

HARBOR LIGHT

MUSKEGON RESCUE MISSION TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Thank You for Making Christmas Special



Jennifer & James'
First Christmas in their home p. 5

Dan's Continued
Blessings p. 6

HOLIDAY 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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CITYGATE™ MISSION
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Welcome to gospel-powered life transformation

Words of Hope

Warm Hearts at Christmas

Every year, after Christmas dinner, our family likes to
gather together and have some good conversation
over coffee. Everyone is fed, relaxed and enjoying
one another's company.



Here at Muskegon Rescue Mission,
I like to do the same. People come in
from the cold to receive a hot, delicious
meal, and they are relieved to be here.
Everyone enjoys a traditional Christmas
dinner, served with a smile. And as they
finish their meal over coffee, I take a
walk around the tables.

I hear stories of pain, loneliness, abuse and loss. People
are hurting, right here in our community. But a friendly
greeting and a heaping plate of food give some relief.

Often, I share how Jesus came for those who need Him:
the sick, the broken, those disappointed with life. Trusting
Him helps overcome our pain and fill our empty hearts, not
just today, but every day. These Christmas conversations
can warm hearts as we share the hope Christ brings to the
world. There is nothing quite like it.

You are part of sharing the true joy of Christmas with men,
women and children who have lost so much. Some decide
to stay, wanting to turn their life around and walk with God.
His light has come into the world, and we no longer need
to walk in darkness. Merry Christmas!

Serving Together,

Dan Skoglund
Executive Director

Give Online

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



***"Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you."***

Isaiah 60:1, ESV



YOU BRING CHRISTMAS C

The most wonderful time of the year is almost here!

Christmas at Muskegon Rescue Mission is always a joyful time and everyone here, staff and guests alike, look forward to it with great anticipation. It's a special time for all, with good food and festivities.

Our first Community Christmas Luncheon will be held December 22nd from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in our Community Resource Center. We are excited to share the spirit of the season with our guests and partners over a delicious holiday meal, along with Christmas music and the story of Christ's birth.

We ask our donors to send encouraging notes to our guests, to give them some hope during the holidays.

We pass the notes along to them during meals – and they really do make a difference! Here are some of the kind words from our friends to our guests:

*"You are changing in positive ways every day.
Stay strong!" –JAN*

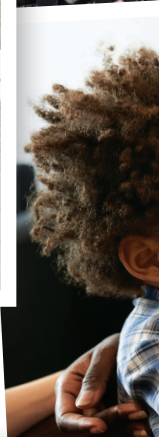
*"You can overcome any problem or addiction with
God's help. My ex did – nothing is impossible for God." –MARY*

*"Dear Friend, I wish I knew your name. Folks have helped me out over the years.
Now it's my turn!" –DEBBIE*

*"May our Lord give you many blessings. Be thankful for this day, for Muskegon
Rescue Mission and above all for our Lord, our God, and know He will bring you
above and beyond poverty. I know, I've been there! As long as there is a God,
there is always hope!" –ANONYMOUS*

"May your joys be as deep as the ocean and your sorrows as light as the foam." –JJ

"I hope this meal warms your heart as much as it does for me to help." –ROBERT





CHEER TO THE MISSION!



We also recognize that this most festive time of year is also the coldest.

Winter brings about a unique set of challenges for our neighbors in need. The colder months usher in a wave of stress and uncertainty: the frightening prospect of surviving long, cold, lonely nights, the struggle to secure a warm place to sleep and provide nourishing meals for their children. The added burden of affording winter essentials like coats, boots, hats and gloves only compounds these worries. For many, the holiday season is overshadowed by the question, "Will I make it through this winter?"

As we prepare for the harsh months ahead, Muskegon Rescue Mission needs your help. Please consider contributing one or more of the items listed below. With your generosity, we can extend our care to all who turn to our shelter in need. Together, we can bring comfort and cheer to them.



PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING:

- Winter Coats – Large, XL, 1X, 2X
- Winter Boots – Large adult sizes
- Children's Winter Coats
- Weatherproof Gloves and Mittens

If you would like to give a financial gift, please visit muskegonmission.org or send it using the form and envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

"IF NOT FOR GOD AND THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED ME HERE, I WOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT."

This Christmas will be very special for Jennifer and her four-year-old son, James. It will be the first one they celebrate as a family, in a home they can call their own.

Jennifer and James had been homeless for over three years – most of the little boy's life. When James's father abandoned the family, he left them with nothing. They stayed in various rescue missions and with family when they could. Most recently, they had been with Jennifer's in-laws, but the apartment building was condemned and they had to leave.

That, Jennifer says, is when God directed her to Muskegon Rescue Mission and everything began to change.

"Muskegon Rescue Mission really helped us out," Jennifer says. "They gave us clothes, shelter and food. Everyone on the staff was very nice."

With help from counselors and case workers, Jennifer was able to save money and begin building an independent life for herself and James. "Being here has made me a better person," Jennifer says. "I've learned so much."

Jennifer will never forget the day she learned she and James had been approved for an apartment. "When I found out I had a home," she recalls, "I told James he would have his own room. He went around and told everybody, 'I have a room!' It was so awesome to hear that from him."



Now that she and James are settled in, Jennifer is working on getting him into a school. "He comes first, more than anything," she says.

And it's primarily for James that Jennifer is planning a memorable Christmas Day. "I can picture our first Christmas! I want to get a beautiful white Christmas tree and do some diamond art ornaments that sparkle with the lights. And I'm looking forward to James opening his presents on Christmas morning."

Jennifer admits the journey toward her new life was not easy, but every step was worth it. "If not for God and the people who helped me here, I wouldn't have made it. Muskegon Rescue Mission made me who I am today." And so did you. To you, Jennifer says, "Thank you for making this possible!"

THE BLESSINGS KEEP COMING FOR DAN!

You may recall Dan's story from our Fall *Harbor Light* edition. He recently graduated from MRM's Man of Integrity residential program. Due to severe, chronic back pain, he's been unable to work or tolerate sitting or standing for long periods.

Since graduation, his life has been a whirlwind of blessings. The first was a place to call home! Community Resource Center partner Miss Jamasha from the Muskegon Heights Housing Commission helped Dan with his first month's rent and security deposit, allowing him to move into a local apartment complex.

Then, after learning how MOI's Program Manager found relief through a local pain clinic, Dan was hopeful he might be helped. After his evaluation, Dan quickly realized he couldn't afford the treatment cost.

Disappointed but resigned to living with the pain, he was shocked to receive a call that the clinic would provide six free treatments. Smiling, he added, "Now, the clinic has committed to providing free treatments until my pain is eliminated, regardless of the number!" Dan is now embracing the possibility of a life free from pain that will allow him to work and support himself. This exceeds any expectations he dared to consider.

And the blessings keep coming. Recently, Dan's brother surprised him with a moped so he could get back and forth on his own. Then, his brother-in-law handed him money to purchase a couch from the Thrift Store for his new apartment!

As an encourager to many, this soft-spoken man shares how his life has changed since coming to Muskegon Rescue Mission. "I'm a very private person, used to doing for myself. But God's been opening me up to share my story to reach others. I'm amazed by all the blessings He's provided. God is so good. I can't wait to see what's next!"



**Dan can get
around town
on this moped,
generously gifted
by his brother.**