



eugene mission

Rescue + Revitalize + Restore

The Truth About Addiction



“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free...”

[John 8:32]

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.

Sadly, far too many of us continue to underestimate the powerful grip of substance use disorder that:

- + Creates an intense craving for pleasure
- + Creates an insatiable craving for relief (from pain, stress, anxiety, withdrawal symptoms)
- + Confuses pleasure with need
- + Automates unwanted behavior
- + Impairs rational thinking processes; and
- + Produces unbearable shame, hopelessness and isolation.

The most troubling aspect of all, however, is that too many people – whether the addicted, the policy maker or the community member – have simply given up on recovery.

“So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

John 8:36

We want to shout from the roof tops that there is hope of lasting recovery!

At the Eugene Mission, we know the Truth. We have witnessed God’s miraculous transformation in the lives of those enrolled in our **Life Change Program**.

Our core curriculum, the Genesis Process, provides participants a Biblical and neurochemical understanding of what causes self-destruction. Combined with supportive Mission staff, a sober community, ample time to learn and practice recovery tools and often a new-found faith in Christ, we see beautiful, hope-filled lives restored for our Life Change graduates!

The Eugene Mission Life Change program provides one of the few local long-term residential options available for our neighbors seeking a way out of addiction, and in many cases, a way off the street. And, it is free of charge to participants, thanks to the kind generosity of Mission supporters.

We are so grateful for your support of the Life Change program which brings Truth, Hope and a future to those struggling with substance abuse.

In gratitude,

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director



A New Beginning

Robert Burns is up early this morning, having breakfast and packing a lunch before heading to work. Robert is two weeks into Phase 4 of the Life Change Program, is 10 months sober, has his driver's license for the first time in his life, a full-time job and is tracking to graduate and be off probation and parole by the end of this year.

"I've worked at gas stations and jobs to get by, but I ended up slipping back into drugs," recalls Robert, as his voice trails off. "I became homeless and ended up pitching a tent under the bridge. I remember thinking 'So this is how it happens.' I was aware of what was happening to me and I couldn't believe it, and I didn't know how to stop it."

Robert is affable, kind and hardworking. He is on Peer Council (peer leadership) in the Life Change Program and is active in Celebrate Recovery (CR), a faith-based 12-step recovery program with an active chapter that meets at City First Church on Tuesday nights. When Robert isn't at work or CR, he volunteers in the Eugene Mission kitchen, spends time meeting with mentors, is a leader at Life Change house meetings and is a joyful and helpful brother in the Mission's community.

"It is great to have a healthy place to live and to come home to," shares Robert. "I didn't have that growing up. I had a broken childhood. I watched my mother's boyfriends beat her up, and it was just expected that I would take care of myself. I was an angry kid."

Robert's childhood of domestic violence and neglect set him on a path to much the same. As a young adult, Robert was in and out of jail.

"I was never taught how to use resources to make good choices," explains Robert. "When I was making good choices, it was because of parole requirements. Good choices didn't make sense to me and I would get back into trouble again."

Ultimately, Robert went to prison for 20 months and was released into a 90-day program.

"I was in a housing program and completed the initial requirements, but left to my own devices, started drinking. It just went downhill from there," recalls Robert. "I crashed a car, got a DUI and ended up homeless and under the bridge. By then, I was completely broken."

Homelessness is not a situational crisis, as many think, but a chronic one with complex causes that include addiction, trauma, disconnection from family and community and deficits in vocational and life skills. The cumulative result is that many experiencing homelessness feel disempowered and incapable of making changes in their lives.

"I was at a point where I literally had nowhere to go," recalls Robert. "One night, another camper came at me wielding a bat and smashed it into my head. I was left reeling with vertigo and I could barely walk."

Robert was taken to the hospital but was turned back out due to the emerging pandemic.

"CAT scans showed I wasn't gravely injured," says Robert. "I was discharged into a wheelchair outside on the sidewalk. I called the only person I knew and he took me to the Mission."

At the Mission, Robert quarantined in the low-barrier Rescue Shelter and decided to enroll in the year-long Life Change Program.

"I realized there was no future for me 'out there,'" explains Robert. "It was 'win, lose or draw' and I knew I would end up back in prison if left to my own devices."

Robert met with Life Change staff and began putting together a plan to begin the year-long process of recovery and rebuilding.

"Coming here...if it wasn't for this place, literally, I mean literally, I don't know where I would be or what I would be doing," shares Robert. "Life Change to me has been God's hand in my life, in every aspect."

Robert is working full-time alongside his chosen recovery mentor and is planning to pursue a Commercial Driver's License. As he progresses in the Life Change Program, Robert is working on a savings plan for his future and will continue to reside at the Mission while building a nest egg. The Mission will continue to support Robert as he embarks on his new beginning with sobriety and a grounding faith in the God that loves him and created him for a life of meaning and purpose.



Move in Day!

Early in the morning of July 27th, five of our guests embarking on the Women's Life Change journey moved into the newly remodeled building on the Eugene Mission campus. As dresser drawers were opened and belongings neatly folded away, there were tears and hugs in abundance. For some of our guests, it has been a long time (if ever) that they had a warm and safe place to live and begin the healing journey of Life Change.

Women living on the street and struggling with substance use disorder have few options when seeking recovery. In 2019, Oregon had the highest rate of unsheltered individuals in the nation, and more than one-third were women. Unhoused women's experience with substances is particularly brutal given the more rapid onset of addiction and associated health problems, and the likelihood of being victimized while under the influence.

To address this significant need, the Eugene Mission has opened its Women's Life Change Program, even as we continue to complete the renovation of classrooms and common spaces in our new center.

"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," shares Eugene Mission Executive Director Sheryl Balthrop.

The Men's Life Change Program has proven to be highly effective for long-term recovery. The program model has been adapted to accommodate women, who often arrive in worse mental and physical health than men. Many women have been trapped in devastating predatory relationships and sex trafficking, have lost custody of children and experience grief, guilt, shame and trauma. The women we see have been deeply hurt, and consequently are less likely to trust others and need time to recover.

The Life Change Program consists of five phases that progress over 12-18 months. The model is based on developing and implementing individualized plans based on each participant's unique circumstances and barriers. The impact of the Life Change Program extends beyond the women whose lives will be transformed, as it breaks the pattern of trauma that would otherwise be handed down through succeeding generations.

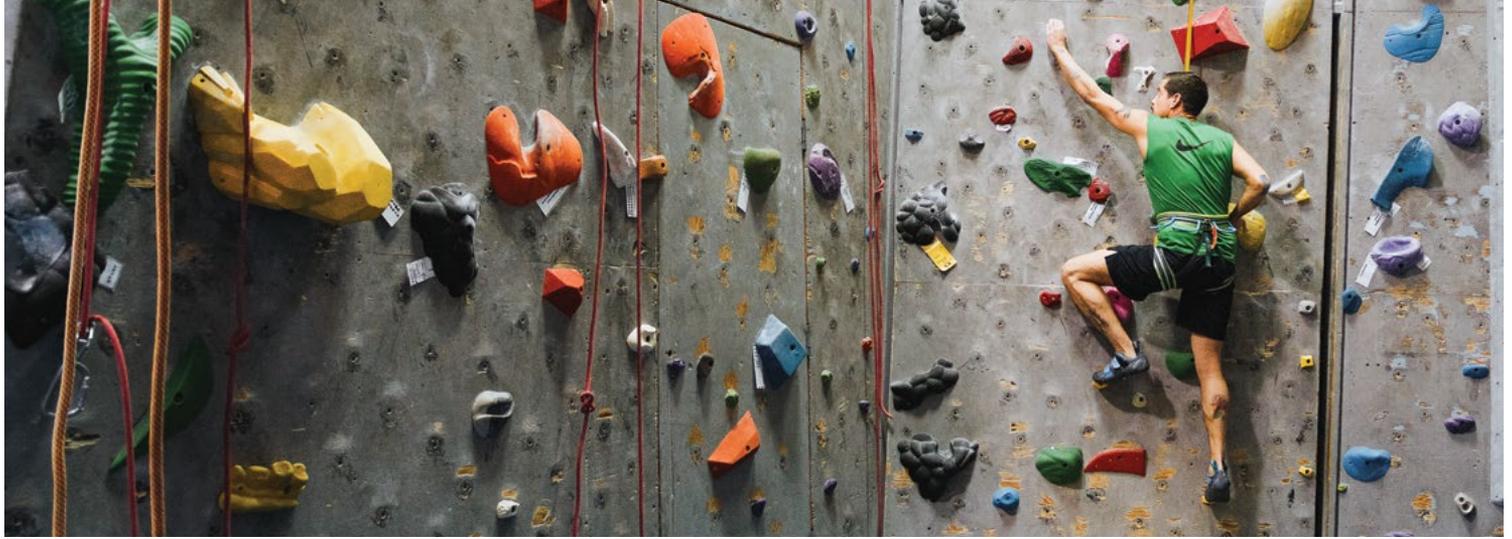
We are tremendously grateful to our community of supporters who have invested in this transformational program that is free of cost to our courageous women who are embarking on the path to recovery.

"I love watching the bond that these amazing women have created in just one short week in the house. This place doesn't feel like a program, it feels like a home. Just this morning I overheard one of the women say, 'I feel like I can just breathe here.' I wanted to cry because I know exactly how it feels to constantly be on guard, to constantly be in survival mode, to feel like there is so much weight on your chest that you can never take a deep breath and just be."

— Natalie Ebert, Women's Life Change Phase Leader

"One of the most amazing things I have experienced so far was getting to watch the women move into their beautiful new house. It was one of those moments in life where a dream became a reality. We walked across the parking lot with all of the women holding their bags and after all of the planning and everyone's hard work and dedication and I was in awe. I kept thinking 'Praise God. This is actually happening.' I had goosebumps."

— Kimber Walton, Women's Life Change Manager



2022 Honorary Life Change Graduate



Rickie Millican was presented with an Honorary Life Change Certificate at the 2022 Life Change graduation. Rickie participated in Life Change three years ago where he was able to maintain sobriety. Rickie shared the amazing things he has gained since then.

“I have a wonderful job at a company I love,” says Rickie. “I’ve gained a church family that truly

is my home. I get to have my son with me over summer and winter breaks. I’ve taken up rock climbing. God has blessed me so much.”

Rickie now mentors new members of Life Change. He shares his passion for rock climbing and takes pride in getting to help other men in recovery find out how to enjoy having fun sober.

“I love seeing the sense of accomplishment in their faces when they hit the top of the wall,” he shares.

When asked why it was important for him to give back to the Life Change program, Rickie says, “I’ve lived the life out in the muck of my own destruction and I know the hopelessness that I felt. I learned about my salvation while in the Life Change Program. I want to share that hope.”

Rickie is celebrating three years and counting and is proud to share that with new brothers in Life Change.

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.

Prayer Requests

Please pray for our guests as they transition into housing and independent sober living. We pray for our new Women’s Life Change Program and for our guests who are beginning their journey with prayer and financial support.

Wish List

- + Poligrip denture adhesive
- + Men’s underwear (new, all sizes)
- + Coffee creamer cups
- + Dry erase markers (for classes)
- + #10 cans of artichoke hearts, sliced olives
- + Jars of sundried tomatoes, three-bean salad

For Our Culinary Program

- + Small microwave ovens
- + Air fryers
- + Flour sifters
- + Pastry cutters
- + Kitchen Aid mixer