



**DENVER  
RESCUE  
MISSION**

# FACT SHEET:

## History

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Brad Meuli, President/CEO

**Denver Rescue Mission is the oldest, full-service Christian charity in the Rocky Mountain region. Thriving today as a non-denominational organization, no one is denied services because of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.**

### FROM RESCUE HOME FOR WOMEN TO SUNSHINE RESCUE MISSION

The roots of Denver Rescue Mission are found in a rescue home for women, started by Rev. Joshua Gravett, pastor of Galilee Baptist Church. In 1892, the shelter opened near 31st and Lawrence in the home of two women from Gravett's congregation. The Rescue Home soon merged with the Florence Crittendon Mission and Home for Women in late 1892. With a shelter available for women, Gravett and his church began plans for a men's shelter, which they opened as a faith mission under the name Living Waters Mission at 1822 Larimer Street.

Approximately 20 years later, Jim Goodheart, a former Living Waters Mission guest, became director of the Mission and changed the name to Sunshine Rescue Mission. Under his leadership, the Mission expanded to include three buildings and two lots located at 1820 to 1824 Larimer Street. At the same time, a dormitory for transients, called Sunshine House, was opened at 1640 Market Street. By 1922, the Mission's annual budget was approximately \$35,000 with more than 3,000 overnight accommodations provided each month.

Because of his success, the Board of Directors sold the Mission to Goodheart for one dollar in 1924. Three years later, Goodheart was hospitalized for a breakdown, and in 1930, the Mission was closed and sold to pay debts.

### DENVER RESCUE MISSION RE-BIRTH

Soon after the closing of Sunshine Rescue Mission, Rev. Gravett and a dedicated group of volunteers rented space and reopened the Mission at 1120 Eighteenth Street. They named this new outreach Denver Rescue Mission.

In 1940, the Mission purchased a one-story building for \$6,000 at 1818 Larimer Street. Nearly 20 years later, under the leadership of Rev. Truman Thompson, a new building was built behind the original one. The 7,500 square-foot facility included two stories complete with kitchen, dining room, garage, and dormitory. The total cost of the new building was \$33,000. One year later, the Mission opened its first medical and dental clinics.

The Urban Renewal Administration paid the Mission \$76,000 for its Larimer Street facility in the summer of 1970. Before the facility was torn down, the Mission purchased its current downtown facility, the Lawrence Street Shelter, at the corner of Park Avenue and Lawrence Street for \$120,000.

From 1967 to 1985, Rev. Leroy Bradrick guided Denver Rescue Mission. Then in 1987, Rev. Del Maxfield became Executive Director and initiated the next phase of growth.

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## **HARVEST FARM**

In 1988, the Mission acquired Mercy Farm in Wellington, Colorado and renamed it Harvest Farm. This 100-acre working farm grows food crops for the needy, provides long-term rehabilitation for 72 men in the New Life Program and serves as a rural outreach.

## **LIFESKILLS, EDUCATION & CAREER**

The Mission started its first computer-based Literacy and Education Center in 1989. This award-winning program provided men and women with the opportunity to improve their academic skills and practical life skills. In 2007, the LEC was renamed Lifeskills, Education and Career modules, which are now available at all our program facilities: The Crossing, Champa House, Harvest Farm, and Fort Collins Rescue Mission.

## **ADMINISTRATION, PROGRAM SUPPORT, AND MINISTRY OUTREACH CENTER**

In December 1991, Cowles Media donated a building located at 3501 East 46th Avenue to Denver Rescue Mission. This 37,000-square-foot building became the Ministry Outreach Center, housed administrative offices and served as the central warehouse for food, clothing and furniture.

In January 1998, Pros with A Purpose became a family outreach ministry at the Mission. It was founded by former Bronco, Mike Horan, and his wife, Kim, and ministered exclusively to homeless working families. In January 2000, it was renamed Family Rescue Ministry, and is currently part of the Mission's Family Services Programs.

On January 1, 2001, Brad Meuli became President and Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.) of the Mission.

## **THE CROSSING**

On May 2, 2005, the Mission purchased a former hotel on Smith Road and named it The Crossing. This 94,000-square-foot building significantly increased the Mission's ability to serve families and individuals.

In September 2005, New Life Program participants were moved from the downtown shelter to The Crossing, and the program for men in Denver grew to 130. In October 2006, The Crossing officially opened. After extensive renovation, this facility is now home to the New Life Program for men in Denver, the STAR Transitional Program for families in need and the New Life Post-Graduate program. It also serves as temporary living quarters for interns and visitors, and offers respite beds for homeless men and women just released from the hospital. In addition, The Crossing offers a safe place for children to learn, play and grow at The Denver Broncos Youth Center and the outdoor playground. Program participants are taught life skills, and case management is provided to families and individuals looking forward to a life of self-sufficiency.

## **INCREASING OVERNIGHT SHELTER CAPACITY**

In September 2005, renovations at the Lawrence Street Shelter were completed. Remodeling the shelter and moving the New Life Program to The Crossing has allowed the Mission to increase its emergency shelter capacity at Lawrence Street to 316 people each night. The renovation included more showers and bathrooms to improve service to our overnight guests. We continue to offer three hot meals a day as well as client and medical services at the Lawrence Street Shelter.

In March of 2017, Denver Rescue Mission's Board of Directors voted to approve a plan to renovate the Ministry Outreach Center, a warehouse facility in northeast Park Hill, to create Holly Center. Construction began in May of 2017 and the Holly Center was opened in November of 2017.

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## **FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS:**

In November 2005, the Family Services was developed to incorporate our three family and transitional programs:

1. **STAR Transitional Program:** Provides affordable transitional program for up to 90 homeless families. In addition to living at The Crossing, each family is matched with a case manager to guide them toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency.
2. **Family Rescue Ministry (FRM):** Provides assistance for permanent housing and mentoring for homeless working families and disabled families. Partners families with mentor teams who provide relational, spiritual, material, and social support to help them rebuild their lives.
3. **Family Refugee Services (FRS):** Provides housing assistance and other services for refugee families. In addition, families are paired with mentor teams who provide support for refugee families in their transition to a new life in the United States.

## **FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION:**

In November 2012, Denver Rescue Mission acquired Open Door Mission in Fort Collins, just nine miles from Harvest Farm, and renamed it Fort Collins Rescue Mission (FCRM). FCRM now provides beds for up to 80 homeless men and women each night.

## **RELOCATING THE MINISTRY OUTREACH CENTER**

Around the same time, an expansion project for I-70 purchased the Administration and Ministry Outreach Center at East 46th Street. The Mission began to look for a new location for the Ministry Outreach Center and Administrative Offices. A warehouse on Holly Street was purchased in December 2012, providing 15,000 more square feet than the previous warehouse, and the Mission purchased Pilgrim's Rest Church in October 2012 to serve as a new site for the Administrative offices. The Administration & Education building is located directly across the street from The Crossing and provides a campus-style environment for the Mission.

## **THE LAWRENCE STREET COMMUNITY CENTER**

In June 2014, the Mission acquired the property adjacent to the Lawrence Street Shelter for the purpose of creating a Community Center. The goal of the Lawrence Street Community Center is to provide a drug- and alcohol-free place for people experiencing homelessness in our community. Demolition of the existing structure on the property occurred in August 2014, and construction began in January 2015.

On November 23, 2015 the center opened to the public providing a safe place during the day. The facility has courtyard serving as a staging/queuing area for men waiting to access Mission services. Showers and bathrooms offer the homeless a dignified place to wash up, and water fountains are available for access to safe drinking water. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served each day to people in need of meals. The Community Center also provides ADA access that the Lawrence Street Shelter could not accommodate.

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