

# CHANGING LIVES

131 YEARS OF SERVICE



Harvesting Hope:



# A Family Reunited



**DENVER  
RESCUE  
MISSION**

## LETTER FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS

Dear Friends,

The holidays are a hard season for many of our guests here at the Mission. Hard, because the holidays are a time when our guests are most reminded of relationships lost, of the family members they are not in contact with, of the meals and festivities that will not be shared, and of the season of hope that too often is hopeless. In seasons like this it is important to remind our guests that they are not without hope.

“Hope Starts Here” is a phrase that has stuck around the Mission, likely because there is something very special about in whom we place our trust. When we say, “Hope Starts Here,” we’re saying that we exist as a Mission to create an environment where individuals and families, just like Ralph and Lisa’s, feel welcomed, supported and encouraged on their journey back towards housing. And more importantly, that they feel an invitation to know the person with whom hope truly does start, the person of Jesus.

The Mission is in the business of coming alongside individuals and families and helping them overcome addictions, gain skillsets needed for better jobs, reunite children with their parents, and return to more stable housing. Stories like Ralph and Lisa’s are a reminder that those we serve find hope while they are with us here at the Mission, due to the ongoing support of donors just like you.

As we enter the holiday season this year, please join us in remembering where our hope comes from and be praying for us as we connect with more families like Ralph and Lisa’s, aiming to show them that there is hope beyond their present circumstances.

God bless,

Josh Geppelt  
VP of Programs



## STORIES FROM OUR GUESTS

Tune in to our radiothon with **97.3 KBCO** on **Thursday, November 9**



## IT'S TURKEY TIME



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# Giving Thanks

“I’m just thankful for life all around. From being on the streets, jumping from couch to couch, going from motel to motel, to having no money, having no food, not having a vehicle, not having our kids, to then **having a job, having a vehicle, having a place to stay at night, having food, having meals provided for us, I’m thankful for it all.**” -Ralph



“I’m thankful for my sobriety, because if I didn’t have that, I wouldn’t have my family. If my sobriety goes then my family goes, everything goes. That’s first and foremost. **With sobriety comes family, my kids, stability, and happiness.**” -Lisa



# Harvesting Hope: A Family Reunited

After years of addiction and separation from their children, Ralph and Lisa are grateful to the Mission's Bridge program for bringing their family newfound hope. Now, they are rebuilding relationships and looking forward to a brighter future together.



1<sup>st</sup> Time family homelessness increased **34%** from last year



\*MDHI's 2023 Point in Time Count - Numbers reflect the total number of people in the seven county Metro Denver Continuum of Care who are in families experiencing homelessness

**T**he grasp of addiction doesn't just affect one individual; it casts a wide net, affecting families and straining relationships with those closest to them. For husband and wife, Ralph and Lisa, their substance abuse may have bonded them together, but it ultimately drove a wedge between them and the ones they cherish most—their children.

"We lost our kids three times to social services, successfully got them back, went clean for nine years, and then had the most massive relapse you could imagine," Ralph recalled.

While Ralph and Lisa were devastated by the separation from their five children, it seemed as if they were stuck in a cycle of addiction, getting clean and relapsing.

With their most recent relapse, Ralph and Lisa not only lost their two youngest children, Aaliyah (16) and Brehanna (18), but they lost their home, vehicle and jobs.

"It was hard wanting to go sober, but you can't because you just can't leave the drug," Lisa said. "Not being able to see the girls and trying to maintain places to stay, finally I just said, 'I'm tired of this.' I just hit my rock bottom."

Their rock bottom brought them to the Mission's Bridge program at The Crossing, where individuals and families have a safe place to live while they transition out of their circumstances.

**“I’m thankful that we found it when we did because there are not a lot of programs out there that help with families,” Lisa said.**

After years of separation, Ralph, Lisa, Brehanna, and Aaliyah were reunited and together they came to the Mission and found the extra support they all truly needed.

“The counseling has been a massive help, especially the family counseling because even though they were happy to come home, we were still working on things,” Ralph said.

“The bootstrap class is awesome, just learning how to budget and how to deal with your finances properly. The three meals being fed a day. Denver Rescue Mission has been a great help in every way possible.”

For Aaliyah especially, the Youth Center has helped her connect and have fun with other teens at The Crossing. Through math and reading club, Bible study and fun activities like summer camp and rafting, she has found a sense of community during what can often be a difficult time of transition.

Having been at the Mission for a year, Ralph and Lisa are grateful for the changes they have noticed in themselves and their kids. They are rebuilding relationships with all of their children, and now get to see their granddaughter every weekend, something they wouldn’t have even thought possible a year ago.

“All the kids are coming around more,” Lisa said. “They have told us countless times, ‘We’re proud of you guys, just keep doing what you’re doing. You guys are doing great.’”

“They know we’re trying really hard to better ourselves and get on with life,” Ralph added.

Aaliyah can attest to that and is just grateful to be together again.

“They’re more caring,” she said.

“Sometimes I get mad, like why do they even care, but I really love it that they cleaned up. It took a while but it’s ok.”

With the holidays coming up, they are all hoping to be in a place of their own. While Ralph and Lisa enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving meal at The Crossing last year, they were also able to enjoy their first holiday season in a long time with all of their kids.

“It was really nice to get all the kids together. We were sober, and it was nice,” Lisa said. And thanks to the kindness and support of others through the Mission, they can’t wait to do that again this year.

“It’s nice to see that they have things for holidays and know that they actually care about the people who stay here,” Lisa said. “They’re caring, compassionate people and if something is going on you can always go talk to them and they give you the resources or help you.”

Now, with a Section 8 voucher, they are all looking forward to having their own place where they can continue to rebuild their relationships, establish a healthy community and utilize resources from the Mission. With a hopeful future of stability ahead of them, they are just grateful to be where they are now: together again.



This Thanksgiving, we give thanks for the reunions and second chances you help support. Your generosity can bring even more families together at [DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives](https://DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives).

Scan to Give!



# THE MISSION in my words



## LARRY COOK

Larry is a retiree from the printing business and has volunteered at the Mission for about 25 years. He volunteers weekly serving meals at the Lawrence Street Community Center, 48th Avenue Center and/or The Crossing.

**What has kept you serving weekly at the Mission for 25 years?**

I've been retired for ten years and one big reason I do it is because God has given me the gift of evangelism. I'm a very committed Christian, and I know Jesus said, "The greatest among everybody is a servant." I like interacting with people and my whole purpose is spiritual because I know that's what the Bible wants us to do. I'll do it until I can't do it anymore.

**What has volunteering meant to you personally?**

Well, even today, as I was helping serve the meal, many people came by and said thank you for volunteering. It's given me peace of mind and helps me get my mind off myself and onto others. That is critical because we are to love and serve one another. A lot of these people, their lives are in shambles, and they need encouragement. And, you know, I can only trust what God does behind the scenes.

**Why do you think it's especially important to help those experiencing homelessness during the holidays?**

This is the time where love is displayed more, and it is a season where people seem to be in a different state of mind. I know those experiencing homelessness enjoy the presence of volunteers, especially during the holidays. Most of them have hit rock bottom, but even though they have a sad face on them, I know they feel a sense of community.

December 5



Schedule your gift early!

Learn more at [ColoradoGives.org/DenverRescueMission](https://ColoradoGives.org/DenverRescueMission)

DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



## 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!



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

