

hope rising

rockford rescue mission



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rescue • recover • restore

# The Rescuer



## Churches RISING

A Legacy of Treasured Partnerships

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# Churches RISING



*“They’ve been that bridge”*

The Mission’s church partnerships help our grads find healthy community as they deepen their faith. Tim’s story is one shining example.



“My recovery from alcohol addiction and hopelessness began at Rockford Rescue Mission. It continues today as I’m living in my own place again and working at the Thrift Store. And, it continues with my church, Maywood Free Church. **With every step, I am so grateful for the people God has put in my life.**

When I was living at the Mission, they had a rotation where we could go to a different church every Sunday. One of the churches we visited was Maywood. My first time there, I met Pastor Gary Kniseley. **The second time, I met him again and he remembered my name.** That really hit something in me. It gave me a good feeling about the church.

And then it was just listening to Pastor Gary preach. He teaches right out of the Word and doesn’t bring politics into his sermons, which

I’ve encountered in the past. I’m not a big fan of that. What stood out most at Maywood, though, was people coming up to me and introducing themselves. I’m not one to do that. I’m sort of an introvert that way. I had met great people at the Mission, of course, but this was stepping out, meeting other people who are believers. They just made me want to pursue that church even more. Today my roommate, Dave, and I serve as greeters on Sunday mornings. We know how much that simple act can mean to someone.

I had gone to church in my younger years, but then there was this huge gap. I had forgotten that there are trustworthy, good-intentioned people who actually want to see me succeed. People who will be there to support me and accept me for me.

**It’s just another great thing about the Mission. The churches that we go to on rotation—they’ve really been that bridge for us.** People want to be involved in the Mission and talk with the residents and just help us get back to life. I’m grateful.”



**Restoration Celebration  
Open House Set for  
Tuesday, May 7**

## Sherry Pitney CEO



Our cover story for this issue warms my heart. Tim has walked a hard road and today finds himself in a good place with God and with the people in his life. The Mission has been a big part of that, of course, and so has his church.

From the very beginning, churches have been a significant part of Rockford Rescue Mission's ministry to homeless and hurting people in our community. **It was a pastor from the Bible Baptist Church in Harrison, Dean Lange, who first suggested to Ray Stewart that he come to Rockford and start a mission.**

Members of the Kilburn Avenue Church of the United



Join us Tuesday, May 7, to help celebrate the lives of some special people — and also to celebrate Rockford Rescue Mission's 60th anniversary.

- 6 to 7 p.m.: Open House, with tours of the Mission
- 7 p.m.: Restoration Celebration, honoring graduates of our Life Recovery Program

No reservations are needed and the public is invited for this special evening at the Mission, 715 W. State St. We'll also be streaming the Restoration Celebration on Facebook Live.

Brethren in Christ helped clear junk out of our original building before it opened. **And on the Mission's very first night—May 1, 1964—Dean Hoobler from that church preached our first chapel service.**



Chapel area at the first Mission location at 116 Kishwaukee St. 1965

One of Ray's first phone calls that spring was to First Baptist Church of North Park (now Machesney Park). "I'm not a preacher," he told my father-in-law, Rev. G.O. Pitney. "I just know that God wants this type of work here to help men like I've been. Would you come help?" G.O. and Nadine did, and they brought more help from their church, too. By the next year, G.O. was the Mission's director and five small Baptist churches in the Rockford area had put support for the Mission into their budgets.

Hundreds more churches would follow over the next six decades. Many of those churches have welcomed some of our guests and residents for Sunday services, too. One longtime partnering church, First Free Rockford, even hosts our Sunday morning worship service at the Mission.

All to say: **Rockford Rescue Mission would not have come into existence 60 years ago, and certainly would not exist today, without our partnerships with churches.** We are not a church, nor are we the arm of any one church or denomination. We represent the collective, local Body of Christ. That is a beautiful picture of how a whole community can follow Jesus' words in Matthew 25:

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*"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

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G.O. used to call the Mission "the church in overalls."

Partners in Hope,

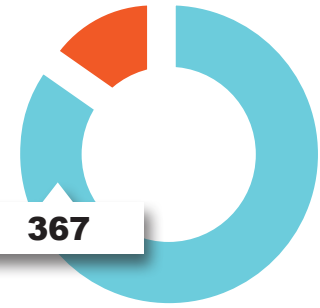
*Sherry Pitney*

# BEREAN BAPTIST CONGRATULATIONS! RFD. RESCUE MISSION 11 TH ANNIVERSARY



Bethel Baptist Church volunteering at the Mission 1993

Just in the past 30 years, where our records are most reliable, 367 churches have given financially to the Mission. Add to that number the churches who have only sent volunteers or donations of items in that time, and it's 432.



- CHURCHES WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT HISTORY
- CHURCHES THAT VOLUNTEER OR HAVE DONATED ITEMS

visited your church? If not, will you invite us?  
Please pray that your church (if they have not already done so) will put us in their church budget this fall - a small amount of 1% will be honestly appreciated. If every gospel preaching church would do this, our needs would be supplied.  
I want to personally thank every one who has stood by in this Rescue Mission Work. The Lord has manifested his approval and blessing.

Words of G.O. Pitney  
The Rescuer 1965

## MISSIONARY MINDED METHODISTS



These ladies from the United Methodist Church near Ashton, Ill. made the Rescue Mission the object of their mission day.

United Methodist Church volunteering at Christmas Banquet - The Rescuer 1975

## Pastor Greg Lynas Hope Church, Roscoe

It can be overwhelming to see how many people in the Rockford area are suffering under homelessness, abuse and addiction. We partner with RRM because it encourages our church to know that they serve as a constant in this city, working to meet these needs in a compassionate and Christlike manner.

## Pastor Dave Spooner Crosspoint Church

Our church family values mercy, love and the power of Christ for transformation. Partnering with Rockford Rescue Mission aligns with our commitment to serving those in need addressing abuse, homelessness and addiction. Together, we strive to make a positive impact, providing support, hope and a path toward a brighter future for individuals in our community.

## Pastor Luke Uran First Free Rockford

Our church family is honored to partner in so many ways with Rockford Rescue Mission. We love the Mission's emphasis on restoration and redemption in recovery. We love seeing those terms put into practice every day in the lives of so many. And we love how everything the Mission does is gospel-centered, serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in pointing to ultimate hope and healing.

## Pastor Steve Doyle Calvary Christian Church

Calvary Christian has supported Rockford Rescue Mission for over 30 years because their work encapsulates the Gospel of Christ. Everything they do for the homeless and downtrodden in the community - whether seeing to their physical, emotional or spiritual needs - is done in the name of Jesus. (Colossians 3:17)

## Pastor Mark Hunter Total Faith Community Church

From our earliest beginnings in 2008, Total Faith Community Church has enthusiastically supported the great restorative and evangelical work of the Rockford Rescue Mission. Rockford Rescue Mission is a part of Jesus' great Church, who He commissions to "Go ye therefore, and make disciples". Total Faith honors and is inspired by the great work of witness and recovery that the Mission is so devoted to. We enjoy a wonderful relationship with the Mission and all its wonderful staff and residents. We are so grateful that God has knitted our lives and Kingdom work together, for His glory. Total Faith, by God's grace and power will be a forever partner in love and ministry.

# SHARE JOY THIS EASTER

Tim's life changed forever at Rockford Rescue Mission. His story joins those of countless others as testimony to the way God transforms lives here. You can be part of these amazing stories. By donating or volunteering, you help provide Christ-centered care to meet the needs of homeless, hungry and hurting people in our community.

- ✉ Give now using the enclosed reply card and envelope.
- 🌟 Give online anytime at [rockfordrescuemission.org/give](http://rockfordrescuemission.org/give).

