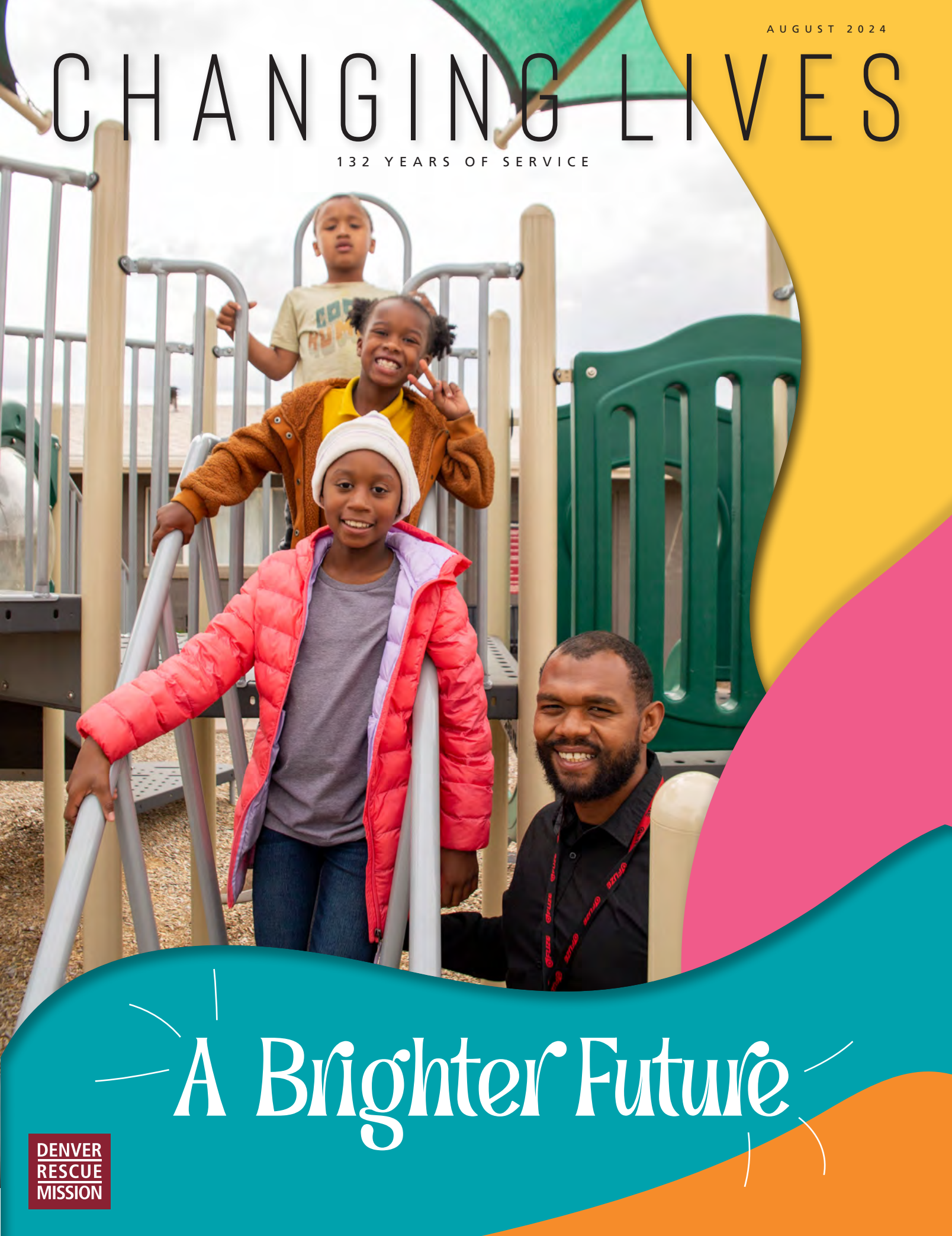


AUGUST 2024

# CHANGING LIVES

132 YEARS OF SERVICE



## A Brighter Future

DENVER  
RESCUE  
MISSION



Dear Friends,

Psalm 127 tells us that children are a gift from the Lord. There are many verses in scripture that help us see God's heart for children. Another passage is Mark 9:36-37: *"Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'"*

Whoever welcomes a child in Jesus' name welcomes Jesus! I am so humbled by the work our team does with children experiencing homelessness. In this newsletter you will read the story of Curtis, a single father who found support, help and hope here at the Mission. You will learn how our Youth Center helped his children.

Our staff understand that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, care for the sick, and welcome the children, it is as if we are doing this for Jesus. In fact, that is our *why* at the Mission. We are called to serve everyone who comes through our doors asking for help. I want to thank you for supporting the Mission. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your volunteer hours. Thank you for prayerfully sharing your finances with us.

Thanks to our generous community, we ended our fiscal year strong on June 30 despite facing a budget shortfall. Your prayers and contributions do not go unnoticed.

While there is still so much to do, I am confident that we serve a God who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask, think or imagine!

May God bless you and keep you,

Dennis Van Kampen | President/CEO

# THE MISSION *in my words*



Emily Staples

Emily has volunteered in the Youth Center at The Crossing since 2021.

### What initially inspired you to get involved with Denver Rescue Mission?

When I moved here from Chicago, I wanted to get connected to my community. That's when I found the Mission and the youth room. I enjoy working with the little kids, but I connect a lot more with the teens. I feel like especially in places like this, they're rarely surrounded by people closer to their age and seeing them succeed. How awesome is it to be a role model to them, but also be their friend?

### How have you seen the youth benefit from coming to the Youth Center?

I've seen my fair share of families who have come, and they've made progress. You see families like Yasmin's—I've really bonded with her because there are things that maybe she doesn't want to

confide in with the staff because she sees them almost every day, but she'll confide in a volunteer who she maybe only sees once a week. I really wish when I was younger that I had someone close to my age telling me it is going to be okay. I try to tell her, "Go through it, learn from it and know that you're going to be on the other side of it so much better for it."

### How have you been personally impacted by volunteering at the Mission?

I live downtown and I see homelessness every day. I think it re-grounded me to the fact that we really have no idea what anyone is going through. There's no reason to judge. I think it's important to know that people fall on tough times from all walks of life. It's important to be grateful for what we have, but also if we're able, to always give back.

# A Brighter Future



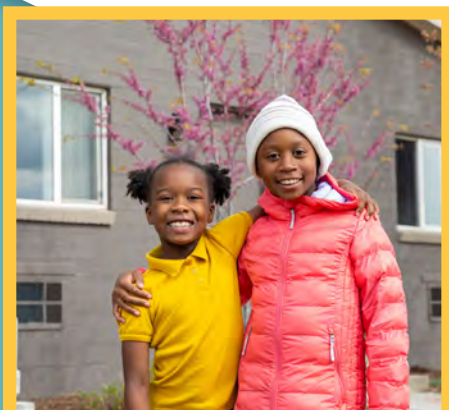
Curtis and his children are one of many families to find support at the Mission's Youth Center. Through intentional relationships and a safe environment, it's not just a room to play in—it's a lifeline for families living at The Crossing, offering hope and a better future.

Curtis came to the Mission, filling one of the six rooms recently dedicated for families in crisis. These families, like Curtis', literally have nowhere else to go and may have more immediate needs. So as a single father to Skylar (10), Sophia (eight) and Sebastien (six), Curtis is grateful for the Mission providing a safe place for his kids.

That's where the Youth Center comes in. Through homework assistance and after-school activities, the Youth Center helps provide children and teens with a new sense of confidence, responsibility and resiliency.

MC Crawford, children, youth and family manager, described the Youth Center as “a space of respite for our kids. When they come home from school, they—unlike most children—come home to a one bedroom that they share with their entire family. So not a lot of room to play, to express themselves and to develop who they want to be. So we want to make sure that they have the space to do that.”

For Curtis, the support he received from the Youth Center staff upon move-in meant a lot, especially for his son, Sebastien, who is diagnosed with nonverbal autism spectrum disorder. “I'm very surprised at how well they're equipped with handling kids. It's pretty outstanding.”



One word Curtis  
uses to describe the  
Youth Center:

Positive

# 30 Youth engage with the Youth Center on average at a given time

With the recent addition of a room for ages zero to three and a teen room for ages 12 to 18, the Youth Center is focusing more on supporting the individual needs of each age group.

“It’s us responding appropriately to a need that has been there and seeing a need that is coming up,” Joy McGuire-Olson, associate clinical director, explained. **“We are looking at how to build resiliency, being trauma-informed and increasing our intentionality.”** Kids are just as much experiencing things as their adult parents are. We have an obligation to step up to help facilitate their experiences and their connections.”

While Curtis is receiving the support he needs through counseling and case management, he has been grateful knowing that his kids are “able to have that time to find resources, understand what they can do here and what they can create, learn about finances, and learn about the Bible.”

MC has noticed growth in all of Curtis’ children. “The girls have really come to embrace the youth



room and the social environment that it provides,” she said. “They’ve made friends here and I’ve seen them really blossom.”

With Sebastien, the Mission helped connect him to resources for various therapies he needs and helped coordinate his transportation to and from school. There are even volunteers in the Youth Center who are speech therapists who have helped teach him some sign language.

“The other day I was signing ‘more’ to him, like, ‘More swinging?’ out on the playground, and he signed ‘more’ back to me,” MC shared excitedly. “So that is just one example of how consistency and stability can be really beneficial for a person.”

## What have you learned since you started coming to the Youth Center?

Sophia



“That there are people who are kind and nice.”

Skylar



“How to do sixth grade math. I’m in fifth grade.”

## A Glimpse into the Youth Center

**“It looks like hugs when they walk in the door and accepting them as they come.”**

**-MC**

The Youth Center sees this kind of progress and success in many of the children. MC shared the story of another set of siblings, three and five years old, who had lived on the street and in shelters with their mom, who didn't talk at all when they moved in.

“Now they come to the youth room running and they're 'chatty Kathy's,’” she said. “The five-year-old girl, the fact that she wasn't speaking at all and now she's socializing with other kids, I believe—and her mom believes too—that her experience here has redirected her child towards a better path.”

Building up future generations is one way the Mission is moving the needle on family homelessness. “Look at our youth, they're starting out in homelessness and we're working to change their direction, so they don't end up in homelessness too,” MC said. “I'm really proud of the work we're doing here.”

For Curtis, he's just grateful. “There are people out there who are able to help, who aren't looking for something in return, who want positive change, and want to see a better future for people.”



### How do you feel?

With the whiteboard-tables, youth are encouraged to write or draw how they are feeling that day.



### Free time

Playtime is encouraged through toys, arts and crafts and playing on the playground.



### Math and Reading Club

Time is spent doing homework, receiving tutoring and furthering their education.

The Youth Center also facilitates Bible studies, field trips and other events.

**Thank you for caring for children like Skylar, Sophia and Sebastien. Give today to help build up the next generation at [Denver RescueMission.org/ChangingLives](https://denverrescuemission.org/ChangingLives).**

*Scan to Give!*



# Our Future Focus

## "2Gen Model"

Building family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together.

### Example:

Family conferences once a month

*In collaboration with Ascend through Aspen Institute and the Colorado Department of Human Services*

## Resiliency

Helping families to withstand or recover quickly from difficulties.

### Seven areas:

- Spirituality
- School/work readiness
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Family support
- Peer support
- Competence

## Aftercare

Increasing community partnerships and helping families establish resources to better equip them for when they leave the Mission.

### Example:

Partnership with Young Americans Bank to teach financial literacy and open savings accounts

## LEAVE A LEGACY DURING MAKE-A-WILL MONTH

### Create a Free Will

[GiftWise.com/DenverRescueMission](http://GiftWise.com/DenverRescueMission)



GiftWise

In 20 minutes or less you can create or update your Will for FREE thanks to our partner, GiftWise.

## Back to School!

The youth living at The Crossing are back in school, and thanks to generous donations, they have new backpacks and school supplies to kick off the school year!



### 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



### Join Young Professionals



#### 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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