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the **ROCKFORD RESCUE MISSION**
rescuer



THROUGH IT ALL...
I thought my life's
story was already
written. I'm so glad
I was wrong.

Read Charles' story
on page 3.



**A MESSAGE FROM
CEO SHERRY PITNEY**

Dear Friends,

It's so timely that this issue of The Rescuer features our friend Charles. I love Charles' story. He has moved from a life of pain, addiction, anger and hopelessness to the certainty of knowing God loves him and has a plan for his life. That sums up what the Mission is about, in just one man's life.

The old Andraé Crouch song, "Through It All," came to mean a lot to Charles, and it means a lot to me. It's about trusting and depending on God, even in the hardest of circumstances. I think of the past year and a half of struggle, as the pandemic turned so many lives and plans upside down. In spite of everything, God carried us through – and in the process, brought us closer to His heart.

In the Old Testament book of Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah is overwhelmed with the evil and suffering. In the wake of the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem, everything about life is now uncertain for the people of Israel. It's a sad book... yet Jeremiah also finds great hope. "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed," he writes, "because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I hope in Him!'" (Lam. 3:22-24, NKJV)

And so do we.



Partners in Hope,

Sherry Pitney

Sherry Pitney
CEO

2021 THANKSGIVING CAMPAIGN

It's been another challenging year for so many of our neighbors...

39,403

Meals Needed this Thanksgiving Season

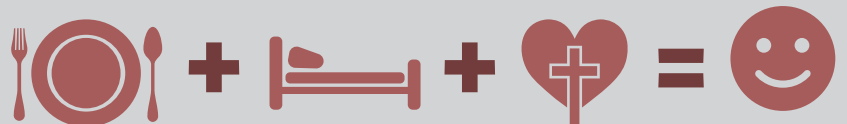
Many of our neighbors are still struggling... trying to get back on their feet... trying not to lose hope. Today, YOU can help them!

For just \$2.05, you can provide a nourishing meal for a hungry neighbor this Thanksgiving season. And that meal opens the door to so much more...

- Safe, welcoming shelter
- Warm clothing, coats & shoes
- Classes & job training to help them get back on their feet after another tough year
- A chance to experience God's love that changes lives



YOUR GIFT WILL MAKE AN IMPACT!



Please – help us be ready to serve thousands of meals to our homeless and hurting neighbors during the busy holiday season!

Send your 2021 Thanksgiving Campaign gift today.

✉ Give now using the enclosed reply card and envelope.

📄 Give online anytime at rockfordrescuemission.org.

**READ CHARLES' STORY
TO LEARN MORE!**





Through It All

*I've had many tears and sorrows,
I've had questions for tomorrow,
there's been times I didn't know
right from wrong.
But in every situation,
God gave me blessed consolation,
that my trials come to only make
me strong.*

*Through it all,
through it all,
I've learned to trust in Jesus,
I've learned to trust in God.
Through it all,
through it all,
I've learned to depend upon
His Word.*

Music and lyrics by Andraé Crouch
© 1971, renewed 1999 by
Manna Music, Inc.

I used to think everyone's book was already written. Mine was always going to be about a rough childhood, a prison term, broken relationships and decades of heavy drinking. One night I looked around the cheap hotel room where I was living and thought: *This is my life? Really?*

I wanted help, but only on my terms. When I came to Rockford Rescue Mission on the advice of a friend, I knew it was a faith-based program. But I didn't realize how faith-based it was. I was here for an addiction, but most of the classes were about faith. I thought, *When are we going to start talking about recovery?*

I said some harsh things to staff and was on my last chance before being asked to leave. One day, (staff member) Mike Hedrick said to me, "I don't think you believe in yourself enough that you can do this."

Believe in myself? Didn't he know that God was the one I had trouble believing in? I walked away from Him after something terrible happened to me in prison. That was my life's story.

About that time, a Christian song came into my head that I hadn't thought

about since I was a kid. The song was "Through It All." I thought, *Wow, this is weird.* And then every day, I was hearing stories from residents and staff. All of those conversations seemed to blend into one. I couldn't deny that I was here for a reason.

That's when I gave myself back to God – and took Mike's challenge. I finished the Life Recovery Program in February. I also work at Kids Around the World – something I got interested in last year when we helped them pack meals for kids in Ecuador.

I can't thank Rockford Rescue Mission enough for having patience with me, especially during my rebellion. They helped me walk back to God. Now I want to give people the same blessing and hope that the Mission gave me.

A Place of Peace

If you knew your time on earth was short, what would you do?

Robert Meyer first volunteered at the Mission as part of his community-service requirement. But he kept coming back after that requirement was satisfied, and even during a fight for his life.

Back in 2016, Robert was diagnosed with grade 3 brain cancer. That meant it was aggressive. His past five years have been filled with surgeries, radiation treatment, chemotherapy and regular MRIs. This year, even as Robert's activity was more limited, he continued to volunteer at the Mission, helping in the kitchen whenever he could.

"Being that I've had so much else taken away, this is where I get my joy from," he told us.



"It's awesome to watch God work right in front of you and also in your life at the same time."

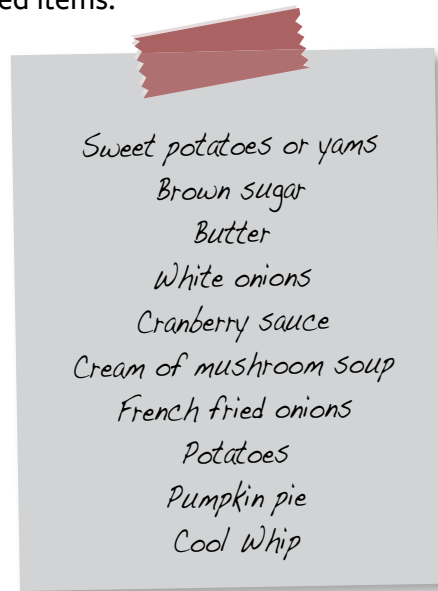
Robert is a recovering addict himself. Spending time around the Mission keeps him resolute.

"The men and the ladies here help keep me sober just as much as we're helping to keep them sober," he says. "It has been nice to be able to talk to them because I do know where they're coming from."

The location of Robert's brain tumor has meant every surgery carries the risk that he could lose his memory if not his life. Still, he is at peace. "I have truly come to the point where I can turn it over to God."

OUR THANKSGIVING NEEDS LIST

There's still so much to do to get ready for the Thanksgiving season! Please consider shopping or hosting a food drive for these needed items.



Please bring food donations to the Food Service Entrance at **715 West State Street (north side of building, off Mulberry St.)**, open from **8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Sunday.**

THANK YOU FOR HELPING!



Robert told us his story earlier this year. To watch the inspiring video, point your phone camera at the QR code above.

Interested in the joy of volunteering with the Mission? Visit rockfordrescuemission.org.

How You Can Give Bigger

Two men went fishing, carrying cooking supplies. The first fisherman quickly caught a fish. After many hours, the second one caught a huge fish but threw it back.

Bewildered, his friend asked, "Why did you do that?" The second fisherman replied, "I didn't bring a pan large enough to cook him!"

Often, people live like the second fisherman – so fixated on one outcome they miss another opportunity. Many people think cash gifts are the best way to support a charity when retirement assets are actually better because they allow you to:

1. Increase your impact. Donating retirement assets means you can give from pre-tax assets, plus your distribution doesn't count toward taxable income.
2. Leave a legacy. When you include a gift in your estate plan to an organization you're passionate about, you're impacting peoples' lives for years to come.

For information on planned giving opportunities, please call Ted Tomita at 815-965-5332, ext. 106. Thank you!

