



## Coming Home to Share Healing



After our guests graduate from the Eugene Mission, many of them come back to share their love and knowledge in different ways. Some volunteer in the kitchen and stand elbow to elbow with the cooks and the servers. Some teach classes or lead chapel services. Some find full-time work here as staff.

When guests first arrive at the Eugene Mission, they are weary from travel, empty of hope and often bearing heavy burdens they need to release. They are not in a place to give back.

When guests return to us in fullness and choose, in their freedom, to serve in the place where they found their healing, they declare that they found something good here. They want to share their growth and wisdom with a new group of people who need the counsel of a friend who has faced the same challenges and found a path forward.

Love is not always pleasant. Shaping character and bringing chaos into order is an uncomfortable process where the old is stripped away so that new life may bloom. Jesus' disciples knew this well — the rough fishermen, the tax collector and the zealot did not understand loving enemies, the gentleness of mercy or the counterintuitive command to give up their lives so they could gain eternity.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." [Isaiah 55: 8-9]*

In our culture, we have a difficult time saying "no," resisting short-term solutions and discerning between help that liberates versus "help" that hinders or grows addictions.

Instead of taking shortcuts or pursuing band-aid solutions, our staff and volunteers partner with our guests to discover and develop each person's unique giftedness and identify the barriers that prevent them from walking in their purpose. We know our guests' names, we listen to their stories and we work hard — together. Building relationships and pursuing a calling higher than "survival" is difficult, but worth it.

When the people who we serve come back to the Eugene Mission, it is a testament to the power of God to transform emptiness into fullness and to help us surrender to a greater purpose in healing than the numbing of or running from the past.

*"(My word) will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." [Isaiah 55 10-11]*

It is a very great honor and privilege to serve those who are hurting. We are grateful for everyone, past and present, who has joined us in the service of transforming lives.

In celebration and gratitude,

*Sheryl Balthrop*

Executive Director



*Men's Life Change graduate Jackson Conrad.*

## Gathering and Growing Wings

For some, “home” is a haven where loving family bonds are fostered and children grow up knowing support and hope for their futures. For others, home may be a place of conflict, trauma or abuse, and safety is a dream that never comes true.

Regardless of where they are coming from, our unsheltered neighbors find a secure temporary home at the Eugene Mission where they can begin to unravel the pain and insecurity of the past amid solid relationships, nurturing and structure. After they graduate from our programs, some guests come back to share their growth and wisdom from a place of victory.

Jackson Conrad, who graduated from the Men's Life Change Program in 2021, is now leading a Wednesday evening chapel service that is open to guests in the Rescue Shelter. In response to a chapel leadership transition this summer, Jackson stepped in.

“I just wanted to make sure the doors were open and the lights in the chapel were on every Wednesday at 6 p.m.,” Jackson says. “The Eugene Mission really saved my life and really turned me around through the Life Change Program and I relate to and sympathize with the people who are living here and who are new.”

About an hour before the service, Jackson and his fellow volunteer, Val Adams, begin by sharing a meal with guests in the cafeteria. They then walk through the Rescue Shelter and invite the guests to receive a different kind of food and nurturing through Bible study.

“We're not perfect. We're not the biggest theologians, but for me, the biggest thing is that people are here, reading the Bible together,” Jackson said. “That was my goal and my vision.”

Jackson's vision has been dramatically transformed. When he entered Life Change, he saw himself as an alcoholic who had relapsed after completing four separate rehabilitation programs. He had multiple DUIs and the potential for prison time.

Now Jackson's life is a testimony of encouragement, restoration and of a Father's love that meets us in tough places and leaves the home light burning.

Jackson's co-lead Val says, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going, and he's a good sparker.”

Ben McCoy, a Navigator at the Eugene Mission, began his relationship with the Mission 15 years ago as a guest. He arrived in the Rescue Shelter after his parents asked him to leave their home and he had nowhere else to go. He lacked purpose and direction, but he said he found support at the Mission and that was the first step on his path forward.

“I met a group of people here and I still talk to four or five of them,” he says. “All of them are in a better place in life because of this place.”

After about four years developing relationships and building skills in the kitchen, he left to attend culinary school. More than a decade later, he decided it was time to give back in some capacity and volunteer, and he came back to the Mission for a tour.

“The whole place was really different,” Ben recalls. “The changes blew my mind.”

Gone was the old day room and the guests who would cycle in and out of the Mission. Previously, guests could leave and come back without enrolling in a particular program. Now, after guests spend up to two weeks in the Rescue Shelter,





Former guest and Navigator Ben McCoy says he can't imagine working anywhere else.



Guest and Navigator Ben McCoy.



Men's Life Change graduate Jackson Conrad prepares for a chapel service.



they can choose either the Life Change relapse prevention program or the R3 Program, which both address the root causes of homelessness through services that lead to the wellness of our guests and their ability to reintegrate into healthy community.

The Eugene Mission has gone through its own changes as it has adapted to a new generation of needs in our community. As the Mission has grown, so too has the hope it provides. The hope, Ben said, is palpable.

"I love this place," he said. "I can't imagine doing anything else."

Jackson and Val feel that God invited them into their chapel ministry, and now they invite others into a story that is always building on the service of those who have gone before. On a recent Wednesday in the chapel, guests gathered in a circle and opened their Bibles. They read Scripture

and then shared their own stories of courage in leaving the past behind, including leaving old ways of thinking and old relationships that no longer served them. They found support among one another and hope for a new day.

Not every home is a place we can return to, but at the Eugene Mission, home is the place where you grow wings and then return to feed a new generation.

*"As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."  
[Joshua 24:15]*

*"For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." [Hebrews 3:4]*



Women's Life Change guests and a volunteer enjoy a moment of victory after a long hike.

## Women's Life Change Guests Share Their Stories

Reality is...

"Getting pregnant at a young age and becoming homeless. Being abandoned by your family and becoming addicted to drugs. Being diagnosed with mental illness and overdosing on drugs. How do I know this was reality? It was mine."

Women's Life Change participants at the Eugene Mission have been sharing their testimonies with the community recently in a presentation called "Truth Vs. Reality." The women begin by describing the difficult realities that brought them to the Mission, but that is not where their stories end. After each guest shares her version of pain and brokenness, they speak out, one by one, truth.

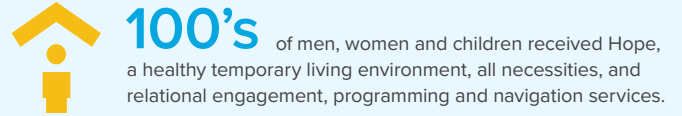
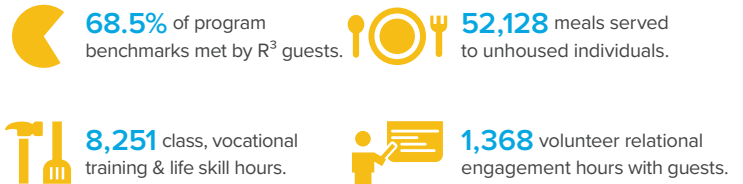
The truth is...

"I am a child of God. I've been redeemed. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted. I am victorious!"

This fall, the women will be visiting several churches throughout Eugene to share powerful testimonies of what God has done in their lives through the Life Change Program. Following the worship services, Eugene Mission Executive Director Sheryl Balthrop will be on hand for a special question-and-answer session for those seeking to learn more about the Mission's work and the Men's and Women's Life Change Programs.

For more information, please contact Women's Life Change Program Manager Kimber Walton at [kimberw@eugenemission.org](mailto:kimberw@eugenemission.org).

## Last Month's Notable Numbers



## 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, vocational 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](mailto:Miket@eugenemission.org)
- + Become a monthly sustaining supporter at [eugenemission.org/giving/](https://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](mailto:Beths@eugenemission.org)
- + Donate using the envelope included with this newsletter.

## Wish List

- + Sugar
- + Butter
- + Vanilla extract
- + Almond extract
- + Olive oil