

HARBOR LIGHT

MUSKEGON RESCUE MISSION TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Graduating with Thankful Hearts



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FALL 2023



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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A Little Time, A Little Trust and a Lot of Thanks!

Thankfulness seems to come easily to most of the men and women at Muskegon Rescue Mission. It's a natural reaction to having food, shelter and care after being without. Trust, however, can be a little harder to come by. Trust takes time. It's not hard to see why.

Many of our guests were out on the streets before coming to us, always on their guard, fearful of harm. They suffered abuse at the hands of people who should have offered only love. They feel rejected and betrayed by employers, friends, family – even by God.



Here, you faithfully provide for their needs. You also give them time to know and trust our God who loves them and cares for them. They come to know He will walk with them every step of the way – and carry them when the road gets rough. That is truly something to be thankful for!

This Thanksgiving at Muskegon Rescue Mission, our tables will be full with food as we look back on our blessings and give thanks to God. It is a beautiful moment when we join with our guests in gratitude for God's great providence.

And when we look back with thanks, we also look ahead with trust. Trust that next year, we will still have much – maybe even more – to give thanks for.

Thank you for giving Shawn, Kris, Dan and so many others the gifts of time, thankfulness and trust. I am thankful for you and hope for your continued friendship in the months and years ahead. May God bless you and yours this Thanksgiving!

Together in Christ,

Dan Skoglund
Executive Director

Give Online

Scan the code with your smartphone camera to get a direct link to our donation page.



"You keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

Isaiah 26:3 ESV

A BAND OF BROTHERS FORMS AFTER TROUBLED PASTS.

How these men are making the most of God's blessings.

Please congratulate our first group of men to graduate from the Man of Integrity program since the Covid pause. These men are one of the strongest groups to go through the program. Their willingness to serve, grow in the Word, take ownership of the program and make the most of their time here are only some of the aspects that make these men stand out.

The Man of Integrity program is a year-long comprehensive program designed to help men understand the root causes of their homelessness. The program focuses on rebuilding lives on a solid biblical foundation offering life-long solutions. All aspects of a program participant's life are addressed – physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social.



SHAWN

For years, Shawn was homeless and lived in the woods as an angry man. His words and actions were hurtful to anyone he came across. "I was the person no one wanted to see on their doorstep," he sadly admits. "I didn't want to be like that anymore."

Shawn came to Muskegon Rescue Mission with an anger problem, but God was ready to help him change his ways. He spent his days reading the Bible and learning how God cares for others. Shawn then made the decision that his life would be spent treating others just as Jesus does.

Forming a band of brothers with his fellow graduates, Shawn prayed, studied and rejoiced in the Word of God. With help from the pastors, he began to feel his anger subside. "I used to hurt people with my words for a living. I don't do that now," he says. These days, you will see Shawn actively looking for ways to help others. In fact, helping others is his full-time job! Shawn is now on staff here at the mission and focuses on assisting everyone he can.

"I enjoy working here. I know what people have gone through," he explains. "I have been homeless; I know their needs. **This place is about helping people and it brings me joy. God brought me here and I am so thankful.**"

Shawn looks forward to life after graduation so he can apply his new knowledge in the real world. God eased his anger and continues to make him into a man that people are now delighted to see!



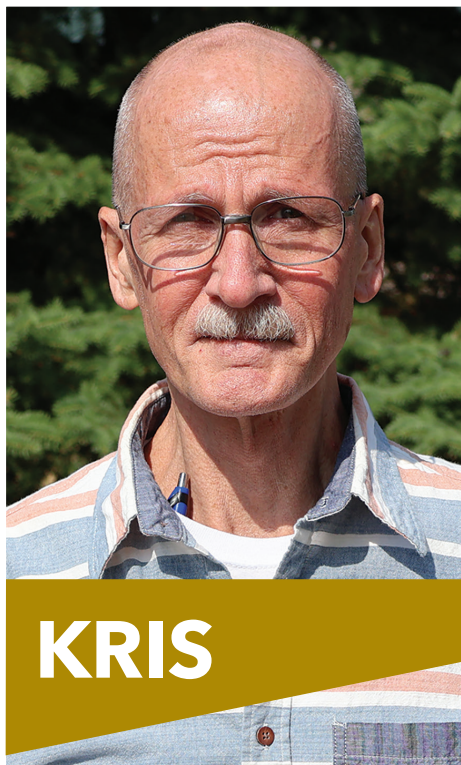
Dan has dealt with severe back pain his entire life that kept him from steady employment. One day, he found himself evicted from his home with nowhere to go. With little money and struggling to stay employed, Dan hit the moment in his life when he knew he needed help.

Dan grew up in a Christian environment and heard Muskegon Rescue Mission would be a good place for him. He originally came here for a meal and a place to sleep. He then learned about the opportunities provided by the Man of Integrity program. Hurting emotionally and physically, Dan applied himself to get right with God.

"While staying here at the Mission, I learned how to be patient and have a servant's heart," he says. As a great encourager to his fellow graduates, Dan guides them in giving back to Muskegon Rescue Mission. "We will do whatever it takes to keep these doors open every day."

Dan is also thankful for the brotherhood he has found in his fellow graduates. He continues to search the Bible and grow in knowledge of God's goodness.

"I have full faith that God will lead me on the right path!"



Kris is unrecognizable from the man he was a few years ago. Today, he is smiling, employed and looking forward to moving into his own home. Kris is fully devoted to God and ready to face the world.

Kris grew up in a Christian home and spent his youth and young adult life in the church. He married and started a family until a job loss put him in a downward spiral. Alcohol took him over, and he lost his family and eventually his home.

Kris decided it was time to get back to knowing God and be the man he once was. He came to Muskegon Rescue Mission broken and withdrawn but with a plan. He just didn't realize how much he would gain! With the help of the pastors and staff, Kris is learning how to take the Word and apply it to his life today.

"I am now looking at the world through God's eyes instead of my own selfish eyes. I am way beyond where I thought I would ever be!"

Being at the mission brought Kris into a sober life and emotional healing from his past. The bond between him and the other graduates remains strong. Every day, they learn and grow together. Kris knows he has their support as he moves on to the next chapter of his life as a follower of Christ.

With God's blessing and your continued support, men like Shawn, Dan and Kris are equipped and ready to live happy, fruitful lives. Your donations keep the Man of Integrity program available year after year. Thank you for caring. We need your help. You are part of these men becoming lights for Jesus Christ in this world. Thank you!



Visit our website for more stories

muskegonmission.org/changed-lives

BRIGHT FUTURES DAYCARE AND PRESCHOOL

SHOWING THE COMMUNITY HOW MUCH JESUS LOVES HIS LITTLE CHILDREN

The name says it all! Bright Futures Daycare & Preschool brings just that – an opportunity to start children's early years right. Muskegon Rescue Mission's daycare center opened in early March and is now in full swing! Safe, quality childcare provides children with well-thought-out learning activities and playtime.

Today, the daycare and preschool provide for 62 children. We are actively looking for teachers and aides to keep up with the needs of our community. As part of the team, you will demonstrate God's love with your talents for the littlest here at the Mission.

If you or someone you know would like to join our team, please contact Nicole at 231.714.4339 or daycare@muskegonmission.org.



THE NEW RESOURCE CENTER IS CHANGING LIVES!

The Community Resource Center is making big waves in the community since opening in March! The CRC provides Bible studies, meals and case managers to help our guests achieve their goals. Local partnering agencies and services gather here in one location, offering a launchpad for our neighbors in need.

Curlene recently came to the Community Resource Center looking for help. "It has been a whirlwind since coming here," he says. Since his arrival, he obtained his birth certificate, signed up for Section 8 housing and met with a case manager. He also connected with HealthWest and Call 2-1-1. Curlene applied for various jobs and an interview is scheduled!



"If it wasn't for the Mission, I don't know where I would be now, probably dead," he admits. Curlene tells everyone he knows to come and see what the Community Resource Center can do. "People need to utilize all the services to help themselves," he says. "I know I am going to continue to use it; it is a godsend!"

For five years, **Diana** has been homeless. At first, she slept underneath a semi-trailer behind an abandoned grocery store. Then, in a porta potty at a nearby construction site. Concerned for Diana's health, her mother urged her to come to Muskegon Rescue Mission. While here, she started attending church and accepted Christ as her Savior. She was also recently baptized. Diana now understands that when her dark past feels too heavy, she doesn't face life alone. There is light in the darkness that gives her peace and hope.



Through the new Community Resource Center, Diana has utilized services she otherwise would not have known about or been able to access. "The CRC has been a huge help, and I would be lost without it. Before this center opened, I was getting nowhere on my own. I had no transportation to get back and forth to all these other agencies."

Diana is putting in the necessary work to get her life back on track. She applied for Section 8 housing and has a lead on a room-for-rent opportunity. Her advice to others is, "Use these great resources available here. You will find the help you need and more."

Thank you for supporting Muskegon Rescue Mission. Your generosity opened the doors of the Community Resource Center and will continue to help people get back on track. Lives are changing every day here and it is wonderful to see God's hand at work.



LET'S MAKE THIS THANKSGIVING MEMORABLE FOR EVERYONE!

Thanksgiving is coming and Muskegon Rescue Mission is preparing to feed the community! Many are struggling to feed themselves and may otherwise be alone and hungry on this day. Others are not able to provide a full meal for their families. Rising costs make it difficult to pay bills and put food on the table. With your help, Thanksgiving will be a wonderful day for everyone in our community!

The 2023 Thanksgiving Community Feast will be held at Muskegon High School cafeteria and features roasted turkeys, green bean casserole, cheesy potatoes, buttered rolls and delicious pies! All are invited to join us for this free Thanksgiving meal on Sunday, November 19th. Doors open at 4:30 and dinner is served from 5:00-6:00 pm.

The annual two-day Thanksgiving Basket Giveaway offers our neighbors a bounty of Thanksgiving joy! This year, 750 baskets will be assembled for the community to make traditional Thanksgiving meals at home. Will you participate in these opportunities to help our neighbors? Donations are needed and greatly appreciated!

Each Thanksgiving basket includes:

- Frozen Turkey
- Boxed Stuffing
- Potatoes
- Canned Corn
- Canned Green Beans
- Boxed Mac & Cheese
- Boxed Brownie or Cake mix
- Mittens/Gloves
- Hats/Scarves

The baskets will be available for pickup on Monday, November 20th and Tuesday, November 21st at the Community Resource Center. Please bring donations to 1747 7th Street. Thank you!