

CHANGING LIVES

131 YEARS OF SERVICE

A COMMUNITY OF CARE



Meet George!
Our First Therapy Dog

Dear Friends,

I remember when I was sixteen and finally had my driver's license and could drive alone. I was so excited experiencing this new freedom. Driving home from a school event, someone in a pickup truck was following close behind me. At the next light, he didn't stop fast enough and totaled my little brown Volkswagen Rabbit. Still today when someone is driving too close behind me, I get nervous and my stomach tenses as a reaction to an experience that impacted me. That incident affected how I see the world.

For the people we serve at Denver Rescue Mission, we know that all of them have experienced levels of trauma because poverty in and of itself is traumatic. We also know that many of our guests have experienced severe levels of trauma caused by physical or emotional harm, loss, discrimination, and more. Our Mission Statement says that we want to meet people at their physical and spiritual points of need, so our goal is to understand that their trauma has impacted how they see the world and meet them there.

As I think about meeting people where they are, there is no better example than Jesus, who demonstrated meeting people where they were and walked beside them. He did not expect the disciples to understand everything, but patiently walked with them and taught them. He was patient, waited for people to ask Him for help and healing and didn't enter their lives uninvited and tell them what needed to be fixed.

We can apply these principles when working with people who have experienced trauma by seeing them as unique individuals created by God, and asking what has happened in their lives to make them see the world differently than we do. We can take the stance of walking alongside them to help them reach their goals, not dictating what we think their goals should be. We can work to provide a safe space where they can process all these things. Our goal is to show up and see them where they are, walk with them through a difficult time and understand the trauma that has molded them.

As you read through this month's *Changing Lives* newsletter, I encourage you to think about the incredible courage and resilience it takes to overcome trauma and pray for our guests as they work to build a life despite these challenges. We are so grateful that we have your partnership in praying for and supporting the people who God has brought to Denver Rescue Mission.

Blessings,



Tracy Brooks
Vice-President
of Homelessness Resolution



A Community of Care

Most of our guests and participants have experienced the effects of traumatic events in their lives.

Baudelio

"There was one day when I was maybe 18; I had to pull my uncle out of a restroom after he overdosed. He was like a bodybuilder-type of dude, but when I pulled him out, he was skinnier than I was because of his addiction. To see somebody from that level to this was hard to deal with. It was a lot of trauma."



HOW THE MISSION HELPED

"I do really like the counselor that I have. I never talked about some of the things I've been through with other people, and I can talk to her."



"I had a daughter who got run over by a car in front of my house by a kid going 60 miles an hour in a subdivision. She was three-and-a-half. I started drinking really bad because of it."

HOW THE MISSION HELPED

"The Mission means the world to me because it saved my life more than once. Without them, I don't know where I'd be right now."

Thurman

At The Crossing,

our team of counselors and staff use intentional and interactive forms of therapy for our participants that include:

THERAPY ANIMALS

MEET GEORGE, OUR FIRST THERAPY DOG!

Often if our participants are closed off to talking to people, they might not be closed off to animals, who create a unique sense of comfort.



MINDFUL MOVEMENT

Weekly class to practice mindful movement and stretching. When reprocessing traumatic experiences, it is important for participants to also tap into their body, as movement is healing in many ways.

EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING (EMDR)

New Life Program Counselor Olivia Llewelyn-Carter is trained in EMDR therapy, which includes verbally processing traumatic life events, stage by stage, while engaging in eye movement.

Olivia

"The idea is that back-and-forth movement helps decrease the intensity of that memory. So eventually, they can comfortably talk about the memory without feeling anxious, depressed, guilty, or shameful. They get to a point where they're sleeping better, and they have no urges to use anymore because they're reprocessing the memories that initiated that avoidance and addiction in the first place."

PROCESS GROUPS

Process groups provide a space for individuals to have a two-way conversation so they can process what's going on in their lives by talking in groups that include:

Anger Management \ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Grief and Loss \ Caregiver Education Support
Relationship Skills \ Financial Skills
Building Character (for youth)

SINCE 2020



INCREASED

Group Hours Offered
Attendance at Groups
Program Retention



DECREASED

Relapse Rate



OUR CARE DOESN'T STOP THERE

We offer critically important aftercare by:

- Writing program graduates letters of encouragement

- Following up six months to a year after leaving or graduating
- Connecting them with up-to-date resources outside the Mission, such as where to find a counselor or therapist, church or anything else they might need

Our Approach to Trauma-Informed Care



ENVIRONMENT OF AWARENESS

The environment we create within our facilities through layout, structure, decoration, and more are important in providing a sense of safety and comfort for our guests.

FOR EXAMPLE

Colorado landscape photos and Bible verses on the walls to provide a sense of calm and encouragement.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS

Our intake team works hard to **DISCERN OUR GUESTS' INDIVIDUAL NEEDS** as soon as they come through our doors. For example, if someone gets stressed by the group setting in our shelters, we offer ear plugs, an eye mask or a quieter area to sleep in.

Joseph with the keys to his new apartment.



INTENTIONAL LANGUAGE

We **OBSERVE** and phrase questions and responses with, **"I'VE NOTICED . . ."** OR **"WHAT I SEE IS . . ."** rather than assuming or putting words in people's mouths. Instead of asking: "Why are you mad?" We might say: **"I NOTICED YOU LOOKED DISTRESSED EARLIER, HOW ARE YOU, HOW CAN I HELP?"**

MOTIVATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

We ask questions that lead to people making decisions and **CHOICES ON THEIR OWN**. Asking them and having a conversation about their options leads to empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Understanding Trauma

DEFINITION

The response to an event(s) or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting, adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.*

Common traumatic events and responses our guests and participants have experienced:

Events

- Homelessness
- Addiction
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Abuse
- Racial or Political Discrimination
- Severe Illness
- COVID
- Job Loss
- Financial Instability
- Accidents and Natural Disasters
- Relational Issues (like betrayal, infidelity or neglect)
- Grief and Loss

Responses

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Avoidance
- Irritation
- Uncertainty
- Overwhelm
- Worry
- Disconnection
- Lack of Motivation

Michael

Michael struggled with alcohol addiction from the age of 16 until 58 years old. "The last thing I want to do is go back to that wretched life, the mind that I was living in. I may not even be alive right now if it wasn't for this program. I give them so much credit."



Read Caleb's story on how the Mission helped him after a traumatic experience in his life at

FortCollinsRescueMission.org/CalebsStory

Thank you for coming alongside those who've experienced trauma. Give today to help others rebuild control, empowerment and resilience.



Scan to Give!

DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives

WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE?

Trauma-informed care involves understanding the effects of traumatic events, addressing them without re-traumatizing and helping survivors rebuild control, empowerment and resilience.



*SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach

THE MISSION in my words



JOY & GEORGE

Joy has been a counselor at the Mission for two years. After learning about the benefits, Joy had her dog, George, begin training with Dog Training Elite as a therapy dog. George comes to The Crossing two days a week to assist Joy during sessions and to provide comfort for our participants and staff.

What impact is George having on our participants and staff?

From the beginning, George has helped with breaking down some barriers and helping people engage when maybe they would not have chosen to. Having someone or something present you with unconditional, positive regard is a powerful gift. George doesn't know how much money you have. George doesn't know if you have an addiction issue, but he will know if you're in a bad mood. Sometimes he's just pacing when I meet with people, and so I can use that as a point of discussion to ask them how they are feeling. You will also often see people's muscles relax when petting an animal, and even being close to them is enough to potentially balance some anxiety.

What is your favorite part about bringing George to The Crossing?

A lot of times pets are the last things that people have to give up when they transition into homelessness. Many individuals who have had a difficult time sharing about their lives come out and play with George and the "flood gates" open and they start to share. Some will come by every time he's here and they're like, "I just look forward to these days. I know it doesn't matter what will happen, George is here." And there's not a day when he's here that I haven't heard giggles. The majority of the giggles are coming from the guys in our New Life Program. Laughing and giggling without restraint can bring a new depth of healing that can increase hope and awaken connection with others.

How do you see the use of therapy dogs evolving at the Mission?

Potentially having another dog here to help cover all the days of the week, and to have dogs available at the shelters. I think that might be where the relationship with Dog Training Elite can be expanded. It will definitely lay the foundation for using dogs in ways that we, the Mission, have not even attempted. Another goal is to allow George to be more of an active participant in our youth programming. The connections and changes we see in adults are just as evident and powerful in our youth. I have seen increased communication and emotional management in some of the youth who George has been building relationships with.

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 



THE RiNo 5K IS JULY 22, 2023!

Five percent of all registration fees are donated to Denver Rescue Mission.

Register at Rino5k.org

Volunteer With Us!



DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



MISSION MEMBER CERTIFIED EXCELLENCE



P.O. Box 5164 | Denver, CO 80217 | 303.297.1815

