



Congratulations to the Life Change class of 2023!



eugene mission
Rescue + Revitalize + Restore

Restoring Guests to Healthy Community



The Eugene Mission's hallways are alive with conversations and laughter. First-time visitors are often moved by the strong sense of interconnectedness and service they experience on campus. Our guests' physical and mental well-being as well as the development of the interpersonal skills necessary to live in healthy community depend on this relational atmosphere.

We have found that creating a caring, encouraging and structured environment is a key tool in healing and restoration. We strive to act in accordance with God's word, which invites us into relationship and commands us to love one another. We are constantly seeking out ways to come alongside our guests and encourage their unique gifts and their healthy reconnection with others.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Hebrews 10:24

Our campus is a place of bringing people together and stands in stark contrast to the division and isolation of the streets and a secular approach. Isolation has had a catastrophic impact on the lives of our precious guests. We see time and again the devastating impacts of our guests' separation from their homes and loved ones because of broken coping mechanisms, untreated mental illness, substance use disorders and related behaviors.

Individual lodgings are often preferred by consumers, advocates and public funding, whether it be for college dorms, senior living

or long-term housing for the homeless. Yet, such accommodations are often budget-breakers and frequently worsen behavioral issues, despair and isolation in those who are already struggling. Further, the risks of isolation are obvious:

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.'" Genesis 2:18a

"A person who has secluded themselves seeks their own desires and rejects all reason." Proverbs 18:1

In contrast to public policy, which tends to favor permanent supported individual housing, the Mission seeks to reunite our guests with healthy family members, loved ones and community whenever possible. We seek to share Hope, to heal and restore and to return guests to full flourishing unencumbered by that which led to their homelessness in the first place.

Guests at the Eugene Mission develop life skills that equip them for a full life. They learn (or relearn) the fundamentals of living with others, including cost and space sharing, conflict resolution, communication, empathy and perspective. Because living in a community helps people acquire the social skills necessary for successfully navigating life with others, the Mission's emphasis on returning guests to healthy community results in better team members, spouses, family members and employees.

The good news is that this works!

In celebration and gratitude,

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director

Cultivating Healing and Recovery, Step by Step

The chaos of trauma, addiction and homelessness does not quickly transform itself into peace and healthy connections. It is transmuted in a step-by-step process that is often messy and confusing, and yet filled with Hope.

As several guests enrolled in a semester-long origami class explain, you can try your best to make better choices and commit to recovery, and, while healing is still hard, it is worth it.

The 12-week course is offered to guests in the R³ (Rescue + Revitalize + Restore) Program, which addresses barriers that stand in the way of people living healthy, independent lives. Guests co-create plans with staff to help them grow in areas of wellness, including physical and mental health along with learning social, vocational and life skills through classes and daily activities.

Enhancing social and community assets, such as reestablishing contact with friends, gaining support from a local church and developing hobbies are key components of the program. Each term, guests choose from around 20 class options in areas such as personal finance, recovery support and the creative arts.

At the outset of the origami class, guests knew they would be working on developing social and creative assets, but they didn't realize that folding squares of paper according to the rules of an ancient art form would mirror their own inner healing process, or help them understand why they need patient, step-by-step support.

The Mission recognizes that the path from homelessness to wholeness requires long-term commitment, relational support and progressive care, which are reflected in our new programming and system. Guests begin their journey in the Rescue Shelter, where they can stabilize, rest and work with Mission Navigators to chart a new path. From there, they can move into either the R³ Program or Life Change addiction relapse prevention program.

It was the pandemic that spurred the Mission to move in a new direction after we were required to pause drop-in services due to the governor's stay-at-home orders. Innovation often happens in the space between folds. We decided the time was right to transition to this new model that helps guests achieve daily objectives, develop both creative and practical skills and build relationships with



Desaree Clark has enjoyed her origami class along with Recovery Support and working along side her navigator to remove housing barriers.

volunteers and staff, such as Navigator Kai Batalona, who taught the origami class.

Origami encourages you to trust the process and make the fold anyway, even if you cannot envision a perfect path forward. One step follows another. The shape becomes clear in the end when students see that a move they made 20 steps ago was necessary in order to create a cross, turtle or swan. Batalona says students are very confused in the beginning, but it is a case of "mind over matter" and they get excited when they begin to see that their hands can make something beautiful.

Guest Richard Durbin, who is disabled and uses a wheelchair, has been focused on improving his well-being since he arrived around nine months ago. He enjoys brain teasers and built paper airplanes with his nieces before he came to the Mission.

"I like the function of origami," he says. "You take paper and make it into something new. You're taking an abstract idea and creating something tangible."



Richard Durbin enjoys the challenge presented by his origami project.



Navigator Kai standing proudly with other participants of his Origami class.



Origami Showcase table lovingly displayed with the guest's favorite pieces.

The idea of “recovery” is just such an abstract idea and it can be hard to imagine what a new self might look like, how it might function or what steps should be taken to arrive at the place called “better.” Fold by fold, step by step, the paper takes shape.

Guest Desaree Clark said the class represents a group of people working to bring something to fruition.

“It’s not just one person,” she says.

Origami may seem a solitary pursuit, but it takes teamwork, encouragement and sharing ideas and perspectives to finish an artwork of which you can be proud.

Since coming to the Mission, Desaree has been working on life skills that include daily chores, such as cleaning the Women’s Center kitchen, and enjoys the structure and simplicity of her work. She said she is not building kitchen skills so much as an ability to work with, and around, others.

She’s been cultivating “tolerance, acceptance, routine and accountability,” she says. “It wasn’t necessarily my goal, but it’s what happens when you’re here.”

The class also opens students to the idea of accepting other cultures and customs, and that they don’t have to understand everything that happens in order to keep moving forward or to choose a new path.

It is hard to see the beauty of an unfinished future when you could focus on the toil or trauma of the past, but Hope, like art, is in the making.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11



Melissa feels hopeful about her future thanks to the Women's Life Change program.

Cultivating Hope Through Surrender to God

Melissa Ryan has a lot of hopes for her life these days, including her desire to graduate from the Women's Life Change addiction relapse prevention program.

Melissa's journey to the Mission contained many twists and turns. After entering the Rescue Shelter, she moved forward into the R3 (Rescue + Revitalize + Restore) program, but left and relapsed and lived on the streets in Eugene. It was by "the grace of God" that she came back and was admitted to the Life Change program, according to her Navigator Natalie Eberth.

Now, Melissa is focused on surrendering her will to the care of God, healing and completing her program requirements.

"It's really important to me to graduate," she says. "It sets an example. If I relapse and go back to that old life, how does that give people hope?"

Melissa says she wants to set an example of leadership to the people in her former life and help "show the way." She's making tremendous progress toward her goal and recently moved forward into Phase 3 of the program, or the "transformation" phase, which lasts a minimum of three months.

During this time, guests start to show true change and resolve to become new in their character and choices. Natalie says Melissa has been transforming when it comes to her will, and she no longer asks "why?" of everything, which indicates surrender. She has also started experiencing peace and her anger is dissolving.

"She's recognizing that the chaos and confusion are not of God," Natalie says.

Congratulations on your progress Melissa! We're rooting for you every step of the way.



52,689 meals served to unhoused individuals.



7,979 class, vocational training & life skill hours.



1,780 volunteer relational engagement hours with guests.



69.2% of Mission guests met program benchmarks.



100's

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

Wish List

- + Small-cut pasta
- + Olive oil
- + Butter
- + Parmesan cheese
- + Decaf coffee
- + #10 cans garbanzo beans, artichoke hearts, mandarin oranges

Ways to Give

Unlike traditional homeless shelters or services, the Eugene Mission helps our guests identify, address and overcome the issues that brought them to our doors. Guests of the Eugene Mission enjoy a safe and sober campus, life skills classes, vocation training, sober recreation and hobby development. All of this is achieved with zero public funding. We appreciate your investment and partnership in the lives of our guests.

- + Schedule a tour and consider volunteer opportunities or financial partnerships. Contact Miket@eugenemission.org
- + Become a monthly sustaining supporter at eugenemission.org/giving/
- + Remember the Eugene Mission in your estate planning: FEIN #93-0563797.
- + Schedule a visit for breakfast or lunch with your church, small group, friends, etc. We are usually available Monday-Wednesday. Contact Beths@eugenemission.org
- + Donate using the envelope included with this newsletter.

Prayer Requests

Please lift up our guests and staff in your prayers. May we serve one another with wisdom and compassion.