

CHANGING LIVES

128 YEARS OF SERVICE



ONE MOTHER'S JOURNEY
OF EMPOWERMENT

TABITHA, ARISE.

**DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION**



THE RISKS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

COMMITTED TO OUR CLIENTS DURING COVID-19

Dear Friends,

I want to first thank God for His guidance and sovereignty during the COVID-19 pandemic. The past couple of months have been a unique and challenging season that we will never forget. At Denver Rescue Mission, it has been an opportunity to show the love of Jesus in the face of a world emergency.

For us at the Mission, it has been "all hands on deck." We have needed to pivot our duties and focus on core functions to keep our guests, participants, volunteers, and staff safe. I have been inspired and blessed to see our frontline staff handle this crisis with such courage and faith. I have always thought it took great courage to come and work at the Mission, but for all of us trusting God during this time, courage and teamwork have taken on a whole new meaning.

While schools and most businesses shut down, we have continued to serve meals every day and provide shelter to guests and program participants every night. We are thankful to each and every individual who has volunteered to serve a meal during this time. You are the reason we have been able to keep our doors open during the midst of this crisis.

In this edition of *Changing Lives*, you will read an update on the Mission's response to COVID-19. You will also read about how the Mission walks alongside program participants, like Tabitha, to work through the trauma they have experienced in order to live the life that God intended for them.

Thank you for your support during this challenging time when the men, women and children we serve have been especially vulnerable. We ask that you take a moment to pray with us:

- We pray for those under our care at Denver Rescue Mission.
- We pray for the safety of our staff, program participants, guests experiencing homelessness, donors, and volunteers.
- We pray special protection for those on the front lines in our shelters and the Lawrence Street Community Center.
- We pray for the strength and perseverance to overcome in these difficult times.

I find comfort and hope knowing that God has been, and still is, in control.

God bless,



Brad Meuli
President/CEO



PROTECTING OUR VULNERABLE NEIGHBORS DURING COVID-19

Written on April 3, 2020

The best way to fight the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home in isolation, but this is impossible for the people we serve. In the midst of the global pandemic, Denver Rescue Mission has been committed to serving the most vulnerable people in our community in the following ways:

- We pivoted our focus to core services, including meals, shelter and long-term programs. Some programs and services are temporarily paused to meet more immediate needs.
- We hired about 35 temporary employees to fill crucial roles, and many of our staff members shifted tasks and priorities to keep our programs and services running efficiently.
- Social distancing is challenging in shelters, so our staff has taken extra cleaning and sterilization measures in all facilities using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Our staff is encouraging continual handwashing and handing out gloves and masks to guests.
- We have been working closely with city officials and other service providers to implement efficient ways to serve and protect our guests.

Thank you for your prayers and support during this trying time. We find rest knowing that God is in control. For updates on ways the Mission is responding to COVID-19, visit:

DenverRescueMission.org/COVID-19

In the midst of pain, fear and defeat, God has called her to arise.

TABITHA, ARISE.



YOUNG TABITHA

Tabitha, a mother of three and Aurora native, grew up feeling unwanted by her mother and misused by her father—tainted by a childhood filled with adversity. “The only things I remember is trauma,” she said. “There was nothing positive.” As a young girl, she yearned for her mother, who struggled with an all-consuming addiction to alcohol. “I remember being five or six and crying for my mom,” Tabitha said. “I remember always wondering where my mom was.”

When her mother moved to another state, Tabitha went to live with her father and experienced sexual abuse from him and his friends. She remembers living in a house that was constantly trashed and her father using drugs and being violent toward her. The agonizing trauma she experienced led to suicidal thoughts, causing her parents to send her to state hospitals and behavioral healthcare facilities. She was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and attention deficit disorder. “I always wanted to just end my life,” she said.

Her only positive memory is the day her neighbor led her to Jesus when she was 12. “We were just two kids sitting on the street praying,” she said. “And I just always believed in Him.”

As she entered her teenage years, she turned to drugs and alcohol to cope with the pain of her past—habits that spiraled into an opioid addiction that lasted 16 years.

At 21, Tabitha had her first daughter, Julie. She had two more children in the years to follow, Kayla and Kaden. Because her unstable lifestyle left her incapable of taking care of them, she lost custody during various seasons of their lives. She spent about a year living on the streets in a constant state of anxiety and depression.

"I was drinking, I was taking pills and I had given up on life," she said.

A PIVOTAL BREAKTHROUGH

On Mother's Day of 2017, Tabitha experienced a spiritual encounter with God in her trailer in Aurora as He spoke to her vividly in a state of desperation. "He already knows your entire life, all the drugs you've done," Tabitha said. **"You don't have to get clean and go to God. You go to God as you are."**

She started pursuing sobriety for the first time out of a deep desire to acquire permanent custody of her children, but she did not have stable housing and had a deadline of December 15, 2019 to secure a long-term housing plan. Tabitha's prayers were answered on December 11, 2019 when she joined Denver Rescue Mission's STAR Transitional Program and moved to The Crossing with Julie, 16, Kayla, 13, and Kaden, seven. "I don't know where we would have gone," she said. "I feel like this place solidifies that God is real."

Jaquella Brennan, Tabitha's case manager, has taught her to use healthy coping mechanisms in order to maintain sobriety and address the **trauma** she's experienced. She is also in counseling, which is a requirement of the program.

Trauma-informed care involves understanding the effects of trauma and helping survivors rebuild control and empowerment. To learn more about how we take a trauma-informed approach when serving individuals, visit [DenverRescueMission.org/Blog](https://denverrescuemission.org/blog).

"She's really excited about her sobriety and works really hard to maintain it," Jaquella said. "The goal is for her to have the coping skills to work through [situations] independently."

A NEW SEASON OF MOTHERHOOD

For the first time in her life, Tabitha has a solid support system to help her navigate the complexities of parenthood and distinguish the individual needs of her children. She's learning how to be a mother when she never had her own around to learn from—to be strong for her kids when there was never anyone to be strong for her. "The only thing I've prayed for is to be a mom," she said, "and the only way that I know how to be a mom is through God."

Julie, Kayla and Kaden have started attending the after-school youth program at The Crossing on a weekly basis, which has created opportunities for Mission staff to step in and help. "I have so much

support here," Tabitha said. "The kids program has been phenomenal. My kids cannot be in a better place. They need stability."

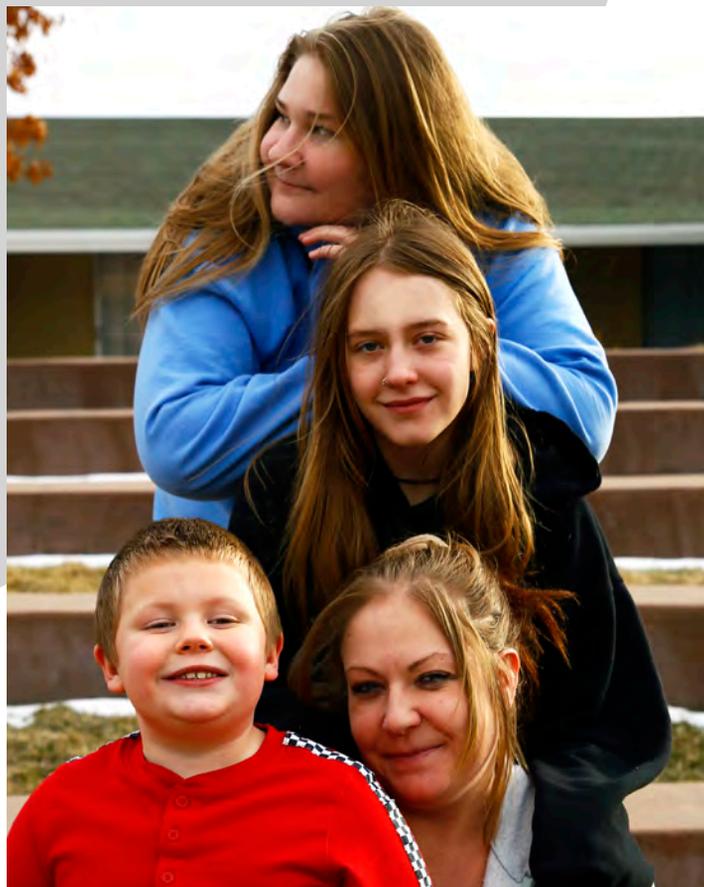
She's being proactive about her children's mental health. "Tabitha is really amazing at being present with them," Jaquella said. "Everyone's in therapy, because she understands they've been exposed to a lot."

Tabitha is working on restoring her relationship with her parents. "God's working on the bigger pieces of me: humility, kindness and forgiveness," she said. "He gave me a responsibility when He saved me in that trailer to break the cycles, not just in my life, but in the lives of my mom, my family and these three kids."

There is a special, biblical significance to the name Tabitha.

Acts chapter nine shares about a woman named Tabitha from Joppa, a disciple of Jesus with motherly, nurturing qualities, who passed away from an illness. The disciples called for Peter to come see her. He knelt down, prayed, and said, "Tabitha, Arise," and she was restored to life. The miracle became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

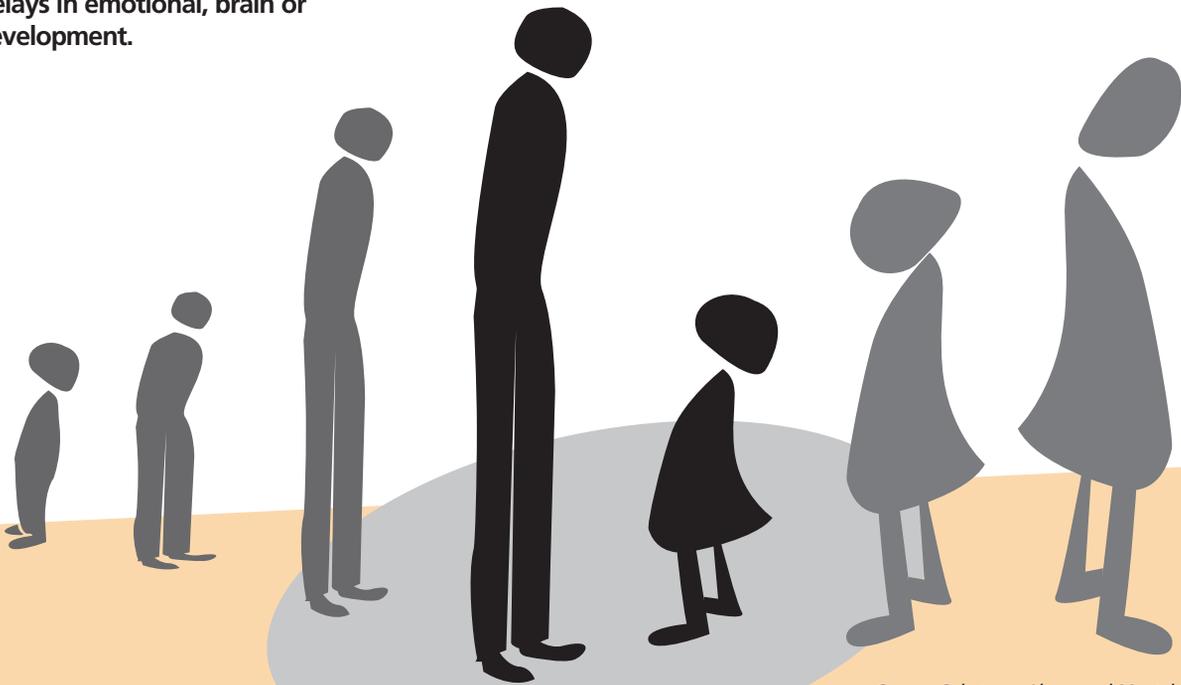
In a trailer in Aurora—in her most broken state—God called Tabitha into a new life. He has called her to pursue motherhood. He has called her to share her testimony to empower others. He has called her to arise. ■



TABITHA IS OVERCOMING A LIFE OF TRAUMA SO SHE CAN BETTER SUPPORT HER CHILDREN. YOUR DONATIONS ARE ALLOWING THE MISSION TO HELP TABITHA AND OTHER FAMILIES HEAL. GIVE TODAY AT [DENVERRESCUEMISSION.ORG/CHANGINGLIVES](https://denverrescuemission.org/changinglives).

THE RISKS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Childhood trauma is one of the biggest indicators of future barriers and deficits. Children who are exposed to five or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), such as abuse, neglect or family dysfunction, in their first three years have a **76%** chance of having delays in emotional, brain or language development.



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.samhsa.gov>

INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA ARE:

15 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO ATTEMPT SUICIDE

4 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP AN ADDICTION TO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION

3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SERIOUS JOB PROBLEMS

Will you share about the partnership between the Mission and KS 107.5 and why you felt inspired to get involved?

At KS 107.5, our heart is all about the community, and we wanted to partner with an organization that gives mothers a second chance. Each year, we team up with the Mission to share stories of mothers who have been uplifted by the STAR Transitional Program. When I started at KS about a year and a half ago and my boss told me about this partnership, I was emotional. I wanted give it a bigger voice and get the wonderful work of the Mission out there. Working with the Mission has made us at KS feel a lot fuller and has allowed our hearts to be bigger. We love you guys. It's such a big deal for us.



What sparks your passion to support mothers and families at the Mission?

I'm a single mom, and I know what it's like to lose everything. I've been in the music and radio industry since 2002. I had it all and then moved to North Carolina and lost it all. My children watched my cars get repossessed, the lights turn off and food not be there. I thank God for good friends and for the people around me. It was the hardest thing to feel like that and have my kids watch me. I thought, if God can help me get through this—if I'm ever able to get back on my feet—I'm going to do whatever it takes to help other moms. I want them to know that they still have so much life left. Just because we go through stuff, doesn't mean it's going to be the end of the road.

How did your experience volunteering at The Crossing last year on Mother's Day impact you?

Going in, I was dealing with all these emotions because I've been at a similar place before in my life. Once we walked in, the staff was amazing and showed us exactly what to do. Seeing the smiles on all the children's faces was just incredible. In every person who came up to receive a meal, I saw myself, I saw my mother, I saw my kids. It made me remember how far I've come, how far these people are going to go, and how much of an impact they're going to make on others. It was a very empowering event.

Why do you think the Mission's work is important?

When I moved to Denver, I was really upset to see the high rate of homelessness. Sometimes people just lose themselves, but the Mission helps them remember who they are and where they want to be. They're helping people have sight again and have that fire again.

Is there anything else that you'd like to share about the Mission?

After I worked with the Mission last year, a mom called me to say she listens to me on the radio every day and that she is living in her car with her three children. We were both in tears, and I told her about the Mission. She said that she got in touch with you, and the next time I heard from her, she was doing great. The fact that she had a place where she could go—that's huge. The Mission is giving life back to moms who feel like they've lost it all.

Toshamakia Acevedo is a survivor of domestic violence, bullying and molestation, and she uses her personal story to help empower others and be a voice for women and teens. She has been on air for more than a decade. You can catch her on KS 107.5 Mondays through Fridays from 3 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

People are invited inside, off the street where their immediate needs are met and critical relationships are built with Mission staff.



REHABILITATION

Men living with an addiction are equipped with work readiness skills, receive help to overcome destructive habits, find permanent housing, and begin a new life.



TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS

Families and individuals in need receive case management, develop life skills and save for permanent housing.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

People struggling in our community receive assistance with food, clothing, furniture, household items and holiday meals.

LOCATIONS

Lawrence Street Community Center: Meals, restrooms, showers, laundry, clean drinking water, and access to Mission staff for encouragement and guidance	
Lawrence Street Shelter: Overnight shelter for men and chapel	
Holly Center: Overnight shelter for men assigned weekly and lockers for storage	
The Crossing: Transitional program for families and rehabilitation program for men	
Harvest Farm: Rural rehabilitation program near Fort Collins	
Fort Collins Rescue Mission: Meals, shelter and programs toward achieving self-sufficiency	
Ministry Outreach Center: Central warehouse facility including food, clothing and furniture distribution	
Administration & Education: Entry point for Mission transitional programs and home to the Mission's administrative and development staff	
48th Street Center: Overnight shelter for men, operated in partnership with the City of Denver	



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