

MARCH 2022

CHANGING LIVES

130 YEARS OF SERVICE



FAMILY, FAITH & A FOREVER HOME

130 YEARS
OF
IMPACT

**DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION**

A MOTHER'S LONG-LASTING CONNECTION WITH THE MISSION

MEET A MISSION MENTOR

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends,

Often on these pages we write about people who have been with us for a few months and how being here at Denver Rescue Mission has impacted them for good. They have housing, are free from addiction, got their life back together, obtained a job, are restored to their family, and many times are involved in and giving back to the community. And often, very often I would say, they talk about their faith journey and how they have found the hope and strength they need for this life, and for eternity, in a relationship with Jesus. For me personally, their commitment to faith in Jesus is always the most exciting thing to hear.

I hope we never stop telling these stories and celebrating the lives of people we get to touch in some way every day. We have been serving and celebrating these "wins" for 130 years at the Mission. Our hope is to keep serving all who come to us for another 130 years. (Pretty sure I will not be the President 130 years from now!)

This month's newsletter talks about something we do not often discuss—the long-term contact we have with some of the people we have helped. Melody is a wonderful success story of a woman of faith who has had to work hard through this life, facing challenges that many of us simply cannot imagine. Being a single mom without much of a support system is incredibly hard. Being able to help, encourage and watch her as she successfully navigates this life has been a blessing.

She first transitioned into housing through Family Rescue Ministry (FRM) and since then has built a long-time relationship with us. We are proud of her just as we are proud of all our families who have come through FRM and are still in housing one, two, three, or more years later.

Our work here is about building relationships with people who need our help. These relationships run both ways, blessing us as we seek to bless them through our service. Thank you for *blessing us* as well with your financial assistance and your prayers. Together we are making a difference in people's lives!

God Bless,



Brad Meuli
President/CEO



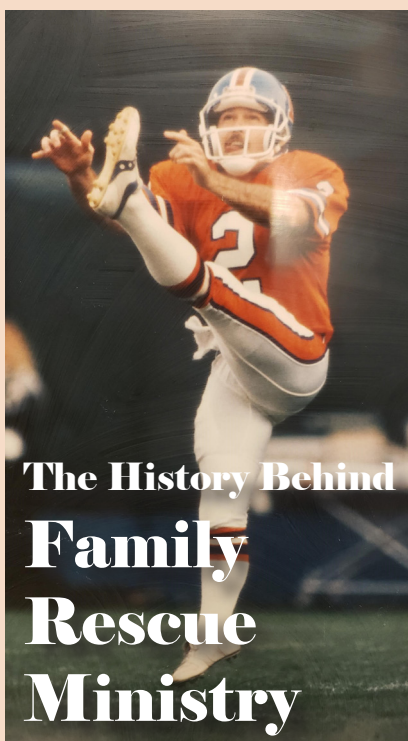
HOPE STARTS WITH A VEHICLE

**DONATE YOUR CAR.
TRUCK. VAN. SUV.**

**Changes Lives • Free Pick-up
Fast, Easy • Tax-Deductible**

Our Vehicle Donation Program provides transportation for individuals and families who graduate from our year-long programs to help them maintain employment and live self-sufficient lives.

Provide the gift of reliable transportation today.
Learn more at DenverRescueMission.org/Vehicle.



1993 Denver Broncos player, Mike Horan, and his wife began raising money for families experiencing homelessness with every punt he made within the 20-yard line, which then became the program, Punts with a Purpose.

1998 The program's name changed to Pros with a Purpose as more of the community and local professional athletes got involved.

2002 The program became a part of Denver Rescue Mission and evolved into what we have today, known as Family Rescue Ministry.

"Family Rescue Ministry
taught me self-sufficiency.
It just gave me a sense of
someone caring for me
and reminding me that
even when I feel at my
lowest, there is somebody
I can talk to."

—Melody



FAMILY, FAITH & A FOREVER HOME



Melody's life changed when she got pregnant at the age of 16. Her life changed when she had a second son and had to raise her kids all on her own. Her life changed when her oldest was 12 and got in a car accident, suffering from a life-altering brain injury. And her life changed when she found Denver Rescue Mission, the place that—17 years later—is still a major support in her life.

...17 YEARS LATER

As a single mother, Melody has always made sacrifices for her two sons, Raymond and Desmond. When she had Raymond at 16, she had to learn how to be a mother while still learning what it meant to be a teenager. While her friends were off partying, Melody was working night shifts after school to make ends meet.

She was working at Denver Health, which was in walking distance to her high school, but it was a challenge to be a new mother and a student. She worked hard to graduate high school, but after that, Melody knew she had to do more to make her son a priority.

"I wish I would have had it in me to go to college, but my main concern at that point was just taking care of my son," Melody said. "I used to go to work, walk to school, go back to work until nine o'clock at night, and then catch a bus home. Eventually I said something has to give. That's when I picked up the phone and called Denver Rescue Mission."

Melody originally contacted the Mission 17 years ago to get a car, but even after they referred her somewhere else for a vehicle, she stayed connected with the Mission through reading the monthly newsletters.

It was there that she learned of the Mission's resources to help with housing and soon applied to be in Family Rescue Ministry—a program that provides first month's rent and deposit assistance for families and seniors experiencing homelessness, as well as mentors from the community who help with basic needs and goals, budgeting skills and relationship support.

"They helped me get my own apartment and build my self-esteem and my confidence," Melody said. "I was starting to feel like a young, responsible adult because I was able to have my own place for my kid."

After being in her apartment for a few years, Melody got approved for a home loan. It was another moment that changed her life, one that she is still grateful for 15 years later as she continues to live in the same home.

"It's just a good feeling to know that I have a home," Melody said. "My dream is to be able to pay off my home so that when I leave this world, my boys will be able to have the comfort of knowing that they have a place."

Melody's oldest son, Raymond, was in a traumatic car accident when he was 12 years old. Due to the brain injury he received, he now lives with a disability and will be in Melody's care for the rest of his life.

"My son was in a really bad car accident where the little boy next to him died," Melody said. "He had a lot of physical therapy and had to learn to walk again. He is 31 now but is probably more like an 18-year-old because of his brain injury. It's been a really rough road."

Although she was able to secure a home, Melody has continued to face many challenges throughout the years. But no matter the struggle, Melody has always felt supported by those at the Mission, particularly Director of Family Services, Tom Leavitt.

"There are countless challenges as a single parent in the city, such as: providing for their children's needs, working long hours in energy-draining jobs with low pay, keeping up with increasing rental cost, and having a lack of support systems," Tom said. "Single mothers and fathers who come to FRM and fight for self-stability for years, like Melody, are the forgotten heroes of our society!"

Melody has always looked to Tom as a mentor. Throughout the years, when things break down, she knows she can always call him, or anyone at the Mission, and they will connect her with helpful resources.

"The Mission as a whole just puts smiles on faces, keeps people warm and makes people feel important and cared for," Melody said. "They've always made me feel that way, from the minute I picked up the phone with them."

Melody's strength as a single, hardworking mother is evident as she faces each trial in life head-on. She credits her strength and ability to go through each day to her faith.

"If I let go of faith, I'm letting go of my purpose," Melody said. "There have been so many times that I've cried until I couldn't cry anymore, just talking to God from within my heart saying, 'I have to give it to You now.' Of course, I still have to do the work to get things done, but I am a full believer of faith—it's the only reason why I'm still able to do what I can do."

"The Mission as a whole just puts smiles on faces, keeps people warm and makes people feel important and cared for."

Now, Melody is looking forward to finally being able to give back to the Mission and the people who have supported her for so many years.

"If I were to win the lottery, the first people I'd give back to is Denver Rescue Mission because of how much they've helped me—I genuinely mean that," Melody said. "It's really hard to find people who would last a lifetime of friendship like that, and I feel really grateful to be able to have people like that in my life: people who care." ■



Melody and her sons in their apartment when they joined FRM in 2005 (left) and later in 2008 (right).

With your help, we can provide lifelong support and stable homes for families like Melody's. Give today at DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

Scan to Give!



THE MISSION in my words




MIKE MERINO

Mike is a recently retired software developer who lives with his wife and two dogs in Southwest Denver. He has been involved with the Mission for a number of years, working with three families in Family Refugee Services (FRS) and mentoring one family in Family Rescue Ministry (FRM).

What initially inspired you to get involved in helping those in FRS and FRM?

I served overseas for seven years in Cyprus as a cross-cultural missionary. During that time, I traveled in the Middle East, and everywhere I went I was treated with extreme hospitality and patience. It is something I now try to cultivate in my own life and in my dealings with others. So, when my church offered to help settle refugees alongside Denver Rescue Mission and Lutheran Family Services, I was very excited to get involved in that.

What are some of the things you do to help the families?

As a mentor for an FRM family, I helped them with things like setting a budget and setting goals. As a team member through my church, I worked with two Somali families 20 years ago and then recently came back and helped an Afghan family, all through FRS. The most recent family is a family of nine, and I met them at the airport, took them to an Airbnb, found them a house, helped them move in, and am now helping them get their children in school and helping the men find jobs. We also usually get together once a week or so to do social activities like go to a concert or go out to eat.

What has it meant to you personally to get to connect with these families?

I really enjoy cross-cultural interaction and I've chosen to spend a fair amount of time with the Mission because of the people I've seen and the results I've seen them get. For example, the Afghan family has been very, very kind toward me—very grateful, very hospitable. And to see them come here, very excited about the American dream, and to be able to show them, in Jesus's name, an opening into that dream, is very gratifying.

What would you say to encourage others to help the families in these programs?

In the Bible, Ruth was a refugee. When she came to Israel, she said she wanted to follow the God of Israel and come into that culture. I would tell others that you have a chance to do that—to welcome people to America and to be Jesus to people who have definite needs. These are wonderful people and I have really gained a lot from being with them. To me, the church of Jesus Christ is multicultural, so if I can help move us all more towards that, that excites me.

OUR CORE STRATEGIES



EMERGENCY SERVICES



REHABILITATION



TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LOCATIONS

Lawrence Street Community Center:

Meals, restrooms, showers, laundry, clean drinking water, and access to Mission staff for encouragement and guidance



Lawrence Street Shelter: 24/7 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 access to resources and services



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: 24/7 shelter for men, operated in partnership with the City of Denver



THOUGHTS?

Send your questions and comments to
Newsletter@DenRescue.org.

DENVER RESCUE MISSION
IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



MISSION
MEMBER
CERTIFIED EXCELLENCE



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