

Rescue Mission of Roanoke Inc.
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THE
**RESCUE
MISSION**
OF ROANOKE
SINCE 1948



DONATE ONLINE

Your December 2023 Newsletter!
Please give to the Rescue Mission this season!

In the glow
of Christmas,
give the gift of
love and light.



Demand for services is up and we need your help more than ever.
Look inside to see how you can make a difference.

Services are up. Your gift is needed more than ever.



**Shelter stays are up
37% from 2022 to 2023**

2022	2023
Aug: 5,105	Aug: 6,836
Sep: 5,279	Sep: 7,314
Oct: 5,831	Oct: 8,004



**Meals served are up
38% from 2022 to 2023**

2022	2023
Aug: 13,086	Aug: 17,715
Sep: 12,069	Sep: 18,742
Oct: 14,266	Oct: 17,939

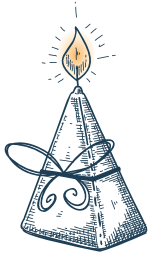


**Clinic visits are up
18% from 2022 to 2023**

2022	2023
Aug: 316	Aug: 397
Sep: 328	Sep: 329
Oct: 275	Oct: 361

The glow of your gift lights paths and inspires lives.

Merry Christmas from your Mission Family.



Open to read two powerful success stories and go to RescueMission.net for more.

A Christmas Greeting

By C. Lee Clark, Rescue Mission CEO

Dear friends,

Merry Christmas! In the darkest days of the year, Christmas is like a beautiful candle lit in a window welcoming us home. Your Rescue Mission is just like that...a welcoming beacon of light guiding a person toward home in the darkest days of their lives.

Inside this newsletter, you will find stories of real people, people just like you or me. Representing the more than 250 men, women and children who are currently finding safe shelter here each night, these stories show us that each person is someone's sister, child, dad or loved one. What would you do if your son or daughter were in line at the Mission tonight? Imagine volunteering serving dinner, and the young family in line selecting their meal belonged to you. Would you think less of them? Would you run to them with tears in your eyes, gather them up in your arms, like the watchful father did for his prodigal son?

I recently had a similar experience but not in line at the Mission. Wrapping up my day with a stop at the grocery store, I waited in line at the deli counter and smiled at the woman serving me. She and I know each other a bit. I told her it was good to see her and she shared how hard it has been being homeless. She is currently staying in the Women & Children's Center at the Rescue Mission and has just started a part time job that she hopes to build into full time. She has a voucher for subsidized housing but no housing is currently available. She is tired and weary but optimistic. I thanked her for helping me and she shared an idea on transportation that would aid her and others staying at the Mission. We are always thankful for feedback so we can best meet the needs of others.

You may be next in line at her counter. Just like me, you will see a bright smile, clean pressed uniform, and a desire to be of service. You will not see a person struggling with the loss of home, possessions or stability. On Sunday, I spoke at a Sunday School Class in a large suburban church on what the Rescue Mission is doing help people struggling with homelessness, addiction, and poverty. One of the questions gave me pause. From the back, a man raised his hand and asked, "What do you do about the fear people have when

interacting with someone who is unsheltered on the street?" I hesitated, then shared, "There is no difference. We are all alike." The similarities we share are remarkable. Yes, we have different life experiences and challenges, different support systems and family backgrounds. We need to be thoughtful when approaching someone in crisis but we don't need to be afraid. We are all children of God. Smiling and saying hello can be a great beacon of light in a troubled life.

That is why your Rescue Mission is here, helping hurting people in Jesus' Name, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Nights of Emergency Shelter and Meals Served are both up nearly 40% over the same period last year. The very real economic impact of these increased demands is straining resources already stretched too thin. Your gift this Christmas will make all the difference to ensure we are able to continue in this work. There is great blessing and joy in being able to serve. Thank you for making this work possible.

For more than 75 years, your Rescue Mission has been a light in the darkness. Imagine with me for a moment just how many people have been impacted over the last 75 years. Between 2,000 and 2,500 different people come through the doors of your Rescue Mission each year. That equates to approximately 150,000 men, women and children over a 75-year period. Now take it a step further and consider the families of these individuals. If each person represents another seven family, friends and loved ones, the ripple effect of this work has touched over 1 million people in 75 years.

Light has permeated the darkness. Matthew 5:16 tells us, ***In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*** Join us this Christmas with your gifts to shine light on someone's darkest day.

Merry Christmas with love,





Randy's Redemption

Randy's journey at the Mission began with a background that many wouldn't expect. An ordained Minister, he found his life falling apart, and his reliance on alcohol to numb his pain caused even more problems. In 2012, he found himself homeless, living in his car. Due to his addiction, he couldn't save money, so he remained in a cycle of homelessness and hopelessness. Randy stayed at the Mission from 2012 until 2014 when he moved out into an apartment. He stayed there until his addiction became such a barrier that he couldn't cope anymore. "Addiction caught up to me again" he said of the moments before he came back to the Mission "I was laying in my bed, eating peanut butter out of the jar, just a totally mess." He decided then that he had to enter the Rescue Mission recovery program. "I was such a mess that I missed the program introduction and orientation, but I called, and he let me come a day late, which he didn't have to do" he said of the program director at the time "That's God at work". So, at 55 years old, Randy came back to the Rescue Mission, eager to accept what God had ready for him.

When Randy came to the Way forward Program at the Mission, he weighed 155 pounds (He is about 6'3'), had cirrhosis of the liver, and Hepatitis C. Upon arrival he found all the support and love that he needed; medical care, community love, and a spiritual oasis that he had been waiting for. Of the changes he said, "I always knew the Lord was there, but God made some amazing things happen when I got to the Mission." A moment that sticks out to him is when he was reading his Bible and he asked God why he was here, Gods response gave him comfort, "Randy, there is nothing that you will ever do in your life that I don't know about and have control over, and there is a reason you're here." God guided Randy through our Recovery program with His loving hand, bringing Randy to graduation and changing the direction of his life forever. Eventually, these experiences opened doors for Randy to join the Rescue Mission staff to continue his sobriety by giving back to others.

Today, Randy is an inspiration at the Mission, serving meals to guests with a smile, living out the life that God has given him. Working here is not only a chance to spread Gods love, but also one of accountability for himself "Working here is the greatest accountability



you can have." He knows that the Randy that people see today, the sober, loving, outgoing Randy is the only one people know, and one that inspires others on a daily basis. Randy knows that God has sent him here to live as he is, to inspire others and encourage coming to Christ. His mission is much more than food service, it is human service, one of connecting with guests and loving them just as he was loved. "Only when you become what God made you to be will you do what you were created to do, and I am working hard every day to live into what God has put in front of me." He says of his role at the Mission.

Randy truly experienced each of our services in his years at the Mission. When asked what he saw as the most impactful, he quickly said "Men's Shelter". His stay in our shelter gave him perspective and time to work on himself. The compassion of those who worked in our emergency shelters had an impact on how he viewed others. When asked about what the support of our donors means he said "they have no idea the impact, it's hard to measure. The love, compassion, and transformation is only made possible with time and building of relationships."

Randy's journey is only just beginning, as is the same for many we serve. When you give to the Mission, you are directly helping guests like Randy find God, and through Him, a future to look forward to. Scan the QR code to see more about Randy and his story.



RANDY'S STORY



Janet's Journey

Janet's Mission story began with years of addiction. "My addiction just grew and grew, and started to affect everything in my life, I was using, selling, it was all consuming." When her kids were taken away, the life she thought couldn't get any worse became unbearable. "It was the hardest thing I've been through; it was like the life was sucked out of me" and from that point, her addiction got much worse" using made it so I didn't think about it, I just became numb and stayed numb." The cycle of addiction remained because she would see-saw between being high and thinking about her kids "for years I would just get high to numb the pain, then once it would wear off, I would start to think about my kids and I would have to use even more to forget, it was a horrible cycle." Janet knew she needed help, that her pain would only continue if she didn't do something about her addiction.

"My addiction completely controlled me" Janet said as we paused in our conversation, **"but the Rescue Mission completely saved me."** Janet came to the Rescue Mission after hearing about the services and supports that were available here. She didn't know quite what to expect so she decided to call first, hoping to talk to someone in person, "I called other recovery programs and I would only get answering machines, but when I called the Mission, Stephen [the Way Forward Program Director] answered the phone, after hearing the love and compassion in his voice, I knew it was the place." She packed her things and got a ride to the Mission, beginning a new journey of hope, health, and healing at the Rescue Mission.

When her cab pulled up, she knew immediately "this place was going to change me." She was welcomed into our Way Forward Recovery Program with open arms by a team not only expecting her to come that day, but hoping for her arrival." Stephen and the staff made me feel at home, which was exactly what I needed." Janet jumped into all the classes and services we have to offer. Seeing a psychiatrist was so important because it helped her find out not "what's wrong with me?", but "what happened to me?". These questions helped her explore why she did what she did, and untangle some of the tougher parts of her addiction. She also found that living recovery alongside others who have shared



similar experiences to hers incredibly helpful. When asked if there was anything else that stood out about our programs here at the Mission, she smiled and said, "my teeth". While at the Mission Janet was able to have comprehensive dental work done, giving her a new smile that she is proud to show off. After her graduation from the Way Forward Program, she reconnected with her mother and family in Florida. Seeing family whom she had been estranged from for years was a positive step in her journey but she continued to feel the pull of the connections and support she found at the Mission. Janet came back to the Mission, this time to give back to others with similar life experiences to her own.

Today, Janet is a Shelter Supervisor at our Women and Children's Center (WCC). Her daily role includes doing much of what she received when she first came here. "I am here to guide, serve, and listen" she said of her most important daily task, "It is not for the faint of heart, and you need to have patience with those you serve, but I love what I do." She wants supporters of the Rescue Mission to know the impact of their gift, "I'm a mother, and by helping me, they helped a mother find herself, her family, and total recovery." Just as Janet's story continues at the Mission, so is the need for your support. You can help guests just like Janet by giving today. To see more about Janet and her story scan the QR code.



JANET'S STORY

In Memory & Honor of..

For Memory and Honor Gifts received
October 15 through November 15

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