



RAISING UP

The good news at Helping Up Mission



Citygate Nevermore Conference *see page 2*

"I know that I am safe here [at HUM]. As soon as I walked in, I felt that I was protected, I was safe, and I was good."



Because of You, Marsha is Safe!

As a child Marsha was traumatized by her relationships. "As a child, we were very poor and my dad was an alcoholic," recalls Marsha. "My dad's best friend raped me. I was rejected by other little girls. I still have a fear of rejection in my life. But, I am working on it. Thanks to Helping Up Mission (HUM) I realized that I am worthy and that I am loved. I have never felt that before. Before HUM, every relationship that I had made me feel unworthy. I never felt like I was good enough and all of that trauma, and all of that pain I carried for decades."

"I started drinking at age six. I wanted to not feel anything. I wanted to not feel any of the nightmares, the rejections, and the trauma. I started drinking to numb myself from these things. Growing up, there was never any kind of religion in my life. When I came to HUM the Bible was presented to me and I was not sure that God loved me. I felt like no one loved me, so why would God ever love me? "

"One day Donna Mercer (Chaplain for the women's program) started telling me the story of Adam, Eve, and the serpent. I was attracted this story, and somebody told me that it was a 'popular one.' I responded 'really?' But the story began to show me the love of God. The love to live for an audience of one. Because of my trauma and being beaten all my life, I did not know this love. I woke up one morning, finished praying, and started putting lotion on my body. I was so gentle, and I began crying like a baby, because I felt that is what God's love is. He is very gentle, and He is very loving. That love came from Him (a Man) and I wanted to stay right there."

Before arriving at HUM, Marsha was homeless in Ocean City, Maryland. "One thing about being homeless is having nowhere to go, nothing to eat, no self-worth, and doing anything to get one more pill of dope or one more drink. I was living in an abandoned building with a man who 'prostituted' me out.

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NOW IT'S UP TO US

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NOW IT'S UP TO US Bob's Monthly Update

Dear friends,

I can't think of a time when I was more excited to share this update letter with you! After years of planning, and with the tireless support of volunteers and donors, we are counting down the days until the construction will be complete on the **new Center for Women & Children!**

We remain on track to finish the project by the end of the year, so that we can open our doors to clients in January 2022. The first women to be served in our beautiful new state-of-the-art Center will be those women who are currently clients in our smaller women's program at the Chase Street Center. I have been thinking about this move as if we are taking a plant that is root-bound in a small pot, and transplanting it into a much larger pot, and giving it the space and support it needs to grow and thrive!

Along with our powerful program of pastoral counseling, substance abuse and mental health counseling, the new Center for Women & Children will provide the comprehensive wrap-around services for women, like those we have been successfully offering to men for decades. This includes full education and workforce development services for women! We expect that very soon we will be celebrating women who earn their high school diplomas, or certifications in new vocational skills that will lead to career-track employment with benefits.

All of this is made possible through the support of our amazing community of donors like you. When you support our programs that serve women and mothers, you are helping to finally stop the generational cycle of poverty and homelessness caused by chemical addiction.

You just read Martha's heartrending story—one sadly all too familiar—where a child growing up with an alcoholic or addicted parent grows up to walk the same destructive path herself. But because of you, we can finally stop this in its tracks. We know we can't fix every problem in our community, but together with your support, we can fix this!

With gratitude,

Bob



Please visit: helpingupmission.org/hum-awareness

Citygate Nevermore Conference

Helping Up Mission (HUM) was honored to welcome guests from Citygate Network's Annual Conference and Exposition. During the week 100+ guests were greeted by HUM staff and clients as they toured our E. Baltimore St. Campus. It was truly an honor to share our stories of HOPE with mission representatives from all over the country.



I remember walking out of that building and feeling like my life did not even matter anymore. I would walk on the streets of Ocean City and go into missions to get toiletries. I remember stealing and robbing people. And I remember the hot, hot tar on my feet with no shoes on. I remember that feeling so much that when I am walking now with shoes on it is hard. Now I just picture myself walking with God with my sandals on. It does not matter how dirty my feet get, but I am walking with Him, I realize what a difference my life is and what a transformation of my heart.”

“I am finally where I want to be in my life. What I needed most from HUM was healing and to feel safe. I have never felt safe in my life. Can you imagine that? I know that I am safe here. As soon as I walked in, I felt that I was protected, I was safe, and I was good. And for women like

me, who has done so many horrible things while not loving myself and always looking over her shoulder. I just felt good.”

“Since coming to HUM, I wanted to learn the Word, the Gospel, the Good News. I started reading the stories and I was so infatuated with God. I was so in love with Him. He was like the husband that I never had, and he treated me with kindness. I wanted more of it. I wanted what Pamela Wilkerson (Director of the Center for Women & Children), Donna, and Nikki Jones (Program Coordinator – Chase St.) had. To have what they had, I had to do what they did to get it. I made a promise to God that I would not use. And that was huge. It has been an amazing journey and I want more. I do not want to leave! This is good healing stuff that you just do not get anywhere else. I have been in recovery houses. I have been to

treatment centers. None of that worked, this is where I want to be.”

Today Marsha is courageous. She is strong, she is protected, and she is loved. She is a child of God. “I feel that spirit in me when I am praying. I feel that spirit when the newcomer (to sobriety) comes into the rooms. I can tell a struggling woman what I went through and how it has changed my life. I am not the same woman. I am now safe, and I know if I can get to this point than any woman can.”

“I have a son. My parents raised him. When I graduated from the Woman’s Spiritual Recovery Program, my son said to me, “I have hope now.” Thank you for helping Marsha, her son, and all the women that we serve, have HOPE.

To read more of Marsha’s story, visit helpingupmission.org/stories/Marsha

Focus on Recovery by Donna Mercer – Chaplain, Center for Women & Children



In 2014, I came to the HUM as part of a service project with youth. The presence of the Holy Spirit was tangible, and I felt his pull to serve here! My time began as a volunteer Bible tutor with men who were unable to read with comprehension. Through a few stops and starts as both volunteer and eventually, staff, God has seen fit to call me as the Chaplain for the Women’s Spiritual Recovery Program. Just as Jesus loves us in specific ways, our team operates under the conviction that we must employ diverse strategies to portray that compelling love!

Experience shows that women respond to that love in openness when they experience some level of trust. This is built through conversations with mentors, staff and program residents. When vulnerability and wisdom are shared, trust is built. This is a new experience for most of the women we serve. Like God himself, we must be true to our word! Faithfulness builds safe, encouraging relationships which lead to healing.

Recently during a Bible study on forgiveness, a resident pushed back from the table and interrupted the leader. “You’re telling me that the things done to me by someone I trusted can be forgiven if that person merely turns to Jesus and asks?” A heavy pause fell over the room as the scandal of grace was experienced. The leader responded, “Yes.” The questioner seemingly checked out. After everyone filed out, the woman began to weep. She shared with us through tears. “EVERY day of my life, what was done to me has had an effect. But now, I see that if I can be forgiven through Christ....” This moment of supernatural breakthrough revealed God’s power, and love! What an honor to be called into that sacred moment.

Women thrive in recovery when they experience both love and respect. We often hear that this makes our program unique. The focus is not on past behaviors, but on discovering life in Christ. The word of God empowers women to recover as they experience Jesus’ unique love. We are excited to be invited into what God is doing to change the lives of women through the Spiritual Recovery Program!

Feed A Hungry Neighbor This Thanksgiving Season ...just \$2.05

Dear Friend,
You won't find a better deal in town!
Just \$2.05 is all it takes to provide a traditional Thanksgiving dinner at Helping Up Mission. And for a man or woman battling homelessness or addiction, that meal can be the first step toward a transformed life and a fresh start.
Thanksgiving will be here soon. With so many people continuing to struggle in these challenging times, your help is especially needed this Thanksgiving season to serve more than 42,000 meals.

Please continue your faithful partnership today by giving to help our most vulnerable neighbors:

- \$38.95 to feed and care for 10 people
- \$77.40 to feed and care for 38 people
- \$155.80 to feed and care for 76 people

Our community faces so many uncertainties right now. Vulnerable people are hurting, which puts the risk of homelessness and addiction even higher.

Sadly, 1 in 9 people in Greater Baltimore now battles addiction. They need real help and the hope found in Christ. And it all starts with a hot, nutritious meal.

Please don't let these folks be forgotten this Thanksgiving season. Take a moment to give now. At just \$2.05 per meal, imagine how many lives you can touch.

To give a hot and nutritious Thanksgiving season feast to a hungry and hurting neighbor simply visit:

www.helpingupmission.org/givemeals

Thank you ... and Happy Thanksgiving!



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NOW IT'S UP TO US

Women's First Spiritual Retreat



Over the years, hundreds of men from Helping Up Mission (HUM) have enjoyed the peaceful and natural settings of Camp Wabanna located on the Chesapeake Bay in Mayo, Maryland. Recently, our women were also provided the opportunity to enjoy this beautiful setting, free from distraction and daily routine.

Donna Mercer, Chaplain for our women's program, sees the importance of setting aside time apart from daily life to listen to God, gaining spiritual strength along the way. Donna and Pamela Wilkerson, Director of our new Center for Women & Children had prayed about the retreat for months. As they did, clear goals emerged: "that the time away would allow us to explore the heart of Christ, that we would grow in unity and love for each other, and finally, a stillness would open within which the spirit could work."

"Everyone was lounging on the grass by the Bay in the sunlight, feeling utterly relaxed, open to each other and the Holy Spirit," recalls Donna. Everyone is looking forward to the next retreat scheduled for this month and the benefits of more "time apart together" in God's presence as they prepare for the move into the new Center for Women & Children in January 2022.

Thank you to the Reval Foundation for providing the funding for these spiritual life-transforming retreats!



Our Mission

Helping Up Mission provides hope to people experiencing homelessness, poverty or addiction by meeting their physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs.

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