



The Rescuer



A Place to be a Kid
Take a look inside the Mission's
Child Care Center

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EXPANDED CHILD CARE HELPS THE MISSION SERVE HOMELESS FAMILIES

It's Thursday morning, and the Mission's Child Care Center is buzzing.

CeCe Webster gathers kids on a rug and reads from a children's Bible. She and children's Coordinator Carmen Jackson have been walking the kids through the book of Genesis. Today they're on the story of how God called Abraham. CeCe looks up from the book.

"Would you take all of your stuff and go to a place you know nothing about?"

For these kids, the question isn't hypothetical. They're staying in the Women's Crisis Center with their moms, who get to use those hours to work with Mission staff on finding housing, jobs ... and hope.

The kids move to a craft table for the morning's assignment: Draw a picture of Abraham and glue on cotton balls for his beard.

"Abraham Lincoln?" one of the kids asks.

"Not Lincoln," CeCe says, chuckling. "But do you know who Abraham Lincoln was?"

"He was one of the mayors of our country," says Daniel, who's 8. "Was he a president?" asks Josalyn, also 8.

"Yes! Good!" That question solved, the kids set to work on their drawings of Abraham not-Lincoln.



"I want to draw his wife, too," Josalyn says.

"How did you know he had a wife?" CeCe asks. "Have you heard this story before?"

CeCe tells the kids to write their names on their works of art. Alena, 10, writes hers in beautiful cursive, then turns to Daniel, her brother. "Pound it!" she says. He gives her the obligatory fist bump.

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**"THOSE WHO
GIVE TO THE
POOR WILL LACK
NOTHING."
PROVERBS 28:27**

SHARE HOPE ALL YEAR LONG

Become a Hope Giver and support moms and kids on their journey to healing. When YOU become a Hope Giver, you offer more than just financial support—you provide stability, comfort and a safe space for little ones and their mothers to grow and heal together.

Your monthly gift helps make our child care program possible, offering:

- A safe, loving environment for children to learn and play
- Faith-based activities that nurture young hearts
- Support for moms as they attend classes, advocacy and recovery programming
- Diapers, formula and essentials for babies and toddlers

Knowing their children are cared for by trusted, compassionate staff means moms can focus fully on the hard work of healing and rebuilding their lives.

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM Sherry Pitney

“One aspect of a rescue mission that people don’t always realize is that kids come to us homeless, too. If a mom arrives in our Crisis Center after having to sleep in her car, or couch surf from house to house, usually her children have also been living that experience.

This issue’s cover story brings you inside our Child Care Center, where we have recently expanded what we offer families. Now that we have our own in-house staff, the center can offer child care in both the mornings and afternoons, four days a week. **What a joy to see that large room alive with energetic kids and our wonderful staff.** Thanks to a grant from the Kjellstrom Family Foundation, we also are in the process of purchasing new furnishings for the center, including educational fixtures, toys and activities for early childhood development.

Some of the kids we care for will only be with us for a day or two while their moms sort out a difficult time in their lives. Most are here a little longer than that; the average stay in our Women’s Crisis Center is 45 days. During that time, our Child Care Center provides kids with a semblance of stability, structure and love. They learn together and play together—basically getting to be normal kids.

Meanwhile, as moms seek housing, or a job, or education, they can do that with peace of mind, knowing their kids are safe and well-cared for under the same roof. And as the moms receive spiritual help and direction—often coming to faith in Christ—the kids do, too—interacting with Bible-based stories and activities.

If you support Rockford Rescue Mission, know that the dollars you give are impacting families’ lives for eternity. Thank you.”



Partners in Hope,

Sherry Pitney

Sherry Pitney, CEO

Did you know?

149

MEN, WOMEN, &
CHILDREN WILL STAY
AT THE MISSION TONIGHT*

316

NUTRITIOUS MEALS
ARE SERVED EACH
DAY*

79

FULL-TIME & PARTTIME
JOBS

\$2.44

PROVIDES A HOT MEAL
TO OUR GUESTS &
RESIDENTS

\$12.40

PROVIDES A NIGHT OF
SAFE SHELTER AT THE
MISSION

*Numbers based on October-through-May average

**Give Today
on Our Website**



Your faithful, monthly support ensures children experience God’s love—and their moms can embrace lasting change.

Please consider becoming a monthly Hope Giver today and bring stability, joy and hope to families every single month.

✉ Give now using the enclosed reply card and envelope.

🖱 Give online anytime at rockfordrescuemission.org



hope givers

transforming lives through the power of giving

CHILDCARE STORY CONTINUED

Expanded Care

The six kids, ages 2 to 10, all arrived with their moms just before 8:30 a.m. That's a fairly average number of kids for a day. Normally during the academic year things tend to skew younger as the older kids attend school. Today is one of the last school days of the year, but for various family reasons the four older kids are here instead.

Child care was always part of the plan for Pitney Place, which opened in 2016 as the Mission's center for homeless women and children. It hosts both the Women's Crisis Center and the Women's Life Recovery Program. For the past several years, the Mission has partnered with the YMCA of Rock River Valley, which provided child care staff at the Mission for two hours a day. Now, with the Mission employing its own child care staff, the center can be open longer—Mondays through Thursdays 8:30 to 11:00, then again from noon to 2:00 (the kids join their moms for lunch).

"It relieves a lot of pressure on the moms," says Leona Tennin, Homeless Services Supervisor. "A lot of our moms who come in want a job, but the child care cost alone is enough to make them feel a little bit hopeless. So when they come in and Carmen is so welcoming with the children, it gives them great peace of mind to know at least that part of it is taken care of, so they don't have to be so stressed out about it."

A recent grant to the Mission from the Kjellstrom Family Foundation is providing a long list of new items for the room—activities and fixtures specifically created for kids' educational, sensory, emotional and social development.

Not knowing what each day's mix of kids will look like, Carmen prepares lessons, activities and crafts for ages 0 to 3, 3 to 5 and school age. The eventual plan is for her to also teach a parenting class for moms.

"Hopefully that will alleviate some stress for them," Leona says. "Sometimes they just don't know what to do, or they're overwhelmed."



A Safe Place

Carmen has worked in child care for more than 10 years, but her Mission role is new. She never knows exactly what a child has been going through when they arrive—the trauma of homelessness can be severe—but she wants them to feel safe and hopeful that their lives are moving in a good direction.

"My mindset is that when they come here, we give them all the love and the support and the nurturing that they need. I love to teach. Children are eager to learn, and they want to have fun while they're learning. I just love to help them with their development. We want to implement all the learning activities we can to keep them ready for school."

Her new role has already been a personal blessing, too. "Coming home at the end of the day, it's awesome," she says. "Because I don't feel stressed. This is a place where I can pray. A lot of daycares that I've worked at, you can't mention Jesus or God or anything of that sort. Here, I am able to call on the name of Jesus. It's awesome that I'm able to practice my faith here."

THE WAY HOME

A PODCAST BY
ROCKFORD RESCUE MISSION
NOW ON YOUTUBE,
SPOTIFY & APPLE



**PRECIOUS MEN, WOMEN
AND CHILDREN FIND HOPE
AT THE MISSION BECAUSE
OF COMPASSIONATE
PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
THANK YOU!**