



RAISING UP

The good news at Helping Up Mission



First trail team, see page 2 for more

“God hears prayers, especially when we don’t realize we’re sending one up.”



Jibreel is – *Choosing to Live*

Jibreel, age 51, was born October 31, 1970. Raised in Jacksonville, Florida, by his mother and maternal grandmother, he recalls those early years with combined reverence and disdain. My parents divorced when I was about six years old and growing up in the “Deep South” was quite different than up in North Carolina. I was bullied a lot because of my accent and correct grammar, dress, and being an only child didn’t help. I didn’t fit in and so I began doing silly stuff, getting in trouble in classes just to ‘be liked.’” These misbehaviors eventually got Jibreel sent to alternative schools, and back to NC to live with his father, who promptly enrolled him in military boarding school. Fifteen years old and having been exposed to the criminal lifestyle, the impression it had left on Jibreel led to truancy and eventually, “a higher level of foolishness.”

“After graduation from high school, I got recruited by the Army. Having attended military school for two years I assumed the transition would be easy. I stopped runnin’ the streets, and ‘squared up,’ thanks to a stern and heartfelt pep talk with the Army Battalion Commander and my father.” However, still hanging with the same crowd led to trouble yet again. One night shortly after that visit

Jibreel was cited for having an open bottle of wine in his car. The police officer knew his dad, a prominent attorney in the city, and opted to not take him to jail but write a ticket. “On the day that I was to officially enlist, they asked if I had any court issues. In a rare moment of honesty, I told the recruiters about my little mishap. Their reply: “You blew your chance, that’s it for you.” I was devastated. My Pops was HEATED; his response being a ‘good cussin’ out, fifty dollars and a one-way ticket back to Jacksonville.

Returning to the place of his traumatic childhood, Jibreel again fell prey to the pressures of peers and uncertainty. It was the peak of the “Crack Era, 1989.” “Everyone I’d grown up with in poverty was thriving in the drug trade; money, jewelry, cars, status. And I went into the lifestyle head-first, wanting to see as much as I could and be seen by as many who would give me attention. I started selling drugs, a failed attempt to fit in and be accepted. Unbeknownst to all, I was addicted to cocaine; my dirty secret.” Eventually exposed, Jibreel endured extreme low-level respect from his circle of so-called friends. “I was the junky/flunky little brother. I hung around because I had no purpose.”

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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,

Many of you are familiar with one of our informal mottos here at HUM: *What more can we do?* I started asking that question when we initiated our Spiritual Recovery Program in 1994, and ever since then, we have been challenging ourselves and our community with that question.

Over the past few months, the answer to that question has been this: minister to hurting people out on the streets. We are calling this work our *Street Outreach* ministry. Three days a week, on a set schedule, our street outreach team has been visiting locations in our community where people in need of services are gathering- in places such as tent encampments.

The strategy to attract people to visit the outreach vehicles is to offer them food, water, hygiene kits and clean clothes. This allows us to engage them in a conversation with the goal of sharing information about the life saving help that is available at HUM. By visiting the same locations week after week, we can build trusting relationships with people over time, with the hope that eventually those living on the streets will accept a ride back to HUM for services or accept a referral to one of our partners for housing, detox or emergency healthcare. We call that a "warm handoff".

We recently brought a woman back to our Center for Women & Children who was living alone in a tent in an encampment in a very rough area. She had witnessed a homicide, numerous overdoses, and had herself been victimized. Even after nearly 30 years in this work, I still shudder to think of life on the streets for a woman alone. Today, she is a contributing member of our therapeutic community, getting the help she needs to break her chemical addiction, and making new connections to people who will support her as she addresses the trauma of her experiences.

The Proverbs teach us that we serve the Lord when we help those in need. Verse 19:17 tells us, "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed." Thank you, dear friends, for your generosity and joining with us to help our suffering neighbors. When I ask the question, *what more can we do?* I am very blessed to know that you are standing alongside me.

Sincerely,

Bob

* Due to an overabundance of kindness, we are not accepting women's and children's clothing through December 31st.

** Have you considered placing Helping Up Mission in your will?
Visit: <https://helpingupmission.org/legacy-gifts>

Men's Trail Team

From boulder scrambles and knee-deep mud piles to indescribably beautiful, million-dollar views, the men involved in Helping Up Mission's first trail team have spent the last 3 months facing fears of heights and vulnerability, while building trust. Many of these men have either never camped or have withdrawn from experiencing a sense of community for years. "These are sights and places I've dreamed of seeing for years, coupled with accomplishments I have never dreamed I could achieve, provided by the blessing of God and the donors," says trail team member Ryan!



Jibreel spent twenty-plus years incarcerated in both state and federal prisons; drug addiction being the catalyst of each crime committed and subsequent jail term. "It was during a seven-year sentence for bank robberies that I was introduced to 'the Recovery Process' and eventually Peer Coaching, through mentoring comrades who endured similar struggles." Several years and a few additional prison stints later, while in pre-release, he participated in a re-entry program called Project Empowerment. "I learned how to prepare a resume and cover letter and present myself as highly valuable, with marketable skills. I interned at a Behavioral Health clinic in DC. which provided opportunities to meet and assist clients struggling with mental illness and addictions, just like me." Jibreel thrived in the position, catching the attention of upper management who suggested he acquire his Peer Recovery Coach (PRC) certification.

Jibreel continued to struggle with his inner demons of addiction and depression, eventually destroying his marriage and relationships with his mother, who'd stood by and supported him throughout

thirty-plus years of substance abuse and incarcerations. "My parents, especially my mother, current spouse, my ex-wife, and significant companions. So many people put so much unconditional love and support into my cause and I reciprocated with lies, manipulation, abuse, and selfishness."

"My dear friend, who'd given me shelter after relapse and expulsion from a transitional house, urged me to talk with her cousin Chris, an esteemed Helping Up Mission (HUM) graduate. I made excuses for over a year, but after getting called out for using drugs in her home, I was soon to be homeless, with no other options! Broken and weak at this point, I still argued: 'Man I've done 20+ years living around dudes behind them walls and now I'm just supposed to go back to that?' God's reply, via Chris, was: 'Jib's, you've made it through maximum security penitentiaries, this'll be a cakewalk, those bids prepared you for this...'" Jibreel came to HUM the following day. "One day in (Director of Spiritual Life) Mike Rallo's class he posed a question: 'what's stopping you from working on yourself?' I'm too scared to put in the work, man..." I replied. I learned in that "light bulb" moment, that

making myself vulnerable was essential for my healing to ever begin."

"I have been blessed to be in the position to serve others. In addition to earning my PRC certification while here at HUM, I'm a part of the Emergency Department SBIRT Team at Greater Baltimore Medical Center in Towson, MD, an expert team offering resources and support to patients who are suffering or at-risk, as I once was."

"I have a better understanding of God and more profound respect for Him and plan to fulfill what's in store for me. My journey to learning and embracing the Recovery Process has been 20 plus years in the making. And HUM has been integral and essential in my process. Without the generosity of HUM, I have no idea where I would be. Yet, I'm grateful for where God led me-1029 E. Baltimore St."

"To the donors, come down here and see. Whether it is serving the less fortunate or purging your closet, you are giving to someone who will gratefully appreciate it."

To read more of Jibreel's story, visit helpingupmission.org/stories/jibreel

Focus on Recovery – Mike Rallo – Director of Spiritual Life



"Man, I've done 20 plus years living around dudes behind those walls," said this month's grad spotlight feature Jibreel.

Here at the Helping Up Mission (HUM), we use the movie *Shawshank Redemption* to talk about institutionalized thinking. Whether prison, drugs and alcohol or just a sick pattern of growing up in a broken world, most of us get stuck in a pattern. Jibreel was stuck.

"Yea, when Red (in the movie) says the walls are funny, first you hate em, then you get used to them, and eventually you depend on them. That was me."

So here we talk about breaking down the walls. Jibreel had to wrestle with a difficult question that basically forced him to deal with the walls. And the key was vulnerability.

That is a scary word to those who are used to being hurt when showing any weakness, but Jibreel learned that it was the key to him moving forward.

"I had to embrace the process of brokenness," he said.

And in that brokenness Jibreel began to feel peace. It is the paradox of the Kingdom principles in God's word, that says in our weakness He is made strong.

And now Jibreel, broken and restored, is in a position to help others in a way he never thought. Jibreel has embraced the mantra in Corinthians that says, "Comfort others in their affliction the way you have been comforted in yours." (2 Corinthians 1:4)

"I could only get the comfort if I broke through the walls of allowing myself to be broken and comforted...now I can do the same for others. God is so good."

Street Outreach Program

Friend, life on the streets of Baltimore is especially dangerous during the brutal summer heat... even deadly.

That is why Helping Up Mission's newly launched Street Outreach Program is so important, and why I hope you will support this critical effort with a lifesaving gift today.

We are traveling the city streets to reach hurting souls trying to survive the sweltering heat. These are men and women who struggle with homelessness and addiction. And they urgently need help.

With your support, our caring staff will meet with those living under bridges, in parks, and on sidewalks. They will build relationships with these folks, and offer them a ride back to Helping Up Mission where they can receive:

- ✓ Overnight shelter
- ✓ Nutritious meals
- ✓ Refreshing showers
- ✓ Clean clothes
- ✓ Opportunities for a brand-new life through HUM's long-term Spiritual Recovery Program

This lifesaving outreach is a powerful way to demonstrate the love of Christ for our most vulnerable neighbors. Help rescue someone in desperate need...

Please take a moment to give now at helpingupmission.org/outreach

Thank you!

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NOW IT'S UP TO US

Join Team HUM



Our team of volunteers – runners, walkers and those cheering us on are AMAZING! They are training and fundraising over the next two months to run (or walk) the streets of Baltimore City, declaring that men and women experiencing homelessness and addiction are NOT alone. Their community keeps pace with them as they fight the hardest battle of their lives – *one day at a time*, one mile at a time.

The 2022 Baltimore Running Festival offers a race for EVERYONE – the ever-popular 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, and Full Marathon. There is also a Fun Run for kids under 12! And for those unable to travel, you can even join team HUM virtually. Come one, come all!

To become a member of Team HUM today visit: helpingupmission.org/teamhum

P.S. 80 of you have stepped up to the plate and we're going to see you on race day, but we need to register another 100 Baltimore Running Festival participants before Labor Day! Join our team today by contacting Team HUM Captain Michael Cannon, at mcannon@helpingup.org / 410-675-7500, ext. 1147.



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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