



eugene mission 
 Rescue + Revitalize + Restore

Women's Life Change program participant Casandra and her son, Jasper, celebrate his first birthday.

Celebrating Overcomers!



"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Romans 8:37

Far too often we see the suffering, tents, chaos and debris, and want to cry out that we are losing the battle. In fatigue and frustration, we may be tempted to turn away, condemn, or perhaps even attempt to placate with disordered compassion.

Yet, if we prayerfully consider the situation and look more closely, we see precious human beings disconnected from loved ones, healthy community and hope, hungrier than ever for a relationship with their Savior, more open than ever to a word of encouragement, desperate for the opportunity that will bring true healing and restoration.

The path off the street is not easy. Like the Israelites in the desert, there is a strong temptation to return to places of known bondage rather than to embark upon an arduous and uncomfortable journey and face the uncertainties of even a Promised Land.

"Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

1 John 5:5

This is why we celebrate our guests' courageous decision to leave the streets behind and partner with us on the hard work of removing barriers in their lives to rejoin healthy community. Our guests have embraced the journey forward and lives and legacies are eternally changed. The shackles of trauma, generational poverty, mental illness, and addiction fall away.

We are delighted to share these overcomers' victories with you!

May it be to God's glory!

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director



After 10 months of sobriety and commitment to the Life Change curriculum and schedule, parenting classes and life skills shifts, Casandra has earned weekend visits with her son. She has a room in the Center for Mothers with Children and is supported by her program counselor, mentors, volunteers and her sisters in the Life Change Program.

Cassandra is one of 14 women currently enrolled in the 12-to-18-month Women's Life Change. All are mothers; some are grandmothers. Each of their circumstances is unique, yet they share common elements of loss, trauma, addiction, multiple relapses and family disintegration.

While the Life Change Program for women existed at the Eugene Mission for a time prior to the pandemic, the deeply troubling increase in rates of addiction and overdose deaths in women—particularly with the increased prevalence of methamphetamine and fentanyl—spurred a commitment to make the program a permanent part of the Mission's offerings. After Women's Life Change was re-started in July 2022, Casandra was one of the first to enroll.

Casandra came to the Eugene Mission after losing custody of Jasper. "I thought I had a standard appointment with my CPS caseworker and when I opened the door, there were police officers," says Casandra, her voice trailing off as she shares this painful memory. "I broke down. I could not see a way out, and I tried to end my life."

Casandra was raised by a mother who had her own history of trauma and addiction. "My mom had boyfriends, and they didn't want me living with them," she says. "There was drug use and fighting. I was homeless by the time I was 16."

Casandra enrolled in a Youth Corps program, earned her GED and began attending community college. When COVID-19 became an international crisis, Casandra's "time" in the program expired, and she was evicted. As a young woman without the support of family, Casandra struggled, enrolling in multiple housing programs, one of which had her living in a Conestoga hut located in a church parking lot.

Casandra's Healing Journey

Casandra waits at the gate of the Eugene Mission on an early Saturday morning. For much of the previous week, she has helped bake for and plan and put together a family gathering and Easter Egg hunt for Mission guests.

Casandra's toddler son, Jasper, will be among the egg hunters. He has been in the care of foster parents who have been committed to the journey of reunification as Casandra diligently works through the intensive Women's Life Change Program addiction relapse prevention program.

When Jasper arrives, he is all smiles. As he toddles through the garden holding tight to his mother's hand, Jasper spots a brightly colored egg and laughs gleefully.



"We recognized that too many women seeking to return to loved ones and lives of independence could not do so without the structure and support of a long-term, intensive residential program."

**Sheryl Balthrop,
Eugene Mission Executive Director**

Casandra & Jasper collect eggs at the Great Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Women's Life Change for Eugene Mission guests and staff.

“I was in an unhealthy relationship, and everything was closed due to COVID,” she shares. “I didn’t know where my mother was, and I was about to become a mother myself. I was completely broken.”

The Women’s Life Change Program follows our 12-to-18-month residential addiction recovery and relapse-prevention program model. It consists of five phases intended to be completed in order and designed for those willing to submit to a rigorous wellness learning process in order to develop a new lifestyle of recovery. Participants must be committed to a change in thinking that extends beyond simply stopping drug and alcohol use.

Our experiences have shown that women’s addiction and relapses are often caused by relationships and money issues, neither of which will be a problem during participants’ time in this program. Our women guests do not have active romantic relationships while in the program, and their basic needs are met. They have the opportunity to examine what in their lives brought them to the Eugene Mission’s door, and they will find what they need for long-term recovery: time, safety and a multi-dimensional approach addressing their multi-dimensional crisis.

“Most programs focus simply on the cessation of drug use,” shares Women’s Life Change Program Manager Kimber Walton. “Long-term recovery means ‘whole person’ change. We focus on being sober-minded, and that process takes commitment, time and resources. We are incredibly blessed by our donors who make this possible for women like Casandra. She is so worth it.”

Casandra is getting ready to enter Phase 4 of the Life Change Program. As she approaches her 10th month, she has prepared her FAFSA and is enrolling in the Culinary Arts Program at Lane Community College.

“I have loved the Hospitality and Culinary Program at the Eugene Mission,” says Casandra, who fills daily shifts in the new training kitchen, helping prepare for banquet events which include three Rotary clubs, two Kiwanis clubs and Eugene Lions Club. “With a culinary degree, I would like to work at a college or retirement home. I have learned how much I love cooking, including creating the entire atmosphere of a beautiful meal.”

Casandra is also looking forward to spending more time with 19-month-old Jasper as she transitions into full custody over the coming months. The Eugene Mission will continue to support her and provide secure housing as she completes her degree and follows a financial plan for future independence.

“I have learned so much in this program,” shares Casandra as she smiles brightly. “I have learned to trust others, to trust God and to be accountable for my actions and behaviors. I have a church family I love and a sponsor and several mentors who are supporting me, helping me, teaching me. I can honestly say, I am excited for my future.”

We invite you to celebrate Casandra’s remarkable journey with 10 other Life Change Program graduates at 6 p.m. Friday, June 23, 2023, at CityFirst Church. Casandra will be walking the stage with Jasper in her arms. Hallelujah!



Casandra using ripe bananas for the Eugene Mission’s signature banana bread.

Life Change in Five Phases

1

After demonstrating program readiness, participants enter the 1-month Honesty Phase in which they complete a beginning recovery plan focused on breaking away from an addiction lifestyle and learning the basics of recovery.

2

During the 6-month Endurance Phase, participants confront the unmanageability of their life and gain support for their life change through the Genesis Process, a faith-based recovery program that focuses on a biblical and neurochemical understanding of what drives addiction and self-destructive behaviors.

3

The minimum 3-month Transformation Phase focuses on using the tools they’ve learned for relapse prevention, learning new ways to relate to others and making a clean break with the old ways of thinking and believing.

4

The minimum 3-month Commitment Phase prepares participants to leave the program residence via an exit plan that anticipates housing needs and involves a work search or preparation for further education. Their recovery plan is assessed to ensure it supports relapse prevention, legal status improvement and parenting/life skills development.

5

Participants will live for 6 months outside the program residence and, with Life Change Program support and accountability, demonstrate the skills they’ve learned and their ability to transition to a recovery lifestyle. Participants continue education or their employment search supported by a budget and a savings plan.

Computer classes occur daily for different skill levels and functions



Rescue + Revitalize + Restore!

The Eugene Mission is a residential, sober living community focusing on the unique needs of each guest who comes to our door. While providing food and shelter is important for the initial stabilization of the unhoused, we understand that their primary needs are far more complex than can be addressed with just food and supplies. Individuals on the street are not OK “just needing a boost,” as panhandling signs would suggest.


Through our robust, residential R³ and Life Change Programs, we approach remedying the underlying causes of each person’s circumstances. Guests get better with the dignity of purpose-filled days, structure, accountability, authentic relationships and help with a path to recovery.


Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, we connect our guests with a navigator to identify the distinct issues and barriers resulting in homelessness. Together, we work with our guests to formulate their recovery plan. We then support them by working with medical and behavioral health services, sobriety support, life skills training and vocational education classes, workshops and providers.


Notable Numbers April 2023

 **59,887** meals served to unhoused individuals.

 **7,003** class, vocational training & life skill hours.

 **1,960** volunteer relational engagement hours with Mission guests.

 **68%** 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.

How Can You Help?

We are running out of classroom and meeting spaces as we continue to expand our transformational programs, classes, recovery groups and workshops. We are actively fundraising to purchase two modular classrooms which will cost \$167,500.

We are in need of vehicles in good working condition to add to our Mission fleet. Vehicles will be used to transport guests to off campus appointments including important health care appointments and vocational training opportunities. Minivans and SUVs in good condition would be a huge blessing!

Ways to Give

When our guests get well, our entire community benefits. Our success rate with our guests multiplies through generations and through the broader community. The Eugene Mission does all of this with ZERO public funding—just private donations from generous community members and through the hard work of our staff and community volunteers. Please consider joining our efforts!

- + Become a monthly sustaining supporter at: eugenemission.org/giving/
- + The Eugene Mission gratefully accepts donations of stock.
- + Remember the Eugene Mission in your estate planning: FEIN#93-0563797.
- + Donate with the envelope included in this newsletter.

Prayer Requests

Please pray for our guests who are working diligently towards housing and employment. May our guests find strength in their faith and sobriety. Amen.