



Life Change Graduation

2023

6:00 p.m. June 23, 2023

City First Church, 730 W 8th Eugene, OR 97402

Please Join Us!

Celebrating Life-Change



The data on substance use disorder in Oregon is disturbing. According to Oregon Recovers, Oregon has the second-highest addiction rate in the country and ranks 50th in the nation in providing access to recovery services. Despite this, less than one percent of state funding is spent on treatment and prevention.

Oregon's Measure 110 has not improved the situation. According to State of Oregon data, less than one percent of individuals relieved of potential penalties or diversionary interventions by Oregon's pioneering substance decriminalization law have accessed any type of treatment or recovery option.

The human and financial loss is staggering. We are losing eight Oregonians per day to drug and alcohol abuse, and it's estimated that substance abuse costs the state of Oregon \$6.7 billion per year.

The abuse exacts an even greater toll on the individual and the individual's loved ones as it often destroys the user's family life, physical and mental well-being, vocational potential and financial stability.

The Eugene Mission recognizes the terrible toll that substance use disorder has on our neighbors and community and rejects the growing willingness to accept or purport to manage the carnage. We know that recovery is essential for

removing the barriers that separate many of our unhoused neighbors from loved ones, health, community and well-being. We are committed to their full recovery and restoration.

The road to recovery requires Hope, patience, hard work and financial investment. The Life Change Program at the Eugene Mission embodies our dedication to traveling this road with our guests and sharing with them the complete healing that only Jesus Christ can provide. The Life Change Program is a no-cost, 12- to 18-month residential program aimed at preventing relapse. To successfully reintegrate into society, the program facilitates participants' spiritual, emotional, physical, social and professional growth.

Participants in Life Change are fully engaged. They get up early to get in all their scheduled activities, which includes lectures, discussion groups, Bible studies, workouts, therapy sessions or guided meditation. As they progress, participants' schedules expand to include community service, job skills and other essential tools.

In this newsletter, we are delighted to share more about our participants' experiences and the miracle of transformation God is doing in their lives. Our Mighty Healer holds them in the palm of His hand. In Him, there is healing.

Hallelujah,

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director



Meet the 2023 Life Change Program Graduates

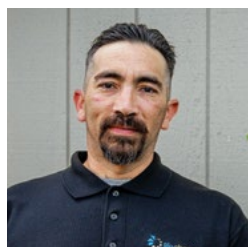
We are pleased to introduce our Life Change class of 2023: all ten of them! Each has completed the first four of five phases of the 12- to 18-month addiction relapse prevention program and has at least 12 months of recovery under their belt. In the structured and intensive program, each person has bravely pursued their recovery and met all program requirements for graduation.



Todd Campbell

came to the Eugene Mission in May 2022. For more than 10 years Todd had been chronically homeless while residing in several camps throughout Lane County. Todd suffered from mental illness and addiction and his physical health was severely

compromised from living on the streets. Members of a church adjacent to the area where Todd was camping began to visit him and offer guidance and encouragement. As they gained Todd's trust and built a relationship with him, they connected him with the Eugene Mission. Todd checked into the new Rescue Shelter and began the process of applying for the Life Change Program. Over the last year, Todd has thrived with 12 months of sobriety and significant gains in his physical and mental health. Todd has skills in construction and concrete and has returned to work for a local contractor specializing in commercial building projects.



Ceaser Pacheco

arrived at the Eugene Mission a year ago after suffering from alcoholism and multiple stints in jail. "I was sick and tired of being sick and tired," shares Ceaser, who began drinking at the age of 14. "I started experimenting with alcohol and narcotics with friends

at school," he shares. "I never imagined I would become an alcoholic at such an early age." Ceaser spent close to two decades in and out of treatment programs, jail and court-ordered recovery meetings. "I came to a point where I was lost, broken and hopeless," he says. "I needed help learning

"I remember each and every graduate's first day in my office as they embarked on the program. They were torn up, scared, worn down, sick. To see them today is an incredible testament to this program and to our great God."

– Denver Harris, Life Change Program Director

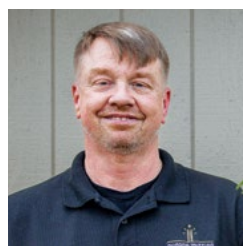
how to live and think as a sober person." Today, Ceaser has 12 months of sobriety and is working for Northwest Auto Group. Ceaser has a financial plan in place and is saving for his future as he considers enrolling in a trade school at Lane Community College.



Joey Samaniego

arrived at the Eugene Mission "exhausted physically, mentally and spiritually" as he describes it. "I have been a lifelong drug addict," shares Joey as he recounts 40 years of narcotic abuse that began in his teenage years. Joey spent his early

adult years in and out of prison and court-mandated recovery programs. "I spent well over a decade trying to get clean and sober, to no avail," he says. "When I came to the Life Change Program, I spent the first three months physically and mentally stabilizing after years of self-medication." Today, Joey has 14 months of sobriety and is embarking on a career for the first time in his life. "God has changed me in so many ways," shares Joey with his affable smile. "I've survived my own story and I'm on a path filled with purpose now."

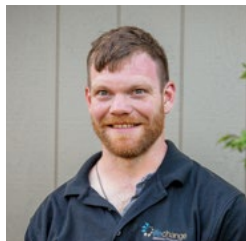


Joseph Stotts

arrived at the Eugene Mission after decades of alcoholism, ongoing homelessness and "wandering." Like many of our guests, Joseph was completely isolated from healthy social contacts. Joseph grew up in a family that moved around a lot, and

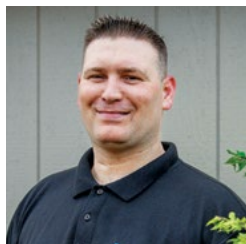
he enlisted in the Marine Corps after completing high school. "Drugs and alcohol were already a part of my life when I enlisted," he shares. "I couldn't stay clean and, ultimately, I was discharged and began a long journey of homelessness and the standard of living that comes with that." In February

2022, Joseph called the Eugene Mission looking for help. "I tried to quit on my own, and I felt like I was losing my mind," he says. "I was so worn down." Currently, Joseph is working as a chef at Camp Harlow, saving money and planning for his future. "Recovery isn't easy, it takes commitment," shares Joseph, who is 16 months clean and sober. "I would like to thank the Eugene Mission and the donors who have made this amazing journey possible!"



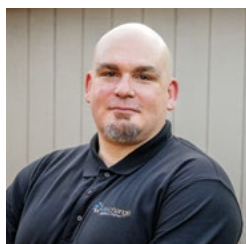
Michael Morris

arrived at the Eugene Mission after several years of struggling with alcoholism. "I started drinking and smoking cigarettes in high school," shares Michael. "I got my first DUI when I was 26," he says. "At the time, I decided to stop driving. You would think I would decide to stop drinking instead!" As Michael's alcoholism progressed, he found himself in and out of jail. He lost touch with his family and was unable to hold down employment. Michael found himself on the streets, homeless and out of options. "The Life Change Program has helped me in so many ways," shares Michael. "I am so grateful and honored to be a part of this program. My walk with God has never been better." As he approaches his one-year sober anniversary, Michael has reconnected with his family and is working at Northwest Auto Group, saving money and planning for his future.



Justin Warner

came to the Eugene Mission after being released from prison. "I knew if I didn't get into a structured program, I would end up back in prison," shares Justin. "I was a methamphetamine addict, and the only time I was sober as an adult was when I was incarcerated." Justin shares a common theme with our guests in the Life Change Program: trauma, domestic violence and family disintegration. "My grandmother raised me," he says. "My mother was an addict and there was a lot of violence in the home." Justin began getting into trouble when his grandmother died in his mid-teenage years. "I was a violent and angry person," he says. "I fought a lot." Today, Justin is one year clean and sober and working full-time at Buckley Detoxification Services. "I love my job," beams Justin. "I would like to 'give back' and help other people who are beginning their sober journey."

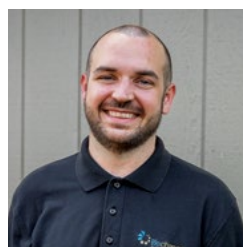


Travis Van Epps

came to the Eugene Mission from Buckley Detoxification Services. "I tried to drink myself to death, but God had other plans," shares Travis, who enrolled in the Life Change Program 14 months ago. "I started drinking at an early age and had an instant

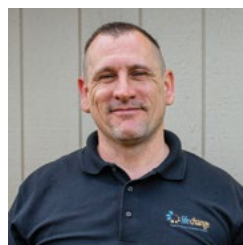
"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." [Jeremiah 29:11]

love for the way alcohol made me feel." Travis came from a tight-knit family and when his parents died within a few years of each other, Travis fell into grief and despair. "I turned to alcohol to bear the loss," he says. "Ultimately, my drinking was completely out of control." Today, Travis is 14 months clean and sober. Travis is a Navy veteran with benefits that are helping support his pursuit of a degree in ministry. "I would like to become a pastor and work with people like myself who have lost all hope," he says. "Long-term recovery is possible. I am a clear example of that!"



Henry Verville

arrived at the Eugene Mission after months of homelessness and living in his car. "I had reached a stage in my life where I felt totally alone and disconnected from everyone," he shares. Henry suffered from anxiety and depression, which he attempted to medicate with drugs and alcohol. As Henry describes the isolation and chaos of life on the streets, he says, "I struggled with guilt, shame and paranoia that I thought would be with me for the rest of my life." Henry is currently enrolled at Lane Community College and working full-time as a donation processor at St. Vincent de Paul as he completes the fifth and final phase of the Life Change Program. In order to enroll in a trade school for Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Henry is taking introductory courses in apprenticeship at Lane Community College. Henry expresses his gratitude, saying, "I am so grateful to the donors who have made this amazing program possible. I thank you!"



Nicholas Holcombe

came to the Eugene Mission's Life Change Program from Buckley Detoxification Services. "For years I battled with alcohol and negative, pathological thinking," shares Nicholas, who has just celebrated his one-year sober anniversary. Nicholas' recovery journey began when his life felt purposeless, he was out of work, had multiple DUIs and failed attempts at sobriety. "Over the last year, I have worked tirelessly with the Life Change staff to get honest with myself, strip away the masks of false identity and find purpose in my life," he shares. Nicholas is working as a detoxification technician at Buckley and pursuing a degree in human services at Lane Community College. "I would like to embark on an entirely new career focusing on Christian counseling and helping people in their recovery journey."



Casandra Young

Casandra was one of the first to enroll in the reinstated Women's Life Change Program. Casandra has courageously worked through the intensive program requirements and curriculum and, in addition, has been working with CPS to be reunified with her infant son. Casandra was raised by a single mother who had her own history of trauma and addiction. Casandra left home as a teenager to live on the streets, which seemed a safer option than the domestic violence and chaos of her homelife.

Like many women who come into the Life Change Program, life on the streets was harrowing. Casandra struggled with addiction, exploitation and domestic violence. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many services and programs were suspended to follow pandemic precautions. Casandra found out she was going to have a child amid all of this. As a young woman without social support and family ties, Casandra struggled and ultimately lost custody of her nine-month-old son. "It broke me," shares Casandra. "I tried to end my life. I had nothing to live for."

We have witnessed Casandra's growth in her faith, sobriety and hope for the future since she first arrived at the Eugene Mission. Casandra has been active in her newly found church, Celebrate Recovery! and has completed her FAFSA to attend Lane Community College. We are thrilled for Casandra who has been working with CPS, Eugene Mission staff and foster parents with the good news that Casandra will regain full custody of her infant son in June.

We invite you to celebrate the remarkable journey of Casandra and nine other graduates of the Life Change Program at City First Church on June 23rd at 6 p.m. Casandra will be walking the stage with Jasper in her arms.

Hallelujah!

Reinstated Women's Life Change Program Celebrates First Graduate

While the Women's Life Change Program existed at the Eugene Mission in the past, the deeply troubling increase in rates of addiction and overdose deaths in women—particularly with the increased prevalence of methamphetamine and fentanyl—hastened action to make the women's program a permanent part of what we do. We are tremendously grateful to the donors who stepped up to help with the renovations necessary to provide a Women's Life Change Center ahead of official reinstatement of the program in June 2022.

Notable Numbers May 2023



59,852 meals served to unhoused individuals.



6,686 class, vocational training & life skill hours.



1,643 volunteer relational engagement hours with Mission guests.



66.4% of Mission guests met program benchmarks.



100's of men, women and children received Hope, a healthy temporary living environment, all necessities, & relational engagement, programming and navigation services.

Please Join Us for a Life Change Graduation Open House on Monday June 19 from 5-6 p.m.

Meet the graduates and learn more about the Life Change Program with a message from Program Director Denver Harris and Women's Life Change Program Manager Kimber Walton. We will be meeting in the **NEW Learning Center** located at 1470 West First Avenue. Please RSVP to lifechangeinfo@eugenemission.org.