



Life Change softball team.

Restoring Guests to Healthy Community



The joyful sound of laughter and conversation fills the hallways of the Eugene Mission. First-time visitors are often struck by the sense of community and inter-connectedness that permeates the campus. This healthy and relational environment is not only important for our guests' physical and emotional wellbeing, is also critical for developing the interpersonal skills needed to live in healthy community.

We seek to respond to God's Word calling us into relationship and directing us to care well for one another:

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

[Galatians 6:2]

"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."

[Ecclesiastes 4:9-10]

We have seen how devastating isolation is in the lives of our precious guests. Time and again we see how individuals decline after being separated from their homes and loved ones due to untreated mental illness, substance use disorder and associated behaviors.

Current popular policies, whether it be for college dormitories or long-term housing for the homeless, generally prefer individual accommodations. Such accommodations are expensive and often deepen isolation, depression and

behavioral challenges in hurting individuals. The dangers of isolation are clear:

"The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.'"

[Genesis 2:18]

"One who has isolated himself seeks his own desires; he rejects all sound judgment."

[Proverbs 18:1]

In contrast to the public policy preference for individual accommodations, the Mission focuses on restoring our guests to healthy community. Our goal is to provide Hope and to restore our guests to their families (and family homes) and healthy community whenever possible. We seek to partner with our guests in the courageous work of rebuilding and restoring relationships.

Eugene Mission guests grow in skills that prepare them for a flourishing life. They learn (or re-learn) basic roommate skills, cost-sharing, space-sharing, conflict-resolution skills, communication skills, empathy and perspective. The Mission's focus on restoring guests to healthy community produces better team members, spouses, family members and workers because living in community develops the social skills needed to navigate life well with others.

And the good news is, this works!

May it be to His glory,

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director



Healing to Housing

In early 2020, a police officer found Zaki Smith lying unconscious in the grass near the Buckley Detox Center. He was immediately transported to the RiverBend emergency room.

“That was my third overdose with methamphetamine and it was extremely terrifying,” shares Zaki.

Zaki completed a seven-day detox program at Buckley and decided to check into the Eugene Mission.

“I had no real plan on how I was going to stay sober,” recalls Zaki, who was homeless at the time. “The Eugene Mission provided a place for me to sober up and get my life on track. I was extremely afraid I would die if I didn’t get help.”

Zaki is college-educated, intelligent and hard working.

“My addiction spiraled out of control when my mother passed away,” shares Zaki. “I was living with her and helping support the family. I initially tried methamphetamine because I could work two jobs and not sleep.”

Zaki’s growing addiction caused problems with his family relationships and led to complete estrangement.

Addiction has wormed its way through countless lives leaving devastation in its wake. Oregon’s statistics are particularly grim. The National Center for Health Statistics reports that Oregon’s overdose deaths rose by 40% last year compared to a 16% increase in overdose deaths nationwide. Further, fewer than one percent of Oregon’s Measure 110 interactions have resulted in the contacted person calling to explore recovery options when the primary purpose of the landmark legislation that decriminalized low-level illicit drug possession was recovery. Oregon also continues to rank near the bottom of all U.S. states for availability of recovery programs.

Zaki was one of the first guests to come into the new low-barrier Rescue Shelter at the Eugene Mission in early 2020. Zaki signed up for the new Rescue + Revitalize + Restore (R³)

Program which is a residential program for all guests of the Eugene Mission who are not in the Life Change Program.

“I can honestly say that the change in Mission programs made me feel safe, but it was more than that. In the past the Mission felt like a Wild West situation and now there is structure and order,” explains Zaki. “That structure was really important to getting me back in the routine of being a normal human being. I had a chance to step back and gain perspective, and a chance to rest.”

The Eugene Mission’s innovative R³ program is needed more than ever as Oregon confronts the highest rate of homelessness in the country and the second highest rate of alcohol and drug addiction. The residential programs at the Eugene Mission provide proven alternatives to the transactional nature of many programs for the homeless, which provide for basic needs but, in the end, serve to sustain their lifestyle.

“For people just coming off the streets, the initial days are really difficult. With just a couple of weeks of sobriety it’s hard to know what the merits are of staying sober,” explains Zaki. “There is a brain fog from the drugs that can last for months. It takes time to wade through that before you can start to feel normal again.”

In the R³ Program, one of Zaki’s chosen life-skill activities was vocational training in the front office.

“When I started volunteering in the office. Aside from being recognized for my talent, I was applying some of my skills and helping,” says Zaki. “Everyone here pitches in. I was able to help and to make new friends in a sober community.”

While providing food and shelter is important for the stabilization of the unhoused, we understand that the primary need is relational services. The R³ relational approach recognizes the need to progressively remove barriers in an unhoused person’s life that are often caused or compounded by substance use disorder. We help guests identify their individual barriers to wellness and create a plan to overcome them.

Zaki participated in the R³ Program for 18 months, volunteering in the front office switchboard and engaging in field trips and activities. As Zaki began to heal and stabilize in his sobriety, he headed back to work and began actively saving for housing. With the help of his navigator, Zaki was able to find an apartment that fit his budget. In March, two years after arriving at the Eugene Mission, Zaki was “ready,” and he moved into his own apartment paid for with his own wages.

Way to go Zaki! We knew you could do it!

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. [1 Peter 4:10]



Women's Life Change visit to Clear Lake.



High fives at a Life Change softball game.



Crafting class with R³ Golden Girls Linda, Michelle, Amy, & Francis.



Life Change member Joe climbing with Rickie Millican.

The Importance of Play

Last weekend, guests in the Women's Life Change Program enjoyed a sunny day on the shores of Clear Lake. Kayaks, canoes, life preservers and picnic lunches were packed and volunteers arrived to enjoy the elusive sunshine of early July 2022. The friendships and connections between guests, staff and volunteers is one of the most impactful and healing aspects of time spent at the Eugene Mission.

Recreation and hobby development is an important element in both the Eugene Mission's Life Change and R³ programs, though it is often misunderstood. Why take a guest for a hike or a field trip when there are pressing matters to address, housing lists to scour and recovery groups to attend? While Mission staff work with guests to navigate the complexities of their individual circumstances, social and emotional health through recreation is also a critical element of transformational programming.

Boredom, depression and anxiety are some of the biggest challenges Eugene Mission guests face early in their recovery. Their leisure and social activities most likely revolved entirely around alcohol and drug use. Sober leisure activities and learning new hobbies are important for recovery and a return to healthy community.

"In recovery, compensatory behaviors are critical," shares Life Change Director Denver Harris. "In other words, what is going to replace the mood-altering experience one gets from their addiction?"

"I had forgotten fun," shares Life Change graduate John Kelly. "You are out there so long it becomes all about survival and watching your back."

Most Life Change graduates recount their favorite parts of the program were the outings to experience the wonders of Oregon as a sober person. For many, it has been years since they socialized without substances.

In the Women's Center, Linda Forbes leads an activity group called "Golden Girls" for senior guests, which comprise well over half of the Women's Center population. Recent outings included a trip to the Lane County Historical Museum and a drive up the McKenzie Highway to explore the covered bridges. Art and activity classes occur weekly in the Women's Center with the help of community volunteers.

"Sometimes, life in a shelter can seem like endless appointments and survival mode," shares Mandy, a guest in the Women's Center.

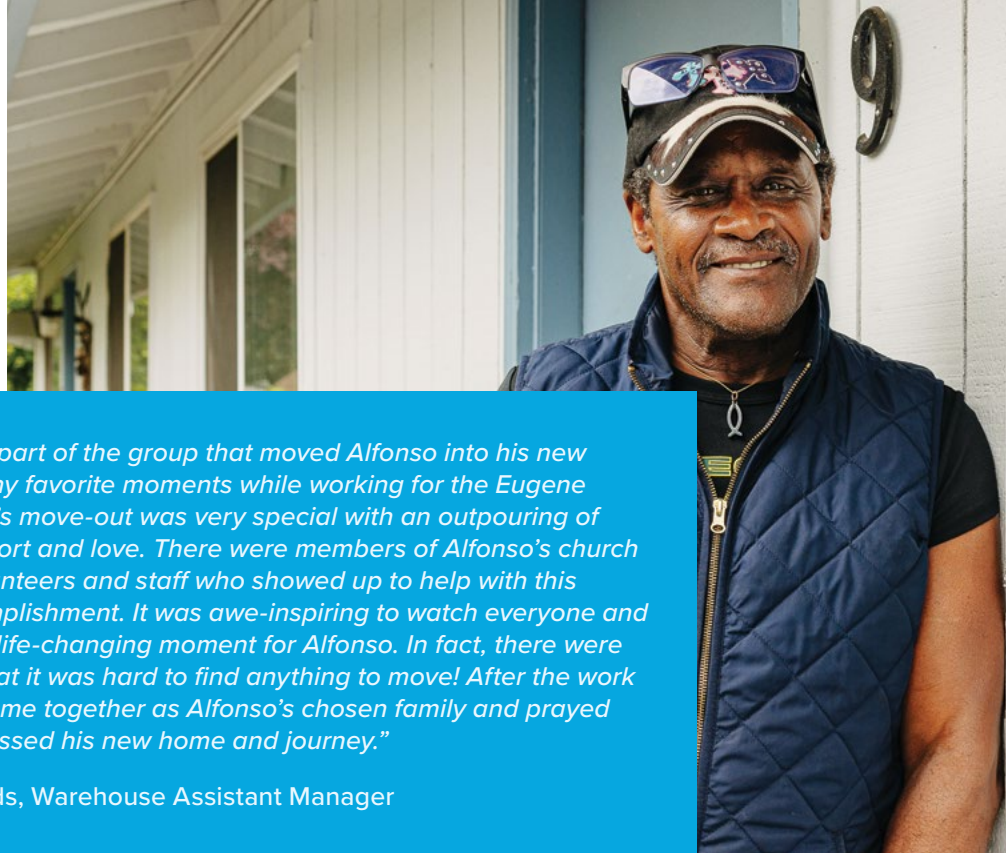
Recreational trips are made possible by donors we call "Bringers of Joy." We thank our generous donors and "Bringers of Joy" who make these experiences possible.

Sharing the Joy

Alfonso Stapler arrived at the Eugene Mission five years ago and was chronically homeless due to divorce, addiction and incarceration.

Alfonso was one of the first guests to enroll in the R³ Program in early 2020 and volunteered in the Eugene Mission warehouse while actively working on his recovery from addiction to methamphetamine, cocaine and alcohol.

During his stay at the Eugene Mission, Alfonso was able to stabilize, reconnect with family and friends and find a church family that loves and supports him in his recovery. With the help of his navigation team, Alfonso was able to establish the documents needed to enroll in the Shangri-La Housing Program, which provides permanent supportive housing assistance to individuals who experience chronic homelessness. In early June 2022, a team of Mission staff, volunteers and friends gathered to share in the joy of helping Alfonso move to a healthy community. Way to go Alfonso! We knew you could do it!



“Getting to be a part of the group that moved Alfonso into his new home is one of my favorite moments while working for the Eugene Mission. Alfonso’s move-out was very special with an outpouring of community support and love. There were members of Alfonso’s church and Mission volunteers and staff who showed up to help with this incredible accomplishment. It was awe-inspiring to watch everyone and be a part of this life-changing moment for Alfonso. In fact, there were so many of us that it was hard to find anything to move! After the work was done, we came together as Alfonso’s chosen family and prayed together and blessed his new home and journey.”

— Dallas Reynolds, Warehouse Assistant Manager

Ways to Give

- + Financial support for the Eugene Mission as we work with our guests to address barriers and challenges.
- + Remember the Eugene Mission in your estate planning: FEIN#93-0563797.
- + Become a monthly sustaining supporter at: eugenemission.org/giving/
- + The Eugene Mission gratefully accepts donations of stock.

Wish List

- + Razors
- + Toothbrushes
- + Deodorant
- + Men’s underwear (all sizes)
- + Writing journals for women
- + Bottled water
- + Bacon
- + Coffee
- + Coffee creamer cups
- + Chocolate chips

Meet the Eugene Mission

Learn more about who we are and how we serve by joining us for a tour of the Mission’s programs and facilities.

For more information contact: miket@eugenemission.org

Prayer Requests

Please pray for our guests who are working diligently towards housing and employment. Please pray for our Women’s Life Change Program that will begin this month. May our guests find strength in their faith and sobriety. Amen.