

# HARBOR LIGHT

MUSKEGON RESCUE MISSION TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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**Harbor Light** is a publication of Muskegon Rescue Mission and is produced tri-annually.

**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.



Faithful partners,

*Transformation starts here* at Muskegon Rescue Mission. God uses the events we encounter daily as tools to shape and sculpt us. He is working, even amidst the pain and struggles. It's not always easy; we don't always understand the whys, but we trust and follow Him. We echo the prayer of Isaiah, "But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand."



God is the Master Potter who never gives up on the clay. No one knows our needs better. With loving hands, He molds and reshapes us, strengthening us through the fires of life. It's powerful to see the life transformations happening here, not only in the lives of our shelter guests but also in our volunteers, donors and staff.

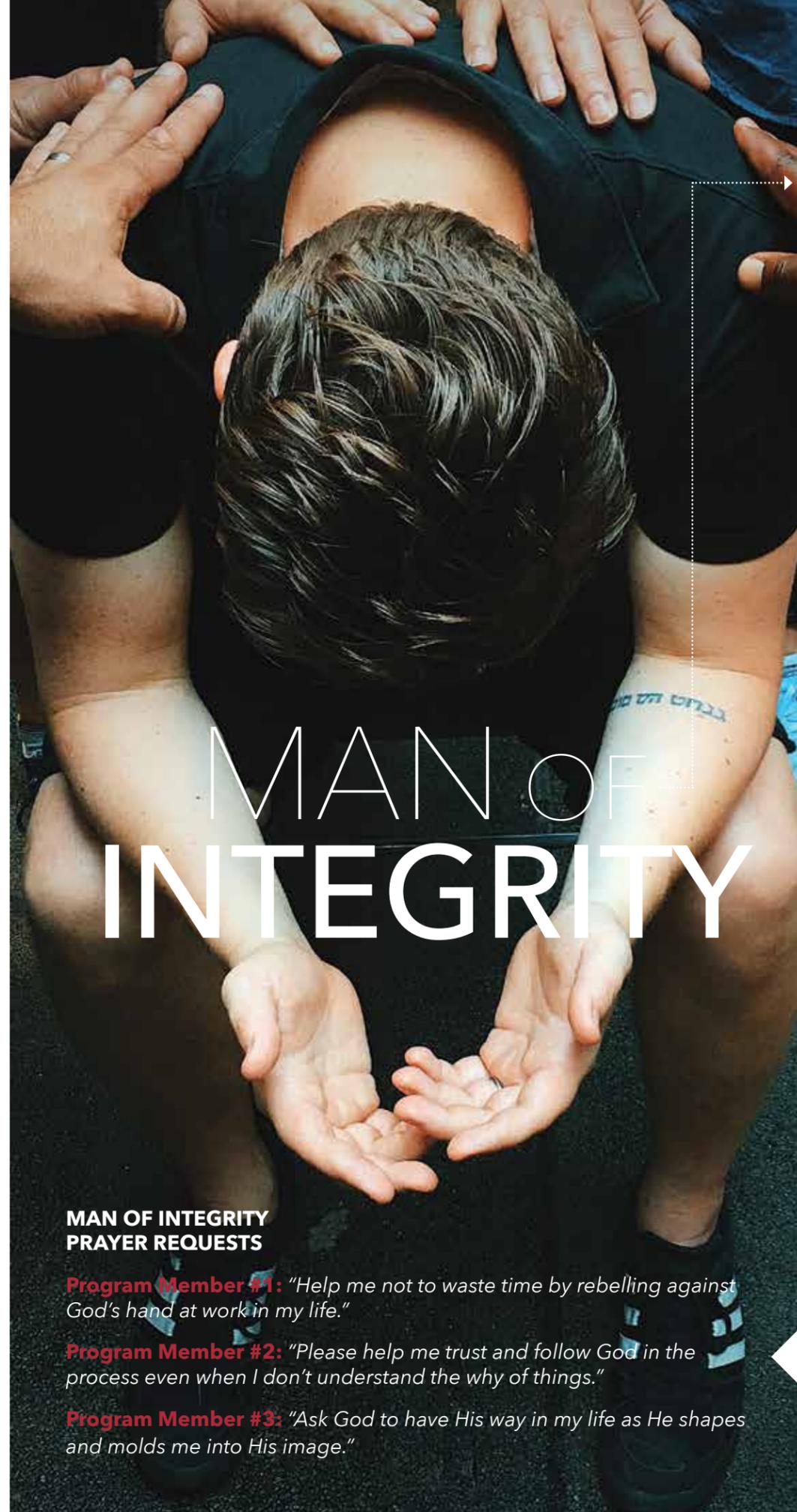
In this issue, you will read about Chuck's journey and how his life transformed from a homeless guest to an employed homeowner. You'll also read how volunteers and donors are blessed for answering His call to serve. He deepens our faith, develops perseverance and turns us into vessels of His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and faithfulness.

Your ongoing support of MRM encourages those seeking emergency shelter. They experience genuine care and are grateful God is picking up their broken dreams and transforming their shattered lives.

For His Glory,



Dan Skoglund  
Executive Director



**WE WELCOME SIX MEN INTO THE PROGRAM!**

Muskegon Rescue Mission is committed to help men overcome the struggles and issues that have devastated their lives. The process is not easy; it takes commitment and hard work. We offer men the time and help they need to achieve lasting solutions.

We welcome six men into MRM's Man of Integrity program. This year-long, in-depth residential Christian program is designed to help men understand the root causes of their homelessness. This program focuses on their entire life, addressing all areas - physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social aspects, to help them rebuild their lives on a solid biblical foundation with lifelong solutions. MRM's Program Director, Brett Koch, is dedicated to leading these men on their journey and helping them achieve total life transformations.

These men recently said, "Enough is enough. I want to change my life." Your caring support gives these men the tools needed to do that. Please add them to your prayer list, as they will undoubtedly face difficult and personal challenges during the months ahead. Let's surround them in love and grace and ask for God's hand of protection to hold them and His peace to lift them during this year of transformation.

**MAN OF INTEGRITY PRAYER REQUESTS**

**Program Member #1:** "Help me not to waste time by rebelling against God's hand at work in my life."

**Program Member #2:** "Please help me trust and follow God in the process even when I don't understand the why of things."

**Program Member #3:** "Ask God to have His way in my life as He shapes and molds me into His image."



## FROM HOMELESS TO HOMEOWNER

***“Thank you for caring, thank you for your donations, and may God bless you in return. Just knowing someone cares means a lot!” – Chuck***

After working twenty-three years in maintenance for a local arena, Chuck was fired due to his drug addiction. He grew up in Muskegon and had family scattered across the state. At first, losing his job wasn't a financial hardship. Being a phenomenal

He lived at the Men's Shelter for close to three years. During this time, he saved money for a down payment on a house. When Barry introduced him to a realtor, Chuck had saved \$12,000! The realtor guided him through the process of establishing credit. For two years, Chuck rented and paid his bills on time to help raise his credit score to 640. A year later, the realtor called and asked if he was now ready to start looking for a home.

Chuck had walked by a house during those two years, noticing it was vacant. The home was listed at \$5,000 over his limit but met all his criteria. It had two bedrooms, was in nice condition, had a new roof and was less than two miles from work! Thanks to the realtor's help, he purchased the home for his approved amount!

He now works full-time at the Men's Shelter and shares, "I see myself coming through that door in every one of these guys. I know their shoes and the trail they are traveling. I know it's hard." He continues, "People believe they have less than nothing when they're homeless. But we have the next day. That's why we bring the Lord into this. He will transform you."

When asked what he'd like to say to donors, he replied, "Thank you for caring, thank you for your donations, and may God bless you in return. Just knowing someone cares means a lot!"

Although Chuck's not proud of how he slipped through life, he proudly shares his transformation story with MRM's guests, sharing how he went FROM HOMELESS TO HOMEOWNER by the grace of God!

pool player, he made easy money hustling at the pool hall, something he learned to do at a very young age. He also had per capita income from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. He paid \$500 a month to sleep on a friend's couch, but his addiction eventually led him to the streets.

The Lord used a little Pomeranian poodle to get Chuck's attention! He shared how he and his friend had been smoking crack inside and the little dog fell over. Rushing the dog outside for air, he said, "God, I can't live like this anymore. If I blow my lungs out or kill myself smoking crack, that's on me, but I'm not going to do that to this little guy." Chuck's friends encouraged him to go to MRM for help with Section 8 Housing and to get off the streets for a while. This was the final nudge he needed, "God put that little dog in my home and on my heart; he's one of the main reasons I came to Muskegon Rescue Mission!"

After 88 days in emergency shelter, Barry, the Men's Shelter Case Manager, offered him the opportunity to join the Man of Integrity program. Without hesitation, he entered the year-long program with an open mind and hope in his heart. Halfway through the program, Chuck was offered a part-time supervisor job at the Men's Shelter.



**He lived at the Men's Shelter for close to three years. During this time, he saved money for a down payment on a house.**

 **Visit our website for more stories**  
[muskegonmission.org/changed-lives/](https://muskegonmission.org/changed-lives/)

**A fresh haircut can quickly boost a person's confidence and change their demeanor.** It can significantly transform those who can't afford this regular care.

One morning each month, several stylists from Muskegon's Great Clips Hair Salon bring their scissors, clippers and trimmers to our Men's Shelter. They provide free haircuts, beard trims and a listening ear to guests.

Rachel, the General Manager of fourteen Great Clips scattered around Michigan, shared that for approximately three years,



the local salon has provided onsite haircare service only for Muskegon Rescue Mission. They usually see between ten and twenty-five men, depending on the season.

When asked why they provide this special service, Rachel replied, "I have personally dealt with life's hardships and know what it's like to have nothing and to feel broken. I have a soft spot for these men and want to show them a little kindness, to see them smile." She continued, "Sometimes these guys just need to be heard, to share their story and be seen."

Rachel said the reward she and her stylist team receive is priceless.

***"Just their smile alone is worth our time! Seeing them with a fresh look, knowing we've given them some of their dignity back and a boost of confidence makes it worthwhile!" – Rachel***

Whether preparing guests with a fresh haircut for a job interview or providing a trim and a listening ear, these ladies from Great Clips are a special blessing to MRM! They make a difference with every cut!



A FRESH CUT CAN  
**TRANSFORM**



# Fund<sub>the</sub>Finish

Our new Daycare, Preschool and Community Resource Center is nearing completion. Help us Fund The Finish. Your church, friends or family can make a real difference by donating any of the items needed to furnish the building. Every gift, big or small, will help us Fund The Finish!

## WAYS TO FUND THE FINISH

Visit our online catalog at [muskegonmission.org/fundthefinish](http://muskegonmission.org/fundthefinish) or request a paper version by calling 231.727.6090 or email us at [info@muskegonmission.org](mailto:info@muskegonmission.org).



## 200,000 Meals in

Starting in late June, MRM shelters experienced an unprecedented surge in guests and pantry needs. MRM is seeing the strain on supply reserves, with occupancy doubling overnight. Your gift during the Fill the Plate campaign helps us meet the growing need in our community.

We hope you will join us in this community-wide effort to provide meals for the hungry and homeless men, women and children who come to our doors. MRM could not provide meals, shelter and services without your faithful support.

**FILL THE PLATE**  
7.24 - 10.31

This campaign runs through October 31st. **Will you FILL THE PLATE for someone today?**

# ARE YOU LISTENING?



Every week, a lot must happen behind the scenes to prepare MRM's pantry to serve the public on Thursday mornings. Over the past six years, MRM has relied upon the expertise of a devoted volunteer, Deb Gawron, who willingly stepped into this vital role. Deb and our pantry team of weekly volunteers keep MRM's pantry running smoothly.

Deb worked for eighteen years at Johnstone Supply. After a failed back surgery, she found herself in extreme pain and pushed herself

to continue working. Deb shared, "I didn't want to give up the job I loved, but as my health continued to deteriorate, I gave in and finally listened to the Lord, who had been telling me to step away." For the next year, she focused solely on restoring her health and praying about what was next.

Feeling the best she had in a long time, the Lord began calling her to the Mission. She said, "I ignored Him at first and questioned this direction. He persisted, and His message kept gnawing at me until I finally stepped out in faith and contacted MRM about volunteering." While interviewing, Deb learned about MRM's community pantry program and was excited to put her organizational skills to perfect use!

Shortly after she began volunteering, the couple who helped run the pantry left, so Deb stepped in and took the program over. She quickly utilized her past job skills to reorganize the pantry, processes and flow. She had racks set up, dated and categorized supplies,

and created a pick path – a sensible flow to support efficient weekly distribution.

Throughout her life, Deb has learned to listen to God's prompting. Although He is leading her down a new path, it's one she's excited to embrace. She knows her new role as grandma to her soon-to-be adopted six-month-old special needs grandson will be rewarding. Besides caring for him, she will help to coordinate and navigate the various doctor and therapy appointments he requires.

Deb summed up her journey by saying, **"God knew I needed to leave my job in order for me to heal. He then led me to a place where I could use my gifts and talents to do His work. I follow where He leads because every path He brings me to helps me understand my place and gives me purpose."**

We thank Deb for 1,512 hours of service to MRM! Although she leaves big shoes to fill, we are confident the Lord is leading her replacement to the Mission.

Are you listening? Is He prompting you to make a change? Contact [volunteer@muskegonmission.org](mailto:volunteer@muskegonmission.org) to learn more about MRM's volunteer opportunities!



**Get Involved – Volunteer**  
[muskegonmission.org/volunteer/](https://muskegonmission.org/volunteer/)