

MAY 2024

CHANGING LIVES

132 YEARS OF SERVICE

JOURNEYS IN & PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION



Dear Friends,

One of the things that has impressed me most about Denver Rescue Mission in my short time here has been how the staff demonstrate radical, Christ-like hospitality to all who come through our doors. Our staff meet people exactly where they are, with love and grace. Hope indeed starts here!

In the book of James chapter 2 in the Bible, the writer offers these challenging words, *“If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”*

When I see the staff at the Mission meet people, like Danny and Latoya (who you’ll meet in this newsletter), where they are, love them, feed them, offer hope, and help in a million ways, I see a glimpse of the Kingdom of God and the same grace that God has so richly offered to each of us.

Yet, the need has never been greater—we are serving more people than ever, costs are rising and we’ve seen a decrease in donations. But praise God we are seeing more results than ever. In 2023 we helped 539 households leave homelessness, and we are on track to exceed this number in 2024. We could not do this without your prayers and financial support.

Thank you for your partnership in this ministry!

Grace and peace,

Dennis Van Kampen | President/CEO

THE MISSION in my words



Cassandra Resudek

Cassandra first started volunteering at the Mission in 2010 and has been a consistent weekly volunteer at the Lawrence Street Community Center since 2022.

What initially inspired you to get involved with the Mission?

My middle school took us to a warehouse that handed out food to the homeless. Something about giving back and serving those in need touched my heart and inspired me to continue my volunteer work throughout high school, college and beyond. After moving to Denver in 2009, I felt called by God to volunteer at Denver Rescue Mission, and I decided to make this my volunteer “home!”

What is one of your favorite memories from your experience with the Mission?

In May 2022, I was doing some personal work with the homeless in Colorado Springs and I met a lady named Suzette. I spent hours speaking with her and I thought about her multiple times over the next year wondering how she was. To my surprise, she showed up

at Denver Rescue Mission as a guest in 2023! I was speechless when I saw her. I was glad to know she was doing ok! I felt like God brought her back into my life to show me He was taking care of her, and that our relationship was supposed to continue in some way. When I see her come through the lunch line, it is always such a joyful time for me!

What does the Mission mean to you personally?

The Mission is a place of hope, light and the possibility for a better future. The staff are so kind and welcoming to everyone. When you volunteer regularly, you get to know other volunteers and it feels like family! God calls us to be servants and to draw near to the needy with a joyful heart. Seeing people who have nothing or very little and still seeing them smile and thank God is truly inspiring. Those smiles are priceless, and it really makes me thankful for the things I do have.

JOURNEYS IN & PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

539
households

from the Mission
obtained housing last year—
the most ever!

Just like there are many journeys into homelessness, there are many pathways out of homelessness. For Danny and Latoya, their journeys couldn't look more different, and yet, they both came to The Crossing and found the support they needed to change their lives.



THE JOURNEY IN

Danny struggled with addiction for 15 years, using substances like opiates, heroin and fentanyl, which also spiraled into involvement in gangs, robbery and vehicle thefts and homelessness.

"I spent nights under a bridge during a storm. I lived on the road in the driver's seat of stolen vehicles," Danny remembered. "I was headed somewhere bad, fast."

Danny was faced with a possible prison sentence and knew he needed to do something different. It was by the grace of God, an email to Harvest Farm and the mercy of a judge that spared him from going to prison. The alternative? To complete five years of probation and the New Life Program at Denver Rescue Mission.

"I have caused so much damage to families, to innocent people, and to people just trying to do their jobs,"

Danny said. "If I'm not doing something to actively compensate for all the damage I've done, then I'll have trouble living with myself."

THE PATHWAY OUT

Once Danny came through our doors, he experienced a transformation beyond anything he could have imagined.

"It was a matter of EMDR therapy, church and finding some form of purpose in life to keep moving forward," he explained.

Through the support of staff at the Mission and other participants in the program, Danny found the healthy community he needed and experienced mental, emotional and spiritual transformation.

"Everybody played a role and was vital. I started praying, getting back into my Bible and going to church every week," he said.

"The work that my counselor and I have done, like, changing my life or saving my life doesn't even cut it. We have completely rewired my brain wire by wire."

Part of Danny's purpose now is to help others who are also in recovery. He recently graduated from the New Life Program, became a certified peer recovery coach, is the sober living assistant house manager for the place he is living and hopes to open his own LLC for recovery coaching.

"My recovery isn't the year of me being at the Mission. It's the last eight years of me; it's progressive," he shared. "I was never sure if I could or not, but I don't care how many obstacles are in the way, if you have a destination and every day you continue toward that destination, there's nowhere else you will end up other than there."

TOP CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS IN DENVER

Relationship problems or family breakups

Asked to leave or evicted

Lost a job/could not find work

Unable to pay rent or mortgage

Alcohol or substance abuse problems

Abuse or violence at home



DANNY

THE JOURNEY IN

As a single mother, Latoya's whole world is her 16-year-old daughter, Karrieyonna. When COVID hit and she was having some health issues and couldn't work, Latoya found herself moving in with her mom and, after issues arose, moving in with her sister. She knew it was what she needed to do to take care of her daughter.

"I do it for my daughter because she's the only one who matters," she said. "One thing I've always told her is, 'Oh your mama is gonna find a way.' And every time I find a way."

Yet after a year and a half, family issues persisted, and they needed to find a new place to stay. "My sister was wishing my downfall on everyone, saying, 'She's not going to make it. They'll be on the street,'" Latoya said through tears. "But this is my story. I struggle, and eventually, it's going

to be okay. I'm going to make it. I just use the negative as a stepping stone. And not to prove to her or anyone but to myself."

THE PATHWAY OUT

With nowhere else to go, Latoya and her daughter came to the Mission. Walking through the doors, they felt relief.

"Being here has been a stress reliever," Latoya said. "I've been able to clear my mind, and I've been able to focus on my goals and on me."

Latoya is now working as a certified nursing assistant, and recently was

accepted into nursing school. But the struggle is real. Even working 48 hours a week, Latoya struggles to pay for food and other fees for her and her daughter.

"Before the pandemic, people were able to make ends meet. And it's hard when you have an eviction on your credit because that's like the first thing they look at," Latoya explained. "So . . . what are the options for people who have that?"

With the support of her case manager and counselor, Latoya is finding motivation and taking small steps toward self-sufficiency.

"They've been my motivation," she said. "I walk into my case manager's office, and she has positive quotes and scriptures on her board. She prays with you. You aren't going to find that anywhere else. But here, they have a caring heart."

No matter what the future holds, Latoya knows that she will have support. "I have a village that's going to help me."

Inflation is impacting the Mission and those we serve, just like it's impacting you. During these challenging times, we are so grateful for the support and care you've extended. If you can, prayerfully consider giving to help more people like Danny and Latoya at DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

Scan to Give!



LATOYA

	2020	Current
Minimum Wage	\$12.85	\$18.29
Fair Market Rent (2-bedroom)	\$1,566	\$2,201
Evictions	2,912 households	12,910 households
First-Time Family Homelessness	37%	63%

Sources:

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative State of Homelessness 2020 and 2023 reports

Denverite: Here's how many Denverites faced eviction in court in 2023

Denverite: Denver saw more eviction filings in 2022 than in 2020 and 2021 combined. So what does that really mean?

USHousingData.com: Denver County 2024 Fair Market Rents

National Low Income Housing Coalition: 2020 and 2023 Out of Reach reports

DENVER RESCUE MISSION



DANNY'S GRADUATION:

"It was more like we did it and less like I did it because everybody had an active role and put more effort in than their job requires. These people have the heart that is required to change people's lives. There's value in finding a place that truly cares about the people they're serving and then to fill a room up and celebrate that together, that's really cool."



"To me Mother's Day is every day. When things get rough, my baby is the one like, 'Mom we got this.'"

- Latoya

Happy Mother's Day! Thank you for helping moms like Latoya know that they aren't alone.



OUR CORE STRATEGIES

EMERGENCY SERVICES
Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable

REHABILITATION
Equipping men through a life-changing program

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS
Transitioning people into stability

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
Providing essential needs for daily life



Volunteer With Us!

LOCATIONS Lawrence Street Shelter | Lawrence Street Community Center | The Crossing | Ministry Outreach Center | Holly Center Administration & Education | 48th Avenue Center | Harvest Farm | Fort Collins Rescue Mission

DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



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