



eugene mission
 Rescue + Revitalize + Restore

The Eugene Mission community is celebrating a season of thanksgiving with joy and gratitude.

Serving Our Generous God Inspires Gratitude



A young man came to the Eugene Mission recently after suffering with addiction and losing his housing.

His addiction threatened more than his ability to retain shelter — it threatened his most precious relationships: his connection with others and his sense of self.

Fear and shame are powerful giants, and many people who could find help at the Eugene Mission let these giants block our front doors. But not this young man. He walked past these monsters because he could see the possibility of a future free of the counterfeit support upon which he had been relying and which always traps and disappoints.

His hopeful vision was grounded in a deep gratitude for the care, resources and connections he found at the Eugene Mission. His gratitude worked like a bedrock that supported every step he took and absorbed the pressure and fatigue that accompany us on our journeys of recovery.

To embrace the journey forward, we must believe that our lives have purpose and that a better future, awaits. It is much more difficult, however, to imagine this positive future when we are in the throes of the pain from the shards of a very real past.

The ancient Israelites had a similar problem when they were faced with the invasion of the Babylonian army. God issued an invitation to them to believe in a hope and a future that they would once again plant vineyards and prosper, but the Israelites could not see the possibility of healing, or of dignity and purpose, because they were relying upon counterfeit gods to save them.

“The metalworker encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths the hammer spurs on the one who strikes the anvil. One says of the welding, ‘It is good.’ The other nails down the idol so it will not topple.” [Isaiah 41:7]

There is no dignity in looking to a block of wood, or a gold image or a drug to save us. The consequences were, and are, disastrous for those whose saviors cannot even speak, and yet, we serve a God of endless chances who delights in mercy and who calls us to repentance through His kindness. If we are still alive, He is not finished with us.

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” [Isaiah 41:10]

When we finally open our eyes to the possibilities presented to us by our all-powerful God, we find thankfulness pouring in. We begin to see the picture of our future transformed from hopeless to hopeful, and from shame to dignity and purpose.

It is easy to feel gratitude when we begin to see the vast resources that are available to us. Complete healing is possible through supportive relationships and the confidence that comes from successfully working through the toughest challenges.

This Thanksgiving, we are humbled by grace and grateful for the bountiful provision poured out for us by a King whose table is filled with every good thing for wellbeing and for sharing.

In gratitude,

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director



Michael Louvring-Carsh is finding deep gratitude amid his challenges.

Accepting a Vision That Births Gratitude

Depending on your perspective, coming to the Eugene Mission could represent a painful failure, or the ideal place to regroup on your journey forward. Michael Louvring-Carsh has noticeably clear vision when it comes to how he sees his time here.

“What a great spot I landed in,” says Michael, who recently graduated from the R³ Program. “The Eugene Mission is perfect for what I needed. I’m very grateful.”

His optimism and perspective belie the tough situation that brought him to our doors. He was evicted from a roommate situation and knew he had to commit to being clean and sober to stay at the Eugene Mission. He could have chosen the streets, and sinking deeper into his addiction, but he also has a three-year-old child. He knew he needed stabilization and support to become the kind of father he wanted to be.

His recovery included following a step-by-step plan he co-authored with his Navigator that included counseling, relapse prevention support and forming a close circle of friendships with like-minded guests. Michael said he had a vision for what he could accomplish here, and he put it into practice. Every day, a deepening sense of gratitude and confidence pulled him forward.

Gratitude walks hand-in-hand with vision – we must see possibility and hope before we can be grateful for opportunities. Success is found with a hopeful vision.

“I’ve grown; I have a different outlook on life now,” Michael says. “I’m grateful I wake up every day and I’m not on the street. The people here were so kind to point me in the right direction and then walk with me there.”

From Fear to Trusting Again

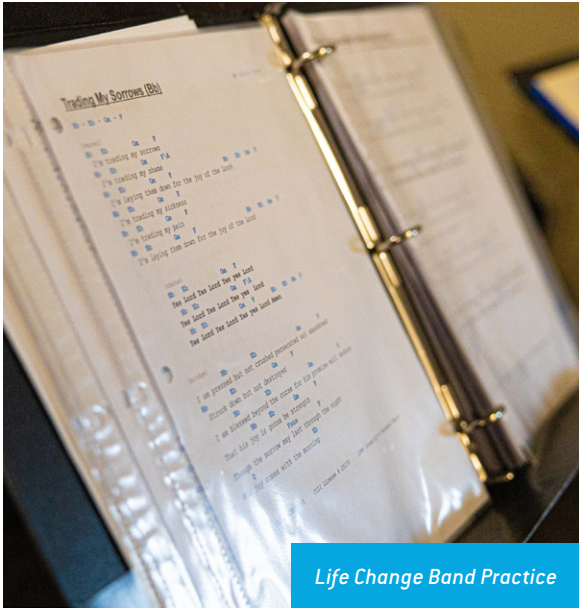
For retired U.S. Marine James Bartholomew, success came when he was willing to believe that institutions that had failed him in the past could still come through for him. James, who has Parkinson’s, said he had given up on the U.S. Veterans Administration 30 years ago, but Navigator Kai Batalona got him in touch with a VA social worker who had a housing search team and they eventually helped connect him with an apartment.

“Military training hardens you. You become self-reliant and can become untrusting,” James says. “It’s a survival tactic. The greatest survivors are people who come to the Mission. They have an incredible level of resolve.”

Survival tactics that help us keep going through the toughest challenges can become cataracts that cloud our ability to see resources.



R³ graduate James Bartholomew wants to pay it forward by becoming a peer support specialist.



Life Change Band Practice

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Men's Life Change guest Daniel practices with his bandmates.



Life Change Band Practice

“I had to put my trust in the VA and total strangers,” James says.

His willingness to open his heart, share life with a core group of guests who became like family to him and trust the process has paid off.

“Being here has been one of the most beautiful experiences,” he shares.

He is now focused on becoming a peer support specialist so he can help veterans in crisis. James started training this fall for his new career path.

Accepting Help, Finding Peace

Men’s Life Change participant Daniel Merrell was in the Lane County Jail and faced being released with nowhere to go. His public defender connected him with the Men’s Life Change Program. After Daniel spoke with Program Director Denver Harris, he knew it would be a good fit.

Daniel is in Phase 2 of the program, or the “endurance” phase, where guests find the stamina and fortitude to

continue without succumbing to their addictions and other challenges. Daniel has found a pragmatic perspective that is helping him move through a phase that leads guests to a place of surrender.

“I’ve had a lot worse experiences than this,” Daniel says. “I feel like this is a blessed place to be. I don’t have to worry about food or housing, and I have fellowship with people.”

He says it was “event after event” that landed him here, but he is finding peace and stability. He is discovering his passions again, such as a love of music, and putting them to use. He recently joined a new Eugene Mission band and the members have been practicing for gigs at churches and other venues. Daniel has been playing music since his hands were big enough to fit an instrument, and he says the connections he has made through music are some of the longest lasting he has formed.

For him, getting through hard times is about acceptance.

“The more we resist, the more we struggle,” Daniel says. “Birds sing; it’s so much a part of their nature. Humans do too.”

It is in our nature to thank and praise, if we can let go of the struggle, see the possibilities and accept help. A bird with a broken wing still has a song to sing.



Matt Erdmann, R³ Program Director

Welcoming the Mission's New R³ Program Director

Matt Erdmann, the new Director of the Eugene Mission's R³ Program, spent 30 years in ministry serving as a pastor for youth and their families.

Through those years, he shepherded people who experienced every kind of joy and pain. His flock may look a little different now, but he says he will still be "walking alongside," counseling and sharing in the life challenges that bring guests to our doors.

The Eugene Mission's uniquely relational, residential R³ Program offers classes and activities designed to address a range of barriers and goals unique to each guest. Matt says the program's focus on healthy relationships as a source of healing particularly drew him to the position.

"In youth ministry, I saw what it meant to have volunteers, staff and the community pouring in to the lives of people," Matt shares. "Decades later, I can see the fruit of that ministry."

Matt says it is important to demonstrate compassion because "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

With a slate of around 30 classes and activities cultivated for the fall term, Matt will continue to build and shape a program that provides a path off the streets and, he says, true Hope for the future.

Last Month's Notable Numbers



67.6% of program benchmarks met by R³ guests.



50,929 meals served to unhoused individuals.



7,923 class, vocational training & life skill hours.



1,211 volunteer relational engagement hours with guests.



100's

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

How You Can Provide Hope

At the Eugene Mission, we are committed to providing the highest quality programming with integrity and accountability. We believe that everyone deserves a chance to thrive. Our programs are designed to help our guests achieve their full potential.

However, we cannot do it alone. With faith and determination, we know that together all things are possible.

"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." [Matthew 17:20]

To continue serving our community and meeting their needs, we need your help. Your contributions to our R³ Program, Women's Life Change, Men's Life Change, and programming for mothers and children are critical to our guests' success. Every dollar you donate makes a difference in the lives of our guests and helps us create a brighter future for those in need.

As we look toward the end of the year, please consider making a monetary gift today. By trusting in God's power and guidance, together we can make a positive impact on the world around us.

Donate online by visiting eugenemission.org or scan the qr code.

