

CHANGING LIVES

131 YEARS OF SERVICE



A Veteran's Story of Restoration

Dear Friends,

It was 4 a.m. on a hot and humid June morning in Virginia. I was half-asleep in my bunk along with 25 other men in a Quonset hut, cooled only by two fans at each end of the building. It was our first night at the United States Marine Corps Officer Candidate School. I had not slept well, knowing what the next six weeks might be like. The door opened and a 55-gallon metal trash can came hurdling down the aisle between the bunks, followed by one of the loudest voices I had ever heard from a Marine Corps drill instructor, yelling at us to get “out of the rack” and stand at attention at the end of our bunks. This was my initiation to the military.

The bonds that developed with my fellow Marines, from those first few days of training and into the years of my Marine Corps experience, remain strong to this day. That is why veterans mean so much to me personally. At Denver Rescue Mission, we care deeply for veterans as we try and serve these men and women who have been willing to put their lives on the line to protect our country.

We owe these veterans our very best to try and help them. Some have lost limbs, have gone through mental anguish and trauma that we can never fully understand and have found themselves alone without the support of family and friends.

Phillip’s story in this month’s *Changing Lives* newsletter is a story of redemption, healing and hope. Our prayer and plan is to keep lifting up these men and women who have faithfully served our country, and by the power of Jesus, to help them transform their lives.

Thanks for empowering us to serve our military veterans and provide them the hope that Jesus brings.

God Bless,



Brad Meuli
President/CEO



Mother’s Day

We are hosting a special dinner to celebrate all of the mothers living at The Crossing.

Thank you moms for all that you do!



Blossom in Every Season of Life



No matter what season of life you’re in right now, you always have at least one of the following three things to offer:

TALENT

TREASURE

TIME

Learn how you can make an impact this season at DenverRescueMission.org/LegacyGiving.

We serve everyone who comes through our doors. After intake to evaluate a person's quickest path out of homelessness, we refer many **veterans** experiencing homelessness to one of our **community partners**, often **Veteran Affairs**, who can meet their more specific needs. After those referrals, about **6%** of those we serve at the Mission are veterans.

We work to get them connected with **case management, mental health services, housing services, employment services**, and more. **Last year, 921** veterans were connected to services through the Mission.



As a veteran himself, Phillip started a nonprofit to help give back to veterans in need of home repair and refurbishment.

“My purpose was to help veterans save for what they need—health care, mental health care, physical care—by making sure that their home was fully refurbished or restored so they could focus on those things.”



A Veteran's Story of Restoration



Phillip came to the Mission feeling completely broken. He struggled to cope from his experience in the army, struggled with drug use, had most of his possessions stolen, burned many relationship bridges, and attempted to end his life. After joining the New Life Program and putting in the hard work, he turned his life completely around and has hope for his future.

Experiencing hardship and trauma often leads to long-lasting physical and emotional pain. Such pain takes a toll on a person and may lead to the search for anything, *anything*, to numb or make it go away.

For Phillip, it was a series of events that led him to hitting rock bottom.

He joined the military right out of high school and served four years. That experience opened his eyes to a lot of hardship that he had never seen before.



You can see Phillip's story included on a PBS 12 special about people experiencing homelessness.

“Imagine how many people you have helped. . . . Being homeless, losing everything and losing who I was, to have an opportunity like this is like winning the lottery.” – Phillip

"This program saved my life."

"People have no clue what people see, experience and deal with on a day-to-day basis," Phillip said. "I quit going to church and started to use drugs as my coping mechanism."

After those four years, Phillip felt completely lost and like there was nowhere he could turn to get the support he needed.

"A lot of people are coming back with arms or legs missing, shell shock, all types of trauma," he said. "There is nowhere near enough support to help people back into society, cope or acclimate themselves."

Phillip continued to use drugs as he bounced between jobs. Then in 2013 he started his own business doing roofing and repair. All seemed to be going well until COVID hit.

Business slowed down, and he once again turned to drugs to cope with the uncertainty. That spiraled into an eviction, leaving Phillip to sleep in his truck, until one night it was stolen, with all his possessions inside. Next thing he knew, he was sleeping on the streets.

"The first time I slept on the streets, I slept under a bridge, and it was the first night it snowed in 2021. I didn't know where to go or what to do," he said. "That experience was very humbling."

Phillip then heard about Denver Rescue Mission and spent a few nights in the shelter. "I was just in a daze and trying to cope with where I ended up," he remembered.

Feeling like all hope was lost, Phillip sold one of the last things he owned to pay for a night at a hotel. "I tried overdosing and taking my life," he said. "I woke up Monday morning still alive. My mentality just switched. It was like, 'Okay, well I guess there's something else in store for me.'"

A few weeks later, Phillip joined the New Life Program, the Mission's rehabilitation program for men. Even though the journey to get there was hard, he is so grateful that God led him to the Mission.

"I was completely broken—mentally, emotionally, physically, psychologically. So I just made an honest commitment and prayed that this was the right place I needed to be," he said. "It offered me a solid foundation morally and spiritually so I could work on myself."

"Every fiber of my being will do anything possible to never ever, ever be in that position again, and hopefully help others to not be in that position."

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Not only did he grow in his faith while in the program, but Phillip was able to start his business back up again. He rebranded his business name to "Read's Restoration & Repair" because he felt like more than his business was restored—his whole life was restored.

"It's just so huge to receive the basic living requirements—a bed, electricity, WiFi, a computer room, people to talk to, Bible lessons, and people who care about your success," he said. "I'm super appreciative of what they've given me. This program saved my life."

Phillip has now graduated from the program and transitioned into the STAR Transitional Program at The Crossing. "Knowing that I had the stability of continuing these relationships and resources was huge," he said. "I had options to leave but I didn't have the funds saved up. Most of the funds I saved up paid off a lot of stuff and helped establish who I am now and my company."

Now, Phillip is saving up to buy his own home, continuing to build his business and finding ways to give back. One way he is already doing so is by hiring other New Life Program participants or graduates when he needs extra help on jobs.

"I've probably hired 12 people total since I've been here," he said. "It's helping them to learn a trade or learn how to do things to be more self-sufficient. While I make less money it's not about the money, it's about the relationships and what you give back to people who are trying."

Although there is still pain inside from what he has experienced, through prayer, community and honest conversations, Phillip now looks forward to waking up another day.

"God has kept me alive for a reason. He gave me the courage to reach out for help," he said. "Every



GIVE TODAY TO HELP MEN LIKE PHILLIP AT DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

THE MISSION in my words



KACIE WARNER

As the Community Impact Director of the American Heart Association's Colorado division, Kacie works on community and clinical partnerships to advance community health. She has her Masters in Public Health and has lived in Denver for 12 years with her husband and two children.

What inspired American Heart Association to get involved with Denver Rescue Mission?

Jim McDonald was the chair of the 2022 Heart Ball for the American Heart Association. He has a passion for the American Heart Association and is also a donor at Denver Rescue Mission. At Jim's encouragement, our two teams sat down together to talk about where our missions align and found commonality in nutrition security, or access to healthy and nutritious food. We are so grateful that Jim connected our two organizations so that we could uncover these opportunities to collaborate.

What inspired the installation of the fridge in our client services area at the Ministry Outreach Center?

When discussing food donations and how those were received by clients of the Mission, we uncovered a need to provide refrigeration in the food pantry to store donations of healthy food items that often go bad quickly, like fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and low-fat dairy products.

Can you speak of the impact you know the fridge is already having on our community?

Since it was added to the client services area, they have served 1,123 households and distributed 16,920 pounds of food (refrigerated and not), equaling nearly 14,100 meals. The Mission said this has been such a blessing in an increased time of need as more and more families are experiencing their budgets tightening. This service ensures that families can continue to pay rent or other needed expenses, while fresh and healthy food can be put on their table.

What was it like to see the fridge installed and this partnership come to fruition?

The entire staff of the American Heart Association's Denver office came to the Mission in December 2022 for a volunteer shift in the warehouse, which was a great opportunity for our staff to see firsthand what the Mission does in the community. Our staff brought in healthy food items like fresh fruits and vegetables to stock the fridge. Personally, I have a strong passion for healthy food access, so it was very fulfilling to see the refrigerator really adding value to the food pantry.



Staff from the American Heart Association and the Mission on the day the fridge was installed.

OUR CORE STRATEGIES



EMERGENCY SERVICES



REHABILITATION



TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LOCATIONS

Lawrence Street Community Center: Meals, restrooms, showers, clean drinking water, and access to Mission staff for encouragement and guidance

Lawrence Street Shelter: Overnight shelter for men

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

Volunteer With Us!



DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



MISSION MEMBER CERTIFIED EXCELLENCE



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