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the ROCKFORD RESCUE MISSION
rescuer

A New Beginning
for Jason & Christopher



God changes lives here at Rockford Rescue Mission. In this issue you'll meet two of our Men's Crisis guests, Jason and Christopher, who found the safety net they needed during the pandemic. Your prayers and partnership have helped them find hope again.

'Thank God for this place.'

"It seems like I fell out of the sky and landed in the safety net that is Rockford Rescue Mission.

I'm from Rockford, but moved to Florida in 2004 to be a truck driver. Then I lost my CDL during the recession and couldn't pay child support. I got licensed as a barber and hair stylist in Florida and was successful for a few years... until it ended with COVID.

I'd always been aware of the Mission, so coming back to Rockford was a safer option than being homeless in Florida. The Mission helped connect me with resources for housing, and now I'm on the waiting list for an apartment. I hope to get a grant and go back to school to start over for CDL truck driving.

This is a stressful time for everybody, and the Mission is a good, safe place to be. I know it's not a coincidence that any of us are staying here right now, because you know how God works. Those strings attaching us all together are a safety net. Thank God for this place."

– Rockford Rescue Mission guest Jason, age 47



'The Mission will definitely help you.'

"I quit my factory job in South Beloit last March – just a few days before COVID shut everything down. I soon regretted the decision. I got a few odd jobs here and there, but they weren't enough to sustain me. Last fall I couldn't keep up with the rent anymore. I ended up turning in my key to my landlord and coming to the Mission.

I've never been homeless before. The first week here I spent a lot of time cursing myself and everyone around me. Not outwardly, but inwardly. After that, though, I worked to better myself, and the staff helped me out a lot.

As much as I appreciate what the Mission is doing, I don't want to be here very long. I've been in contact with the City of Rockford, and they're helping me get an apartment. I am also working with a few people in the Works! Center to find a job. But since I don't have a car, I need to get housing settled first so I know if there is a way to get to work.

The Mission will definitely help you... but you have to be ready for that help and want to be helped. I'm grateful to the Mission."

– Rockford Rescue Mission guest Christopher, age 22



To see more stories of hope that you helped make possible, visit rockfordrescuemission.org/latest

Easter 2021

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

ANNUAL EASTER CAMPAIGN

Monthly averages of care and support:



12,990
meals

\$2.05 for a meal!



3,990 nights of
shelter



35 men & women
in our recovery
programs (on
average)



6,300 hours of
education &
advocacy

*Thank you for your
compassion & support!*



A Message from CEO SHERRY PITNEY

A GOD OF *second chances*



Easter is a special time at Rockford Rescue Mission. We celebrate Jesus's death and resurrection, which created a new beginning for all of humanity. At the same time, we celebrate new beginnings for many of the men, women and children who have been staying with us. Often those stories intersect in wonderful ways.

We often call attention to the lives and stories from our long-term Men's and Women's Life Recovery Programs. But in this issue, you'll read about Jason and Chris – two men who needed help unexpectedly during the pandemic. They received emergency food and shelter in our Crisis Centers, along with help finding housing and employment.

It's not likely that Jason or Chris will still be with us by the time you read this. The average person stays in our Men's or Women's

Crisis Centers less than a month. Stays tend to be short even during the pandemic. This is a tremendous success indicator. As Jason says, Rockford Rescue Mission is a safety net.

Our holistic approach to care – long- or short-term – often means we can help someone rebuild their life while connecting them with community resources like housing and job programs. It is such a joy to see this happen on a regular basis, and it's all thanks to dedicated friends like you.

Thank God for new beginnings... this Easter and all year long!

Partners in Hope,

Sherry Pitney

Sherry Pitney
CEO



Celebrate **NEW LIFE** this Easter

It's hard to have hope when you're hungry and homeless. This Easter, we'll warmly welcome our neighbors in need with immediate help like:

- **A hot meal for \$2.05**
- An overnight stay in our Crisis Center
- Clothing, hygiene items & Christ-centered care

YOU can give even more individuals the gift of meals and care this Easter. A nourishing meal, served with love, is often the first step to a new life in Christ!

✉ Share a gift now using the enclosed reply card and envelope.

✦ Share online anytime at **rockfordrescuemission.org**.

*Thank you for your support of our Rockford Rescue Mission guests.
Have a blessed Easter!*

Thank you

for making a difference during COVID-19

2020 was such a challenging year – but your support and compassion helped so many individuals find help here at Rockford Rescue Mission.

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR YOU!

Thanks to you, we continued to provide the care our community relies on: Food. Shelter. Clean clothing and hygiene items. And special assistance for those struggling through extremely tough times. We did so while following safety precautions to keep our guests, staff and volunteers protected and healthy – and to minimize the impact of COVID-19.

Thank you again, and may God bless your generous heart!



Meet Our

WOMEN'S CRISIS ADVOCATE

Alice Sorenson

Alice Sorenson works with our Women's Crisis guests to connect them with a broad network of support services. Soon after a woman checks in to Rockford Rescue Mission, Alice provides support information including a list of local businesses that partner with the Mission. They include Rockford Housing Authority (RHA), Rockford Township General Assistance and the city's single point of entry (SPOE) for homeless people.

"And then they have to make their phone calls and the work begins," Alice says. "They get on a list. If they have income or small children, they go to the top of the list. Then they are challenged to go out and look for apartments. Once a woman finds somebody that will work with RHA, she alerts them that she found a place. Then RHA goes out and inspects the apartment to make sure it is suitable."

The Mission staff serve as connectors and helpers throughout the process. Alice searches online for available apartments, and even keeps an eye open as she drives around town.

She's constantly relaying information to women at the Mission who are looking for housing.

"My job is primarily to be a facilitator," she says. "I am the one who helps and encourages them to go do things, and keeps them on track. We get them the resources, but we don't do it for them – which helps them learn to be responsible and independent."

Another vital resource on Alice's list is the Family Peace Center, which helps women and children who are victims of domestic abuse. The center helps women obtain orders of protection and find a safe place to live.

"At least once a week we get a situation like that," Alice says. "Sometimes they stay and sometimes they don't... many just need a safe place to stay for one night."

"One woman I just worked with said to me, 'I'm so grateful that you encouraged me and really helped me a lot.' She's now working full-time and just got her apartment keys."

It's one of many reasons to celebrate!

Restoring Confidence and Rebuilding Lives

Teresa Reeverts knows how having steady employment can make a world of difference. She sees it every day as the Program Support Services Director at Rockford Rescue Mission. That's why she wants you to know how you are transforming lives, even during the pandemic.

"The Mission is proud to partner with Workforce Connection to help people find new beginnings by connecting them with resources and funding for housing, education and career training.

During the pandemic, Workforce Connection has been interacting with people exclusively through Zoom. So we have been helping many of our Crisis guests connect through the computer lab in our Works! Center.

We also help people with resumes, filling out applications and preparing for interviews. Eligible people can even get their whole first year of college paid for, and we offer technical education



for careers such as CNC machining. Our Life Recovery residents use the Works! Center and Workforce Connection, too, once they're at a point in their journey where they're ready to look for work.

We're especially excited to partner with employers who commit to hiring our people if they successfully complete internships (such as FasFuel, Carriage Healthcare, Little Caesar's, Wendy's and AZ Plating). That

allows us to help people through the whole process: education, certification and hiring.

Even during COVID, there are a lot of opportunities out there that people can find with the right assistance. Though many individuals arrive at the Mission beaten down by life, we see them gain so much confidence here. They become whole new people with a totally fresh start!"