

SEPTEMBER 2020

CHANGING LIVES

128 YEARS OF SERVICE

*"He knows the way that I
take; when he has tested me,
I will come forth as gold."*

– Job 23:10

A *Blessing* RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION

5 THINGS WE OFFER GUESTS BEYOND MEALS, SHOWERS AND SHELTER

SUPPORT THE MISSION THROUGH AMAZON SMILE

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends,

The past few months have been some of the most trying, difficult and challenging times for Denver Rescue Mission of the 21 years I have been blessed to serve here. We have had to react quickly to a constantly changing environment. We have had our staff members and participants become sick with the coronavirus. Like me, I am sure you have also felt that your "old normal" has been thrown away. We have all struggled to find the "new normal" going forward.

But one thing has remained the same at the Mission: we have stayed committed to sharing Jesus with all who come to us. We know why we are doing this work. We have been *A Blessing Right Around the Corner* to so many during these turbulent times. Whether through providing 24/7 shelter at the National Western Complex and 48th Avenue Center or providing meals at the Lawrence Street Community Center, we have had an incredible opportunity to show what believers in Jesus Christ do when people need help. We step up and enter into the battle, knowing God gives us the strength to stand below the "Jesus Saves" sign in front of our Lawrence Street Shelter and open our arms to all.

People who are experiencing homelessness know this about our staff and volunteers. They told Pedro, who is featured in this month's newsletter, where he could get a meal, where he could get help, and where people would care about him when he did not have support from his family. Pedro's life—like so many others—has been changed forever.

When communicating with our staff throughout the past few months, I often say, "God is in control." He has been and still is in control. I hope that you will be encouraged by His hope as we weather these trying times together, knowing He is in control, with the work at the Mission and in your lives.

God Bless,



Brad Meuli
President/CEO



YOUR SUPPORT BRINGS SMILES!



Amazon Smile allows you to support **Denver Rescue Mission** with each of your purchases at no additional cost. You get the same prices, products and shopping experience, and the Mission receives **0.5 percent** as a donation on eligible purchases.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Shop [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) and select
Denver Rescue Mission as your charity of choice!

JOIN OUR ONLINE PANEL EVENT!



RUNNING WITH ENDURANCE:
Fighting Homelessness Together During a Pandemic

••• **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17** •••
6:00–6:45 p.m.

Tune in for an engaging panel discussion to hear how Denver Rescue Mission and the City of Denver's Department of Housing Stability have been working together to provide resources for individuals experiencing homelessness during COVID-19.

Register at DenverRescueMission.org/RunningWithEndurance.



A *Blessing* RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

Pedro Morales will forever be grateful for the day he made it to the corner of Park Avenue West and Lawrence Street.

On a cold winter night in December 2016, Pedro approached two other men on the street and asked them where they typically go to get a meal. "We go to 'Jesus Saves,'" they said. "Follow us, and we'll take you there."

As he arrived at Denver Rescue Mission's Lawrence Street Community Center (LSCC), he got chills when he saw the 'Jesus Saves' cross shining at the end of the block.

In that moment, he felt overwhelmed by God's sovereignty. He thought back to the day God protected him when he tried to end his life just a year earlier. "When I did it, I felt like my soul, my spirit, was coming out," he said. "I got scared and I said, 'In the name of Jesus Christ, please give me another chance. I'm sorry for what I did.'"

But Pedro's situation got worse before it got better. Shortly after that, he got evicted from his apartment. "God got my attention," he said. "I lost everything—my house, my kids and my wife."

Without any relatives or friends available to help him, he roamed the streets of Denver with his backpack filled with belongings, consumed by a 20-year drug addiction. "I was doing the needle a lot," he said, "and I couldn't stop. God told me, *I am sufficient, and you're going to see the blessings that are coming for you. I heard it like an echo: I am with you. I am with you. Don't break. Don't break.*"

When approaching the doors of the Mission that night, Pedro didn't realize how many blessings were waiting behind them: a solid community, services that would help him get back on his feet, creative outlets that would help combat his addiction, and a future employment opportunity.

A few days after arriving, Pedro heard about Next Step, which provides access to life skills classes and case management assistance to help individuals take steps toward living self-sufficiently. Members of the Next Step community remain drug and alcohol free and participate in community involvement activities during their time at the Mission. He joined right away.

Emergency Services Chaplain Jay Earl, who worked closely with Pedro during his time in Next Step, said that one of the primary goals of the service is to help restore guests' dignity and self-respect. "We're facilitating what God's already doing in their lives," he said.

One of Pedro's biggest takeaways from Next Step was learning how to budget and make wise purchasing decisions.

"The Mission staff taught me how to be a man and not a kid," Pedro said. "They taught me not to feel sorry for myself, to put God first before anything and to have grace with people just like He has grace with me."



"He had a Mission for me. It was not to hurt me, but for me to understand that what I was doing was going to either take me to the grave or to prison. And He brought me here. Now, I thank Him that I got evicted, because if I never got evicted, I would never have been who I am now." – Pedro

Jay said that Pedro was warm to the gospel from the beginning. "Anytime we had chapel or Bible study, he was usually the first one there," he said. "I think it was his spiritual journey and his hunger for Jesus that really gave him the strength for everything else."

An art collaborative led by Angie Tims, Next Step caseworker manager at the Mission, made a significant impact on Pedro during his time living at the shelter. Each week, he joined a group of other guests to create art in various forms.

"It kept me from wanting to use drugs because I was so excited to be painting," Pedro said. "I would just clear my mind. Everything that I was feeling was in my paintings."

Angie has had many conversations with guests whose only element of stability in their lives is the art collaborative. "In an environment where people feel unseen and hopeless, our group offers a low-barrier way for them to have a voice, be valued and do something good with their hearts and hands," she said.

With guidance from Mission staff, Pedro eventually landed a job with a manufacturer and bought a home in Commerce City. Deep down, he had a desire to come back and work for the Mission. About a year after he transitioned out of Next Step, he received an opportunity to work at the Mission, which brought him back to the corner of Park Avenue West and Lawrence Street once again.

As an Emergency Services Coordinator at LSCC, Pedro is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility and for upholding the security and safety of our guests. He takes the time to sit down and talk with them. He asks them about their day. He tells them that he understands.

"Don't stop," Pedro says to them. "Don't give up. Because even though you think everything is over and you want to end your life, your blessings are right around the corner." ■

POWERFUL EXPRESSIONS

Pedro created many different paintings during his time at the Mission. To watch Pedro's video story and hear more about his connection to art, visit DenverRescueMission.org/Blog.



We offer meals, showers and shelter to guests 365 days a year. But your gifts are enabling us to do even more. Give today to bring purpose to guests like Pedro at DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

More THAN MEALS, SHOWERS AND SHELTER...

Every day during the last several years, about 1,000 individuals come to our Lawrence Street Community Center for help. As we meet their basic needs with meals, showers, shelter, drinking water, restrooms, and laundry facilities, we create opportunities to further connect with guests.

Here are **FIVE** additional things we offer to foster fellowship, mentorship and community*:

- 1 -

PEER NAVIGATORS: In 2019, we launched a program called the Denver Peer Navigator Collaborative after being awarded a grant from the City of Denver. Peer Navigators are employees who have lived experience with homelessness and are able to relate to guests, build relationships and refer them to resources that help them become self-sufficient.

- 2 -

CHAPEL AND BIBLE STUDIES: We host chapel services every day and twice on Sundays. The service starts with coffee, cookies and fellowship and is followed by a time of worship, testimonies, a sermon, and an altar call. Our staff members also host Bible studies for guests twice a week. They read a passage and create a space for guests to study and interpret scripture, share, and ask questions.

- 3 -

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS: Each month, we plan a series of events such as talent shows, trivia, bingo, and special pampering events for women to create opportunities for guests to interact with staff and volunteers and engage in positive, uplifting activities.

- 4 -

ART COLLABORATIVE: An art group offered by Mission staff and volunteers provides a means of engagement, expression and community. Together, the group creates projects such as painted canvases, paper quilts, journals, watercolor paintings, cards, macramé, jewelry, and more.

- 5 -

NETWORK OF RESOURCES: Through Next Step, a 50-day service that provides members with a consistent bed, locker space and case management, and other long-term Mission programs, we equip guests to break the barriers causing homelessness. We also refer guests to various resources around the city to help them find an exit plan out of the shelter system.

**Some of the above mentioned activities have been paused due to COVID-19.*

What inspired you to get involved with the Mission's chapel services?

We have been involved with the chapel services at the Mission for about 24 years. Before we were saved, we were caught up in a world of drugs and alcohol. Shortly after being radically saved, we were offered a chance to participate in a chapel service at the Mission. We felt a calling and a connection with the people there.



How are the chapel services typically structured, and what is the main thing that you hope to accomplish through each service?

We always open with prayer and then transition to a time of worship. Then, we give a message and an invitation for salvation and prayer. We have seen many come forward for prayer and invite the Lord into their hearts. If after 24 years, one person was saved, it was all worth it to us. Making disciples is what it's all about.

What memory from your time at the Mission stands out to you?

We had friends come with us, and they preached about healing. The Holy Spirit was powerful.

How has your involvement with the Mission impacted you personally?

It has shown us that many people are hungry for God without even realizing it, and it is our desire to witness to as many as we can.

Why does the Mission's work of breaking the cycle of homelessness matter to you?

Jesus said, "What you have done for the least of these, you have done for Me." Jesus also said, "The poor will always be here," but we can't use that as an excuse to ignore people in need. We believe the Mission honors those scriptures.

Mike Conaway is a retired nurse of 35 years, and Debbie Conaway is a homemaker and counselor. They have been together for 33 years and live in Commerce City. They are active in their church, love music and thank God daily for what He has done in their lives. They have been serving at the Mission's chapel services every month for more than two decades.

OUR CORE STRATEGIES



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 Avenue Center: Overnight shelter for men, operated in partnership with the City of Denver

