



RAISING UP

The good news at Helping Up Mission



Now Calling *see page 2*

"I was tired of not knowing what HUM was about."

Your Compassion Creates Miracles



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Allen, age 53, was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. "I grew up in East Baltimore, but at the age of 14, I was moved to one of the worst neighborhoods in West Baltimore and placed in foster care," recalls Allen. "I understood what the "system" was trying to do. The move seemed great at the time. There were porch front homes. Kids had mothers and fathers. It was a healthier family setting. But, outside of those homes, the neighborhood had a 'gang bang' type of mentality."

"From age 12 to 16, I was just smoking marijuana. But, when I moved to East Baltimore, I started seeing guys shooting up heroin. The same guys were like 'bosses' of the neighborhood and you did not mess with them. I hung out with a gang of guys, and we made a pact. As long as we did not buy drugs to use, using was okay, because we equated addiction with guys that spent money on drugs. So, we took what we needed. Eventually, some guys figured out what we were doing. They said, 'we know what you are doing. We think that you are a cool dude

but keep taking from us and there will be consequences.' I ended up forging friendships with a lot of them."

"I began to navigate through my drug usage, through my addiction. Using was like a circuit, just repeating the cycle. Man, I was on that cycle until I was 46 years old! I always had a way out. I went through a lot of abuse as a child. I was 'damaged goods.' But I began to doubt my life. I love change and I started to wonder what it would take for me to change the way I was living. What would it take for me to find a way out of this wheel? I clearly said I need to find a way out!"

"The first two times that I came to Helping Up Mission (HUM) was from Sheppard Pratt in 2014, and both times I got turned down at the door due to my medications. One day, I decided that I was tired of not knowing what HUM was about. What was HUM's secret? So, I entered the building and started looking around and ran into Kevin Healey, Director of Program Accountability. Kevin said, 'I know you

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NOW IT'S UP TO US

1029 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21202-4705
410.675.7500
410.675.HELP





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

Dear friends,

This month's feature story of Allen D. has got me thinking about gift-in-kind donations. Every day, giving and caring people will drop off a bag of gently used clothes or a box of fresh toiletries to our main HUM Lobby. What a blessing those are! I can't count the number of men and women who have told me they came through our doors with nothing and received clean clothes and essential toiletries, restoring their dignity. I'll walk through the dorms and see a man's perfectly organized locker, and his modest wardrobe of clean clothes kept neat as a pin. Just as when Allen D. received a Tupperware container of hygiene products from a volunteer at Christmas - and to him, that volunteer was an angel, and that container, a treasured gift.

I have shared with you in the past about our HUM tradition of weekly character qualities. Our character quality this week is Generosity, and we use a spiritual recovery-based definition of *Realizing that all I have belongs to God and using it for His purposes*. When you start to look for it, you can see generosity everywhere at HUM, taking so many forms—from the donor who makes a monthly sustaining gift, the volunteer who serves a meal and an encouraging word, and the tutor who will persevere at the algebra lesson so a man can pass his GED exam, the civic group which hosts a drive for warm coats or hygiene products, the upperclassmen who sits quietly beside someone having a tough moment. We often will get an envelope in the mail with two-dollar bills and a nickel inside with a note that says, "I don't have much, but I can give a meal to someone who is hungry."

When I sit and think about the generosity I witness every day; I see God's love coming to life in our community. The book of Proverbs, which is much beloved by me, reminds us that generosity is the path to blessing. *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)*

Thank you for your generosity to men and women at HUM. Thank you for donations of treasure, time, and talent— all are truly saving lives. And thank you also for donations of deodorant, foot powder, and shower shoes, because believe it or not, they make a big difference.

With gratitude,

Bob

PS. Gifts-in-kind can be dropped off at our main campus lobby at 1029 E. Baltimore Street, 7 days a week, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Thank you!

Now Calling

Last month we shared with you photos of our outreach campaign and our new 24-hour hotline. To date, we have received 800+ calls from men and women throughout our community experiencing homelessness and addiction. These phone calls can lead directly to a safe welcome into the Helping Up Mission community.

To add visibility to this growing movement, we are in the process of "wrapping" our vehicles so individuals will know that they are not alone, they are not invisible, and they have POTENTIAL! Keep your eyes out for one of our trucks and vans and join in our embrace of building a better Baltimore!

**If you or a loved one needs help,
call our 24-hour hotline number.
410-929-6999**



from somewhere!' I told him that I had not been allowed into the program so many times that he recognized me from not letting me in. Without delay Kevin asked if I was ready. I did not intend to enter the program that day. But I felt that it was meant for me to be there."

"I came in December 2014 and graduated Christmas Day 2015. I remember my first Christmas here. I was in Overnight Guest Services (OGS), and I had feelings about not having a home to go to for the holidays. But this volunteer asked if I would like a gift and she gave me Tupperware full of hygiene products. She was an angel and I still have it."

"In 2016, I got into a relationship, and even though I was not ready to leave due to unfinished business, I left HUM. I had a job, a relationship, and a nice house with a peaceful front porch. Everything was so quiet. I felt like I was on probation, and I relapsed. I remember thinking of what might happen, what I would have to go through, and I decided to seek my recovery.

I reentered HUM through the Johns Hopkins 9-1-1 program, but I did not surrender. I was trying to chase my old recovery."

"One day, Pastor Gary Byers saw me and said, 'I knew that you would be back. Allen, you needed to be sold on the real joy of recovery.' He nailed it! I surrendered, and today I love learning about myself. Pushing myself beyond what is dangerous or comfortable and being honest makes me free. Freedom today means not being prisoner to my old thinking, feelings, and emotions."

"HUM has given me determination, better mental health, and better mental awareness. I earned certifications in computer fundamentals, Microsoft Word, and Excel. I have addressed my child support. I have also received my certification to become a Peer Recovery Support Specialist."

"It has become obvious to me that there is a Higher Power. I have been in enough situations where it was not me, but Him who got me through it. When

I first came back to HUM, I worked in housekeeping, but I felt like I wanted to do something more. I felt Him say 'please be still. What I have for you will be for you.' Shortly after I was asked to work with the Treatment Coordinator (TC) team. I get to help men in the program navigate and communicate with their TC's. I had a lot of apprehension during my recovery, so I can help the guys coming in."

"I have four kids and my relationship with them is wonderful. I came from a broken home, and it is important for me to help my kids break the chain of not having their fathers in the family. We are going to get through this together. "

"Thanks to the donors for their compassion. The guys around here are living, walking miracles. You are changing the world. I never thought that I could lead a happy life. At my age, when you come into recovery, you are masked up and uncomfortable. At HUM you can experience freedom and real Spiritual Recovery. Thank you!

To read more of Allen's story, visit helpingupmission.org/stories/allen

Focus on Recovery – Donna Mercer – HUM Chaplain



Women in our Spiritual Recovery Program (WSRP) faced the news of our recent Sisters' Keepers retreat with varied reactions. Some were instantly excited, expecting a good time. Others were apprehensive, not knowing what to expect. Fear of new situations still clings to many seeking recovery, yet the hope that brought each woman through the doors of the Helping Up Mission Center for Women & Children prevailed! Expectations were exceeded on the grounds of Camp Wabanna.

An unstructured afternoon brought good conversations. Laughter was heard. Naps for some and basketball for others! There was kayaking and fishing. And some just sat surrounded by the beauty of creation. Slowing down can be a challenge for those in recovery, yet the experience proved fruitful.

Next, we moved into Sisters' Keepers circle groups. Women shared themselves while discussing topics such as triggers, setting boundaries, and developing coping skills in Recovery. Women were learning to trust one another.

Relationships were being formed and strengthened.

Our Spiritual Life groups were filled with prayer, praise, and God's truth. Sisters encouraged sisters. Eternal bonds were being formed in that place. Lives were being changed. Support was offered and experienced. More than one of the participants shared that she had believed in God her whole life, but she had never yet experienced Him in this way. There were tears of cleansing and healing. WSRP residents stepped up and prayed for one another with power.

The WSRP residents spent some time during our Morning Chapel after returning, sharing one-word reflections: "Intense." "Worship." "Hope." "Love." "Unity." "Support." "Release." "Surrender." "Power." "God." "Sisterhood."

Although the Women's Spiritual Recovery Program has doubled in size since our first retreat one year ago, there is more to come! Our expectations are high. The same Jesus who heard the cry of each woman seeking relief, is worthy of our highest expectations. Through the love of Christ Jesus, recovery continues to be experienced at our Center for Women & Children.

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think."
Ephesians 3:20

Send Kids to Camp Wabanna

Summer camp has never been more important... particularly for disadvantaged kids growing up in Greater Baltimore's toughest neighborhoods.

These girls and boys struggle daily to survive the violence, addiction, and hunger that surrounds them. Add to that the challenges brought on by the pandemic, and their plight is especially heartbreaking.

Among them are children of the men and women in our Spiritual Recovery Program. And, now more than ever, these kids need an escape from the harsh realities of life.

\$26 will help sponsor a child at camp

\$51 will sponsor a child for half a day at camp

\$102 will sponsor a child for 1 day at camp

\$306 will sponsor a child for 3 days at camp

Camp Wabanna is a one-week Christian camp where boys and girls can:

- Safely explore the great outdoors
- Play, make new friends, and build self-esteem
- Enjoy 3 nutritious meals a day (Something they cannot always count on at home)
- Learn about God's deep love for them

Please open your heart and sponsor a child for summer camp today. You will help change a young life forever!

Bob Gehman, CEO
Helping Up Mission

P.S. Right now, 70 boys and girls are hoping they will be able to attend camp. But they will not get there without your help. Please give today and be as generous as possible. Thank you!



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Sister's Keeper 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. On May 5, 20 of our women were also provided the opportunity to enjoy this beautiful setting, free from distraction and daily routine during the 2nd Annual Women's Retreat.

Given the chance to slow down from the daily life of Baltimore City and soak in nature can be a blessing that many of the women have never experienced before. "I cannot believe how beautiful this is, I have only ever been to the water – one time," said a smiling Angela, age 51. Many of the women had never been in the water, let alone a kayak. Splashing around, fishing, playing basketball, collecting shells, and developing a strong sense of community were the highlights of the trip.

The smiles were contagious, the memories were bountiful, and the meals were delicious. All in all, this was a wonderful trip walking together with Christ and learning the message of being "their sister's keeper."

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.

1029 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21202-4705 • 410.675.HELP