

**MORE
THAN**
a shelter.

RAISING UP

THE GOOD NEWS OF HELPING UP MISSION



No More Excuses

“Before I came to Helping Up Mission (HUM), I spent years of my life making excuses,” says Leonard (pictured left), honestly. “I grew up in an addicted household and had my first drink when I was 8. I stole a beer from my dad’s party, and instead of getting mad, he made me a mixed drink and said, ‘Here.’ From then on, drinking was acceptable. No wonder I turned out the way I did.”

By 16, Leonard had tried OxyContin. At 17, he injected heroin. “Each time, it became the only thing I wanted. When I turned 20, I got locked up and sentenced to rehab. It was the first time I was sober. I stayed clean for two years—but there was a God-sized hole in my life. My grandmother, Tessie, passed away. She had a strong relationship with God. When she died, I was scared to seek Him on my own.”

Leonard relapsed. “I made more excuses. I blamed the program. I didn’t believe in God.”

In 2020, things fell apart again. “I was doing well, but when COVID hit, I got laid off. I had a 3-year-old son and

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no savings. I started working carpentry with some guys, and they introduced me to crystal meth. Just like that, meth was what I wanted. I went on a four-year run and lost everything. Still, I made excuses.”

“I had a God-sized hole in my heart—but God found me at HUM.”

Eventually, Leonard was ready. “I asked my son’s grandmother, who is in recovery, what the best program in the city was. She said Helping Up Mission—and she was one of the first graduates of HUM’s Center for Women & Children.”

“I came to HUM poor, with a dirty bag of clothes and since coming to HUM, I have stopped making excuses.”

Leonard joined the choir. He got his birth certificate, driver’s license, and Social Security card. He completed Johns Hopkins Cornerstone and had all his court cases dismissed. “When I came back from court, I realized I didn’t have to be here anymore. But today, I don’t make decisions based on impulse.”

“I had a God-sized hole in my heart—but God found me at HUM. May 24, 2024, was the last time I made excuses.”



Hope Restored. Lives Rebuilt.

Daniel’s Monthly Update

Dear HUM Family,

One of the most significant sources of referrals into Helping Up Mission’s (HUM) Spiritual Recovery Program comes from our alumni, family and friends. Leonard’s story this month shares how he was at the end of a four-year run and had lost everything—his son’s grandmother pointed him to the Helping Up Mission.

Often, I am asked—what’s your vision for HUM? Part of my response is that Helping Up Mission and more broadly Baltimore would be known as a place of recovery and transformation, a place for those who have lost hope. At HUM we share the source of our hope much like the psalmist did and seek to meet those who come in the door wherever they are on their journey.

When you stand with HUM, you invest in hope and transformation for those we serve.

Serving with you,

K. Daniel Stoltzfus, CEO
Helping Up Mission

**⁵ Blessed is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God,
⁶ who made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faithfulness forever,
⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.**

The Lord releases the prisoners.

Psalm 146:5-7

Focus on Recovery

Mike Rallo – Director of Spiritual Life

In the feature story, Leonard declared, “No more excuses.” That’s a line we talk about often here at the Mission. It would be easy for Leonard to blame people from his past. But we teach the power of having compassion for your story—without making excuses.

“I spent too much time looking for people to blame,” Leonard said. “All it did was create more anxiety. Now, by filling the void with God instead of excuses, I’ve never felt so free.”

That freedom led Leonard not only to sustained sobriety, but to a new vision: as a son of God, a



father to his son, and a dependable employee. When he came to us saying, “I need help with my son,” that was freedom in action.

“No more excuses” opens the door to restoration. With God, all things are possible.

National Volunteer Week Ice Cream Social

Volunteers at the Center for Women & Children were celebrated with an ice cream social in appreciation for their service. “It was moving to see our clients express their gratitude,” said Volunteer Coordinator Andi O’Connor. “And the volunteers truly appreciated the heartfelt gifts made by our ladies.” Thank you for helping nurture hope and healing.





Urgently Needed

Our Mission urgently needs donations of hygiene items and toiletries to support those in our care! Simple items like deodorant, foot powder, shampoo, conditioner and lotion can have a profound impact on someone’s dignity and well-being. Together, we can ensure that everyone has access to basic hygiene necessities. Please consider donating today and help us spread hope and care in our community!

To Donate Urgent Needs
[helpingupmission.org/
ways-to-give/donate-goods](https://helpingupmission.org/ways-to-give/donate-goods)



A Heart to Serve

If you’ve been on campus lately, you may have seen the warm smile of Mary Scavilla. “When I worked for the Department of Defense, we were encouraged to volunteer,” she says. “I wanted to go somewhere you could really connect with people.”



Mary teaches English to the men in our program and volunteers at the Women’s Center, distributing gently worn clothing. She believes that even small moments — a simple “hello” or a smile — can lead to a real connection.

“I love hearing about their blessings and belief in a higher power. It is wonderful to see many embrace our God,” says Mary “When I brought coworkers here, many said it was their first time volunteering — and they couldn’t believe they’d waited so long. It’s all about connection, and Helping Up Mission is the perfect place for that.”



A NEW SMILE

We first met William R in February, when he began prioritizing his health after a lifetime of unhealthy habits. Today, he smiles wide with a brand-new set of teeth—courtesy of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry—and a renewed sense of hope. His transformation is more than cosmetic—it’s a powerful symbol of progress, resilience and restored dignity. **We’re proud of you, William—keep smiling!**

 **Helping Up Mission**
Hope Restored. Lives Rebuilt.

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Our Mission **NEW!**

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