

# HARBOR LIGHT

MUSKEGON RESCUE MISSION TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

You Give Us Much to Celebrate at Christmas!



# THANK YOU!



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HOLIDAY 2024





**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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Welcome to gospel-powered life transformation

# Much to Celebrate This Christmas



Throughout this year, we have seen the Lord work through us – and you – to give hope to people here at Muskegon Rescue Mission.

We have seen men, women and families turn to God and be filled with his Spirit of love, joy, peace and hope. Many of our guests had been on their own and suffering through life. Few people, if any, cared for their well-being. Most were without hope and without God.

But now, they believe God is with them and will never leave. Like Chanelle in this issue of Harbor Light, they can look back on all they went through and realize God was by their side all the way.

It was eight years ago that Chanelle first came to Muskegon Rescue Mission. The seeds planted by your giving then, and during Chanelle’s two subsequent stays, are bearing good fruit today. This family is thriving, thanks to your faithfulness.

At the same time, my heart goes out to those who remain outside in the cold. I hope they come here. I want them to see God has opened the door of heaven for them, through Jesus Christ. They too can be saved by Him and personally know His great love for them.

Thank you for bringing the light of Christ to our neighbors in need. You provide a place where they are welcome and cared for. May God bless you and your loved ones this 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.



***“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”***

*John 8:12, ESV*

# CHANELLE ENJOYS SUCCESS AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF HARDSHIP

***In eight years, Chanelle went through more hardships than most people endure in a lifetime.***

As a single mother of two young boys, she was evicted from her rental after a financial dispute with her landlord. The dispute damaged her credit, and she was unable to rent anywhere. She came to Muskegon Rescue Mission with her boys, ages 8 and 4. While in our shelter, she learned she was pregnant with her daughter. Due to an unfortunate incident involving her child and a fire alarm, following rules, they had to leave the shelter.

A friend opened her basement to the growing family, and they stayed with her for several months after the birth of her daughter. It became too much, and she was told to leave. She spent the weekend on the streets with her children. They slept in a bus shelter across from the hospital until security guards moved them along. All weekend, she and her little family circled the hospital grounds, keeping away from security, while women working at the hospital fed them.

Chanelle scraped together enough money to move into a motel, but her trials continued. She fractured her foot badly but put a walking boot on and kept going. And once again, her money and her hope were running out. Chanelle was so worried for her children, she called CPS and asked for help.

After that desperate call, life looked better for Chanelle. She was connected to various services and the boys were enrolled in school. Chanelle found a job within walking distance and was able to rent a house. Life was looking up..

Then came the pandemic, a challenge that tested the strength of many families, including Chanelle's. She lost her job, and her landlord had to sell the house she was renting.

***But there was one thread throughout those eight years of hardship that saved Chanelle – the support of Muskegon Rescue Mission.***

Chanelle and her children stayed with us several times, for short periods. At first, she struggled with the rules and structure, but later learned that she was laying a foundation for her family.

So, when Chanelle saw a job opening in our kitchen, she applied right away. She recalls interviewing with our Shelter Director, who remembered her from her previous stay. Chanelle said, "She hadn't seen me since I'd gotten my life on track. When I stayed here, my hair was always out of place, and I had a chipped tooth. Now, they see me happy, healthy and caring for myself. I told her



I would be coming full circle if I were to work here, and she replied, 'That's what God does. He brings you back.'"

***Chanelle became a valued employee of Muskegon Rescue Mission, working as a part-time cook in our kitchen.*** Chanelle shared, "I know what it's like to be on the other side of that window. That's why I always asked people how they were doing. I saw them as individuals, not as homeless, but as people who fell on hard times and needed a hand."

"I enjoyed encouraging the guests, showing them how far they could come if they persevere and trust in God." Chanelle continued, "There's nothing in life God will put you through that you can't handle. There's a reason for everything you go through." Chanelle believes all her hardships and time spent at the Mission made her stronger. She shared, "I'm grateful for everything!"

• Recently, Chanelle accepted a full-time job with benefits outside of MRM to help support her family. We are excited to see her flourish and grow in this new job opportunity. God may have brought Chanelle full circle, but we were just a stepping stone along the way. We will enjoy watching Chanelle's journey continue, and all God has for her!



"I'M  
GRATEFUL  
FOR  
EVERYTHING."



# HOUSED AND HAPPY, ERICA LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

"My life has been hard," says Erica, a mother of three. "I have been homeless quite a few times. I've stayed on couches, sometimes I slept outside, and there were times when I rented a room."

Erica and her daughters, now grown, have also stayed at Muskegon Rescue Mission on several occasions. "Each time I came," Erica remembers, "they opened their arms to me. They prayed for me. They encouraged me."

Especially during her most recent stay, Erica found comfort in attending chapel daily. "I could be in a bad mood, but when I went to chapel, God took over and nothing else mattered. I needed that. I need Him in my life every single day."

Your support for Muskegon Rescue Mission also helped Erica get back on her feet financially. She has been working for the past two years, but found it difficult to pay her bills and keep a roof over her head. Putting anything aside for emergencies was out of the question. "The money management classes helped tremendously," she says. "I know that my rent comes first. And I need help saving."

**"I WON'T STOP PRAYING  
AND PRAISING GOD. HE'S  
NOT DONE WITH ME YET."**

Erica recently moved into an apartment of her own and could not be happier. Even the smallest housekeeping tasks bring her



satisfaction. "Doing the dishes, wiping stuff down, mopping and sweeping – it's wonderful!"

This time around, Erica believes her stability will last. Currently working as a dietary aide in an elderly care facility, she plans to continue her education and become a Certified Nursing Assistant. And she is armed with newfound confidence in God and in herself.

"Fear of failing has held me back in life," Erica admits, "but I'm going to try to move up the ladder. I have my own place now, but I won't stop praying and praising God. He's not done with me yet."

**"My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,  
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."**

– Isaiah 32:18



# YOU MAKE THIS THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR!

Soon, Muskegon Rescue Mission will be filled with holiday cheer! Everyone here looks forward to sharing food, fellowship, carols and the story of the Christ child. Here are some important events on our holiday calendar.

## **Christmas Gift Giveaway** **December 17, 18 and 19**

For current shelter guests and those who have stayed since September.

## **Christmas Luncheon** **December 20**

At Community Resource Center at noon. All are welcome to join us for this delicious and festive meal.

## **Bright Futures Christmas Celebration** **December 20**

After a month of activities centered on the Christ child, children in our Bright Futures Daycare enjoy a visit and a gift from Santa.

## **Children's Christmas Party** **December 24**

For children staying in our shelter.

## **Festive Christmas Dinner** **December 25**

Served for all our guests at both shelters.

**Our shelter guests greatly appreciate warm clothing and other items to help them through the winter:**

- Winter coats in various sizes for children, women and men
- Winter boots in various sizes for children, women and men
- Hats, gloves and scarves for children and adults

For a complete list of items needed, visit [muskegonmission.org/winterneeds/](http://muskegonmission.org/winterneeds/) or scan this code with your smartphone.



You may drop off donations at our Community Resource Center, located at 1747 7th St., use Park Street entrance.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact [volunteer@muskegonmission.org](mailto:volunteer@muskegonmission.org).

*If you would like to make a financial gift, please visit [muskegonmission.org](http://muskegonmission.org) or send it using the form and envelope enclosed with this newsletter.*