Turning Compassion into Action

By C. Lee Clark, Rescue Mission CEO

A recent morning found me at the Grandin CoLab joining Hal Cone for his “Podcast for Good”. Hal has a great heart coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit, which led him to create this venue to share stories of people doing good work in our community. I was humbled to be invited to represent the Rescue Mission.

Hal started off by taking me back to my roots, the small town in Southwest Virginia where I grew up. We talked about my many jobs—among them—working on an assembly line at Bassett Furniture Company, and as a summer ranger mowing fields and cleaning cabins at Fairystone State Park. We then fast-forwarded to the Rescue Mission and the one thing right now that has me the most “fired up”.

The challenge was finding just one! Your Mission is working to ensure the best possible outcomes for our guests by participating in the region’s Homeless Management Information System, integrating case management in all programs, implementing job skills training, and partnering with other organizations to connect guests with opportunities and resources to jump start their transitions from crisis to safe housing and sustainable employment. There is much work to be done.

Then came the question I was hoping for: “So, how can people get involved?”

You’d think that would be a simple answer. When confronted with families in hardship and adversity, people are fundamentally compassionate. They want to help, particularly this time of year as the weather turns cold and our hearts turn toward family and holiday celebrations. The challenge is turning that compassion into effective action.

You see, money can be given to someone on the street, but would you be helping? There could be a sense of relief, even gratitude to be able to share a few dollars with someone in need. But giving a few dollars on the street encourages panhandling by those who aren’t really homeless. It can also enable someone to remain in a destructive lifestyle rather than taking steps to do the hard work required to move out of a life of crisis.

Effective compassionate action takes more than dollars. It takes time. Time to work through the systemic issues of poverty, homelessness, addiction, and illness. Fortunately, your Rescue Mission is here. This Mission is a local, homegrown Christian Crisis Intervention Center that deals with all these issues and more. Your volunteer hours and dollars invested here generate effective, compassionate change that transforms lives through God’s grace and your generosity.

That’s the answer I hope I clearly communicated.

This November, The Rescue Mission celebrates twelve years of running and walking with you as we “Move Our Feet So Others Can Eat”. The Drumstick DASH has become Roanoke’s largest street festival and the place where you are sure to see friends, family, and neighbors before the big feast. There is an overwhelming sense of gratitude and fun, knowing that our time and funds are going to a good cause which channels time and resources into compassionate action that produces lasting results. I hope to see you downtown Thanksgiving morning.

And if you're looking for other ways to turn your compassion into action, just check out our website at rescuemission.net. Under “Get Involved”, you’ll find volunteer opportunities, special requests and all the information you need to effectively help. If you know or meet someone in crisis, the section on Frequently Asked Questions and detailed information on Mission programs will guide you in how to best help. And if you don't find an answer here, just call us at 540-343-7227.

There is much work to be done. And you are just the right person to get involved. We need you.

May God bless you, together with all those staying at the Mission tonight. That’s the best result of all.
Passing the Torch

When the feet of 13,000 people hit the pavement at the start of the 12th annual Drumstick DASH on Thanksgiving morning, Race Director Uneita Mathews will be at her usual place atop the podium at the starting line...one last time.

“I feel like a mom sending her last child off to college,” she says, anticipating her retirement. “It’s been a privilege to watch it grow, knowing the people it helps and the people it has made smile through the years. It’s just near and dear to my heart.”

Grow, it has. “We were told by experts in the racing world we would be lucky to get 400 people out on a Thanksgiving morning,” Mathews grins. “We had 1,400 that first year, and it doubled every year for the next few years and kept growing into something much larger than we could’ve dreamed. I just feel like I’ve hopped on to what God is doing.”

Last year’s DASH raised $265,000 to support the Rescue Mission’s Food Services, setting a new fundraising record. For this dozenth DASH? Mathews exclaims “I want it to break all kinds of records and be the best one yet!”

Mathews will pass the torch to Mission Development Associate Amy McArthur, who has spent this year working alongside Mathews to ensure a smooth transition. “It has been the best possible scenario,” Mathews says, “and I feel confident that the DASH will be in good hands.”

“It’s humbling and a little nerve-wracking,” says McArthur. But Uneita has done such a great job of building it. She has thought of everything and that makes it easier to take the reins. I’m just thankful that she still plans to be around to volunteer!”

McArthur joined the Development team at the Mission in 2015. “Helping with DASH has been my favorite part of my job. It’s a fun, energetic, chaotic time of year, but it’s a huge team effort and I love that aspect of it.”

A lifelong resident of Salem, the DASH was already close to McArthur’s heart before she ever arrived at the Mission. “It has been a tradition for my own family, a favorite part of our Thanksgiving Day,” she says. “But once I started working it, I loved it even more. The energy downtown is just so exciting, and people love participating in something that helps other people.”

With the motto “Move your feet so others can eat,” the Drumstick DASH to date has raised over $2.1 Million. “Knowing I’ve had a part in raising that kind of money and raising awareness of the Rescue Mission has been very gratifying and very humbling,” says Mathews. “It has brought families together and become a beloved tradition. The Mission family has become a tradition for much of our community family and that warms my heart.”

Will you help us break more records to feed even more families this year? Register now at drumstickdash.net.

Adopt-A-Family
for Christmas and provide gifts for the children in shelter.
Sponsor spots fill quickly. Contact Kevin or Bernice today to be added to the list of potential sponsors!

Call 540-343-7227 or email: kevin.jarvis@rescuemission.net | bernice.flores@rescuemission.net
Feeling the Music, Living the Life

“Looking back, I see so much devastation. I did a lot of damage. I think I really had a lot of potential and could have done something with my life, but I threw it all out the window.”

At 56, Monty Cox graduated in October from the Rescue Mission’s Recovery program with a sense of regret for his past, but determination to not repeat his mistakes.

“I have two years clean time and it wouldn’t have happened without this place,” he says. “Opiate addiction robs you of your life, but now I have it back. Why would I ever want to fall back into that? I can actually FEEL feelings again. I can laugh and cry. And I love playing music again. I’m passionate about music but I didn’t even play music for years when I was using heroin.”

For a while Cox played regularly at the 3rd Street Coffeehouse, and even met his wife there. They married in 2003. “That was right after I had started smoking pot again,” he says. “I was a real pothead from age 12 through high school. I did a lot of cocaine in the ‘80s. When I picked pot up again, I tried to hide it from my wife, but I think she knew.”

When a co-worker turned him on to opiates in 2011, Cox says his life spun out of control. “At first there’s this euphoria and you feel great,” he explains. “Then it just takes hold and it becomes this endless searching for more. After a while you just lay in bed and nod. It’s no life at all. My son and I used to be really tight, but I just became useless.”

Finally, his wife forced him to seek help. “She gave me quite a few chances, but she finally kicked me out and gave me an ultimatum to clean up.”

Cox stayed with his brother for a while, and eventually came to the Rescue Mission in August of 2015. He finished his Recovery classes last Spring, and has joined Christ Our Redeemer Church where he participates in the worship band.

Cox has been employed since May in housekeeping for Carilion. “I can even keep a job now,” he smiles. “All I want to do is stay clean and live life again, one day at a time.”

Christmas Gifts 2017

Rescue Mission Shelter Bedtime Gift
Twin Size Sheet Set, Bath Towel & Washcloth

Child/Teen Shelter Guest Gift
Underwear, Socks, Pajamas in larger child and teen sizes

Adult Shelter Guest Gift (Man or Woman)
Gloves, Hat or Headband, 2 Pairs of Heavy Socks, Chapstick, Small Lotion or Baby Powder, $5 McDonald’s or Hardee’s gift card

Rescue Mission Shelter Toiletries Gift
Deodorant, Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Comb, Lotion, Shampoo, Disposable Razors, Chapstick

Program Participant Gift (Man or Woman)
2 Pairs of Heavy Socks, Gloves, Hat or Headband, $5 McDonald’s or Hardee’s gift card

Please return your unwrapped gift to the Rescue Mission by Friday, December 13. Donations are accepted everyday from 7:00 am - 9:00 pm in the Main Lobby: 402 4th St. SE, Roanoke, VA 24013 & online at rescuemission.net | (540) 343-7227

Thanksgiving Day

• 5K Race & Family Walk
• Register by November 13 to guarantee a DASH T-shirt
• USA Track & Field CERTIFIED Route
• Music to Enjoy along the way thru Historic Downtown Roanoke
• For more information contact Uneita Mathews at (540) 343-7227 or Uneita@rescuemission.net
Two Instructors and 10 students from Miller Motte Training College served 25 Mission guests and program participants with hair styling and cutting, and a blood pressure check.

Freedom First takes a holiday from banking, but not from serving. 30 volunteers served in Food Services and the Donation Center.
Thanks to two grants, a new walk-in cooler is up and running in the Pantry. Roanoke-Downtown Rotary and the District Rotary joined to provide $8,000 towards the purchase. Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church gave $25,000 to fund the cooler as well as the remainder of our recent kitchen improvements. “Although much of our food is donated,” said Chief Development Officer Tracy Altizer, “some must be purchased, especially during the winter months when fresh produce is not as plentiful. The additional cooler will allow us to drastically reduce our food purchase costs because it will double our capacity to store perishable foods for longer periods of time. We’re grateful to our friends at the Rotary Club and Raleigh Court Presbyterian for understanding this need and pitching in to help us provide nutritious food for people in need.”

Volunteer with Us!

2nd helpings Shop & Café

- **Shop**: Clothing and Merchandise Assistants to help customers find that special item
  - Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 4:00 pm
- **Café**: Help in the kitchen and dining area
  - Monday - Saturday, 9:00 - 12:00 noon, 11:00 - 2:00 pm or 1:00 - 4:00 pm

HELP NEEDED NOW

- **Distribution and Recycling Center (DRC)**
  - Process and tag donated items,
    - Monday - Wednesday & Saturday, 9:00 - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 5:00 pm;
    - Thursday, 9:30 - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 5:00 pm;
    - Friday, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm
  - (must be age 14 or older)

- **Retail Volunteers (460 Thrift Store)**
  - Help sort, process, merchandise & bag donations
    - Monday - Saturday, 9:00 - 12:00 noon or 1:00 - 4:00 pm

- **Kitchen Volunteers**
  - Breakfast from 5:30 am - 8:30 am daily
  - Morning Food Prep from 8:30 am - 11:30 am daily
  - Lunch on Monday - Saturday from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
  - Afternoon Food Prep from 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm daily
  - Dinner from 4:30 pm - 7:30 pm daily

- **Day Resource Center Monitors**
  - Men’s Shelter, Monday - Friday from 8:30 am - 11:30 am; 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm
  - Women’s Shelter, Monday - Thursday from 9:00 am - 1:30 pm

- **Family Group Leader**
  - 1 Hour per Week and a 3-4 Hours outing once a month

- **Bless My Sole Ministry**
  - Every 3rd Thursday of each month from 4:45 pm - 7:30pm
  - Great for Sunday School Class or small group!

- **Transport Drivers for the Mission**
  - Like to drive? Know the city! The Mission could use your services to transport guests and pick up donations

To Volunteer Please Contact our Volunteer Manager at 540-777-7651 or volunteer.info@rescuemission.net

Not sure how you can help or want to learn more about our services? Join us for a tour of the Rescue Mission any Monday at noon starting in the reception lobby at 402 4th Street SE.
North Cross School “Raiders” made a year long commitment of service to the Rescue Mission. The first group of 8 upper level students served at the Donations Center.

The Rescue Mission recently received donations from ladies of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a national public service organization. During the event, members from across the state presented the Rescue Mission with more than $2,000 worth of donations in the form of money, gift cards, and personal hygiene items. Thank you!

A camping and outdoor enthusiast, 17 year-old James Milam built a fire pit at Jubilee Acres for his Eagle Scout project. Boxley Corporation donated 3,000 lbs. of stone for the project, which includes benches, fire-starters, and a stand for stacking wood. Milam is president of his senior class at Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke and a member of Troop 17. His hope is that the fire pit will promote healing and fellowship for participants in the Mission’s Recovery program.

Gabriel and Michael Waterfield turned 8 on September 7 - they had a party and requested that their guests bring food donations for the Rescue Mission. Happy Birthday!

Shelter Numbers on the Rise

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<th>Sept. 2016</th>
<th>Sept. 2017</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average # Guests per night</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Children per night</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>176%</td>
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Meals and More

These numbers represent lives changed through God’s blessings and your generosity!

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<tr>
<th>September 2017</th>
<th>YTD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meals served</td>
<td>23,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter nights</td>
<td>8,916</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing items provided</td>
<td>3,409</td>
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<td>Professions of faith</td>
<td>466</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer hours</td>
<td>6,612</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class hours of instruction</td>
<td>989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinic patient visits</td>
<td>1,167</td>
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<td>Value of healthcare provided</td>
<td>$158,495</td>
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<td>Case management encounters</td>
<td>240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recycled Items (pounds)</td>
<td>55,569</td>
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<td>Manna households served</td>
<td>479</td>
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<td>Tour participants</td>
<td>43</td>
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Wish List

- **Food Ministry**: CREAMED SOUPS, Hams for Thanksgiving Feast, Sugar, Brown Sugar, Garlic, Pepper, Onion Powder, Mrs. Dash - Garlic Herb, Mrs. Dash - Onion Herb, Pot Holders, Beef & Chicken base, Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo.
- **Manna Mission Ministry**: Cases of Water, Canned Meat, Canned Vegetables, Canned Fruit, Cereal, Coffee
- **Shelter Ministry**: Baby Bottle Brushes, All types of Formula, Travel Size Toothpaste, Boxes of Tissues, Chap Stick, Bars of Soap, Men’s Razors, Men’s & Women’s Shaving Cream, Men’s & Women’s Deodorant, Reusable Water Bottles, Womens Underware (All Sizes), Sippy Cups for Toddlers
- **Clinic**: Tablet or capsule form Cough & Cold medicine, Cough drops

The Rescue Mission is an equal opportunity provider.