Unity Christian Music Festival, White Lake Nutrition, Aquastar Cruises, Putters Creek and ForeShore Adventure Run.

Every meal, every warm bed and every life rescued is thanks to partners like YOU. Thank you for filling the bowl and helping feed the hungry and homeless in our community.



Donate Now! muskegonmission.kindful.com 



TOM D.
VOLUNTEER – CHAPEL SPEAKER

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer, 84-year old Tom D. attends City Heart Ministries and has been a Chapel Speaker at Muskegon Rescue Mission for 17 years! He always leaves feeling blessed after sharing his story with guests!

Born in Memphis, TN, his family moved to Chicago when he was 8-years old. In 1955, he joined the Army Corps of Engineers, serving four years and traveling extensively throughout Europe. He fondly recalls the famous cities and historical sites he visited during his enlistment.

He shared, "Life was crazy for a young African American man in the early '60s." Tom experienced racial prejudice while working for Chicago's main post office on a mail train route. He recalled having to go to the back door of a restaurant in Kentucky because he was not allowed inside. Or the time his train had a layover in northern Wisconsin and his only option for lodging was to either stay on the train or go to jail.

In 1967, Tom moved to Muskegon and worked for 21-years at S.D. Warren. He also

Knowing he is doing God's will motivates him to keep serving.

served as a Loaned Executive for United Way soliciting donations from local companies. Throughout his life, Tom has found ways to contribute and give back, he's served on several boards and is still active throughout the community.

Tom shared he had a drinking problem and in 1971 spent three days in the hospital with alcohol

CONTINUED ON p.8

poisoning. His doctor told him he was one drink away from death! He had a choice to make – stop drinking or die. At a crossroads, he started attending AA meetings and Bible studies, calling on God to give him the strength to say *no*; he proudly adds that's still his answer today!

He grew up going to church and accepted the Lord in 1960, but admits he fell away. In 1993, he came to Muskegon Rescue Mission intending to just stay a day or two, but a friend working at MRM encouraged him to enter the men's year-long discipleship program. It was here he met Pastor Randall and found his way back to God! The two men have shared a friendship ever since.



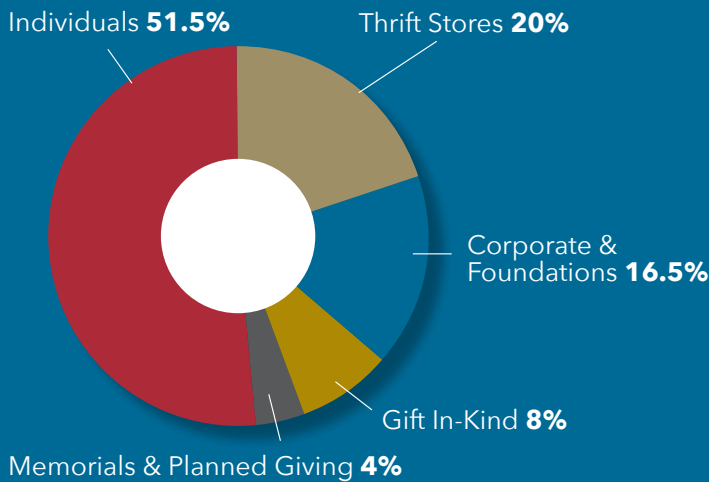
The message he shares with guests is, "People's lives are not always perfect; we all go through things." He uses his own experiences to talk with others, to help console and encourage them to get through whatever difficulties they face. God shared with Tom, "You are effective because you teach from your heart; that's the difference in how people receive the message." Knowing he is doing God's will motivates him to keep serving. MRM is blessed to have dedicated volunteers like Tom!



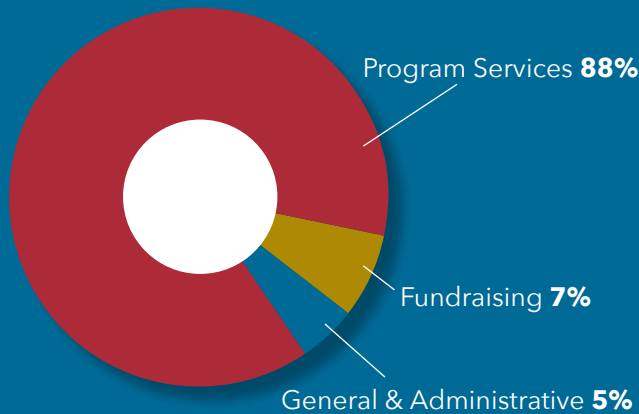
Get Involved – Volunteer
muskegonmission.org/volunteer/

impact stats

SOURCE OF 2021 INCOME



WHERE YOUR DONATIONS GO



SHELTER STATS

18,732
Nights of Shelter

59,664
Meals Served

2,324
Life Skill Class Hours

119
Homes Found

136
Jobs Found

119
Decisions & Rededications for Christ

COMMUNITY PANTRY STATS

1,177
Number of Families Served

17,864
Pantry Meals Provided