

hope rising

rockford rescue mission



Holidays 2024 • Volume 60 • Issue 5

rescue • recover • restore

The Rescuer



Donors RISING

Anonymous, but not Unnoticed

The Brown Bag Blessing • Page 2

A Quiet Legacy of Giving • Page 3

**Follow us on Facebook
and Instagram!**



A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM SHERRY PITNEY

Did you know that generous people also tend to be the happiest people? The Bible says that (in Proverbs 22). Science agrees. People tend to be healthier, happier and live longer when they are generous. One study of older adults even showed that spending money on others can lower blood pressure as effectively as medication or exercise!

At Rockford Rescue Mission, we generously serve the poor, the homeless and the hopeless because Jesus did that, and instructed us to do the same. The reason we're able to do this is you. The Mission exists because of the donations of generous individuals, churches, organizations and businesses. If you give, thank you. If you give regularly, thank you even more. What may seem to you like a small, monthly amount means everything to us.

It isn't "just" giving—you're part of a beautiful partnership that makes all the difference in the lives of precious people.

This holiday issue of The Rescuer marks the end of our 60th anniversary year. Past issues have focused on Community, Churches, Volunteers, our Staff and now, our Donors. The cover photo is particularly meaningful to me. For one, it represents the wonderful story of the "Brown Bag Blessing" (see below), which kept the Mission alive at a critical time in its first year, 1964. But the photo also represents all those individuals and families who give without wanting any recognition. If that's you, please know that we do see you. We thank God for you and your faithfulness—and it is our joy to honor you in this small way.



Partners in Hope,

Sherry Pitney

Sherry Pitney, CEO

You Made Possible...



**57,541
NIGHTS OF SHELTER**



**153,295
MEALS SERVED**



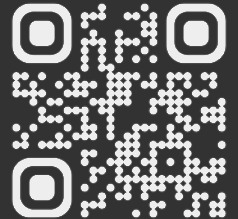
**161
JOBS SECURED**



**476
HOUSING OBTAINED**

(OCT. 1 2023 - SEPT. 30 2024)

When you give to the Mission, the lives that get changed might include yours. If you have questions about how you can impact our community by giving monetarily or gifts-in-kind, scan the QR code with your camera app or go to:
rockfordrescuemission.org/givehelp



The Brown Bag Blessing

Rockford Rescue Mission opened its doors May 1, 1964. By August of that year, many of the men who had come through the doors had stopped drinking. And, 36 had received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

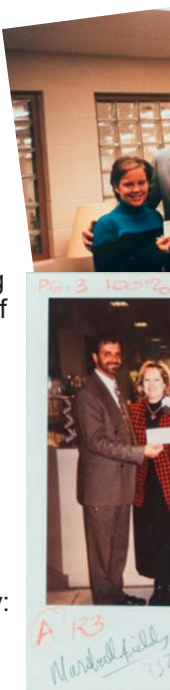
But the Mission was also \$1,300 in debt (that's more than \$12,000 in today's dollars) and behind on rent. It looked like it might have to close. Cofounder Ray Stewart wrote: "I'm sure the Lord called me here to meet a problem and I'm sure He never starts a job He couldn't finish."

One day in September, a woman came to the Mission carrying a brown paper bag. She handed it to Ray and said, "A friend of mine wants the Mission to have this."

Ray looked in the bag. It was stuffed with twenty-dollar bills. Fifty of them, for a total of \$1,000. It was enough for the Mission to catch up on rent payments and stay open.

We've never been exactly sure how that anonymous donor found out about the Mission's need. But what became known as the "Brown Bag Blessing" kept the Mission alive at its most desperate hour. As Mission pioneer Nadine Pitney used to say: "When God calls you to a place of responsibility, and you're faithful, He takes care of you."

Adapted from Rescuing the Raggedy Man, ©2004 by Perry Pitney and Jim Killam



A QUIET LEGACY OF GIVING

To celebrate our faithful donors, we are featuring this message from a family with a long history of supporting Rockford Rescue Mission.

“Rockford is our home. **When someone in our home is hurting, we hurt with them.** Rockford Rescue Mission has a 60-year track record of serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in our community, and His words in Matthew 25 resonate deeply with our family. When we serve the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick and the stranger, we are directly serving Him.

We choose to give financially to Rockford Rescue Mission because it reflects Christ's priority of the poor. We do this quietly and we really don't want our name mentioned publicly. For us, that's in keeping with Jesus' instructions about giving to the poor, not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing. And it is certainly not to denigrate anyone whose generosity is more publicly known. **Thank God for the way He uses people and organizations in that way as well, to help make giving contagious.** Our family just chooses to do it this way.

All of this helps define our family legacy of giving. **Whatever we have is from the Lord, so it simply makes sense to give back to Him first.** Each of our generations has tried to instill this in the next. And Rockford Rescue Mission has been a big part of that on-



going legacy. **There is such joy in giving to His work, and then seeing God use those gifts to help change people's lives.**

To us, Rockford Rescue Mission closely follows the example of what Christ would do if He were living in Rockford. He would be helping the poor, the addicted, the lonely, the hopeless. The people who need help most. To quietly know that our family's legacy is so intertwined with the Mission is a true joy.”

TO EVERY DONOR TO THE MISSION FROM 1964 TO TODAY: THANK YOU!



UPCOMING MISSION EVENTS



THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS BANQUETS



The season of giving is underway as we are already preparing to serve even more guests than normal during our yearly banquets for **Thanksgiving (Nov. 27)** and **Christmas (Dec. 24)**. We need volunteers and donated items for our meal service on these special days. Needed items include turkeys, hams, plates, forks and many more. To see how you can help with our banquets, visit rockfordrescuemission.org/give-help or rockfordrescuemission.org/volunteer.

TELETHON JAN. 23, 2025



Our 27th annual Telethon will again air on Channel 17 WTVO at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23. Our "Evening of Hope" will share inspiring stories about the heart of Rockford Rescue Mission: LOVE! This year, we will raise funds to help further our purpose to rescue, recover and restore the lives of our homeless, hungry, and hurting neighbors in Jesus' name. Tune in Jan. 23 on WTVO or on Facebook Live to support the Mission as God uses us all in the eternal work of transforming people's lives.



NOAH'S STORY A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT LIFE

“Being the youngest guy in the Men's Life Recovery Program has been great. Here's why: I'm surrounded by guys who tell me what they went through. They tell me what to do in recovery, and what not to do. They say they wish they would have understood all this at my age.

All of that really resonates with me. I don't want to be a lot older and going through this. My parents divorced when I was 6. Then when I was 13, my mother died. I went to live with my grandmother. But as I started high school, I also started dabbling with weed, alcohol, cigarettes and eventually harder drugs.

My grandmother died when I was 23, and that's when things really turned bad. For a while I was living out of my car, or sometimes at friends' houses. I knew I needed help. I even tried four different 30-day programs. But they just weren't enough. My dad knew someone who had gone through the Life Recovery Program at Rockford Rescue Mission. I decided to give it a try.

Before I came here, I didn't think of Jesus or God at all. I had never read the Bible. But now that I'm further along, I get why faith is such a huge part of recovery. It gives you a different perspective on things and how you look at life. Every person here, whether it be staff or a resident or my church, are showing me God in many ways. My level of gratitude is pretty high because I've never felt like this before. It's a beautiful thing.”



Give today
on our website



Noah and many others can participate in the Mission's Life Recovery Program at no cost, made possible by our faithful donors. If you would like to support the Mission and its life changing programs, please give through one of the options below for your year-end donations, or consider becoming a monthly Hope Giver.

- ✉ Give now using the enclosed reply card and envelope.
- 🌟 Give online anytime at rockfordrescuemission.org



hope givers



hope rising
rockford rescue mission