

CHANGING LIVES

133 YEARS OF SERVICE



A Season of Peace

DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION



Dear Friends,

I love Christmas, I always have. The joy, the snow, family coming together, presents, Christmas carols, great food, all of it! When our kids were young, I found that I loved Christmas even more as I experienced it through their eyes. To see their anticipation and excitement, wondering what presents they may get. To get the entire family, grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles together. I love it all.

Most importantly, I love the reason for the season. Celebrating the birth of a baby, the Savior of the world! Christmas is a time where hope seems real and possible again. I can remember watching our kids when they were young singing "Away in a Manger" and doing all the motions. To this day my favorite thing is going to a Christmas Eve church service and ending it in a large church sanctuary with only the light of candles as we all sing "Silent Night."

What breaks my heart is knowing that so many kids and families do not experience these things. They are living in extreme poverty, unhoused, living in shelters or the back seats of cars wondering how this happened and how to get out. For the kids, all they know is that the stories and anticipation their friends share at school are not for them. They don't have a home, or

extended family. No presents, no carols, no parties.

Jesus knew about these feelings. He was born in a barn because there was no room for him and his family in any homes. His family had to flee their home country for their safety and go to a land foreign to them. Jesus in his adult ministry even said he had no place to lay his head. Jesus knows how we feel and how these kids and their families experiencing homelessness feel.

I am honored to be a part of a ministry that serves families and children. Because of your support, families at DRM will know some joy. There will be presents, great food, carols, and laughter. They will have a place that is clean to lie down at night. It is not the home they want, but it is a step toward that home.

Most importantly, those families will hear and experience the reasons for the season, the story and hope of a Savior born and sent to us. These kids will feel a little more like kids during the best time of the year to be kids!

Life change happens every single day in and through DRM. You make that possible. We could not do it without you! Because of you, this Christmas, families who seemingly have so little will celebrate Christmas together with the hope that next year they truly will be home, in their own home, for Christmas!

Grace and peace,

Dennis Van Kampen | President/CEO

THE MISSION in my words

Beth is part of the Lydia Circle, a group of 16 members through Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, that has quilted blankets and crocheted and knitted hats and scarves for the Mission for about three years.

Pictured: Beth (second from the left) with some members of the Lydia Circle.



Beth Farr

How did you first get involved with the Mission?

Years ago, it was winter, and it was snowing, and a friend of mine from the Circle called me up and said, "We have to get some quilts down to Denver Rescue Mission, because there are people on the street who are cold." So, we loaded up our little Volkswagen, and we drove down at eight o'clock on a winter night with snow, and we gave those quilts out. That was the first exposure I had, other than the sign outside that says, "Jesus Saves."

What do you think it means to those who receive the items you make?

When we make them, we have the people in mind—children, women, men. I hope it means that they get warmth and love from the people who gave them. I hope those people realize that this is part of Christ's

work. The first time we gave to Denver Rescue Mission, I think we gave 43 quilts. And hats and scarves—I couldn't begin to guess how many. There's a lot of satisfaction in knowing that we can do something we enjoy, have community and also help people.

Have you learned anything new about the Mission that has surprised you?

Yes, the last time Heather from the Mission came to pick up some items, she told us all about the Mission. For instance, **I had no idea that there were other locations; I thought the whole Mission was downtown, and several of our members felt the same way.** She told us how you deal with families, but as a whole group I don't think we knew about all the things that you do and have since been educated.

A SEASON OF PEACE



The emergency shelter the Mission provides led to joy and stability during the holidays for LaDasmine and his family, giving them the greatest gift of all—a safe place to call home and a fresh start.

LaDasmine and his three kids, Jasilyn (10), Jiera (eight) and One (one), walked into The Crossing for the first time on a cold November day, unsure what to expect, but grateful to be in a place that wasn't a hotel, storage shed or car.

From the moment they stepped through the front doors, they began receiving support and tangible items that overwhelmed them in the best way. "I received all the toiletries that you would need, bedding, a brand-new bunk bed, and a playpen and crib," LaDasmine recalled. **"Every day it was like we received something. It was magical."**

Barely being able to afford a place for his family to sleep at night, LaDasmine couldn't fathom being able to afford to get his kids the Christmas gifts they wanted. And then the Mission stepped in so he didn't have to.

“These people are awesome. They asked my kids what they wanted, and they got everything that they asked for and more. For us, we never had anything that was that great just given to us. I definitely felt a spirit of being wanted. It made this place a home instead of just somewhere to stay.”

-LaDasmine

LaDasmine's family is part of the Mission's Emergency Family Shelter, which encompasses 10 rooms at The Crossing for families experiencing urgent shelter needs. At a time of desperation, their family of four was able to come to us and receive the greatest gift: support as a parent, as children and as a family as a whole.

“The Youth Center and my clinician worked with me on everything that I needed to be successful,” LaDasmine said. “That felt like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I didn't have to worry about what we were going to eat or where we were going to stay next. **Stability gives peace of mind.**”

Having consistent three meals a day opened doors for LaDasmine to focus on other things to help his family out of their current situation. In the past he relied on food stamps to feed his family, but in moments of food scarcity, he did what he had to do to make sure his kids were taken care of.

“I felt ashamed to eat because my family was already not being provided for. So, if I had to sacrifice in order for my kids to eat, I would. That felt horrible,” he remembered. “That was a point in my life I don't want to ever go back to. It feels as if you let your kids down.”

Growing up without a present mother and father, LaDasmine is determined to make sure his kids have the resources and support that he never had as a child. “I want my kids to have a stable life, a life of not having to wonder, *‘Where are we going to be?’*” he said.



Thanks to The Crossing's Youth Center, classes, counseling, housing support, and like-minded community, LaDasmine and his kids have come a long way in the past year.



Youth Center "I really don't know where I would be mentally or physically if it wasn't for that team. They tell my kids every day to be proud of themselves, and my kids have been happier and more confident."

Community "I found a very tight-knit community here. We know things are hard, so whatever we can help each other with, that's what we're going to do."

Housing "I feel pretty confident that I'll be able to create a stable household for my kids. With the help of this program, I feel more enlightened on how things work in terms of getting housing and keeping housing."

Ultimately, LaDasmine is grateful to finally feel a semblance of normalcy in his life. He can dream of the future and wants to help others. He is healthier, getting more involved in his kids' schooling and knows that he no longer has to go through life alone.

"Before, I had goals and they seemed so far-fetched, and now, they seem attainable," he said. "This program has helped me get daycare for my son so that I can actually work. And I'm in college for psychology, so it helps me to finish some of my studies. **I just want to thank Denver Rescue Mission for everything they've done for me.**"

What if We Had Met This Family Sooner?

LaDasmine's family was staying in an apartment when the rent was raised by 600 dollars. However, he never received his deposit, leaving him without the money to afford another place, and his family experiencing homelessness.

While we are grateful we had a room for LaDasmine and his family to stay in when they needed it most, **their homelessness could have been prevented.**

Our Prevention Pilot Program

The Mission just launched a pilot program to help prevent homelessness for select families who are experiencing a crisis moment. With one-time financial assistance, we can help prevent them from ever becoming homeless in the first place.



"If you want to make an impact here in Denver, the best place to have your money go to is here. I have never seen anybody help the mass of people at the same time as this place." -LaDasmine



Scan to Give!

This Christmas, make home the ultimate gift for a family in need by donating at DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives



Making Our Kids' Christmas Dreams Come True

"Watching our community rally around our children and families during the Christmas season is incredibly meaningful to me. The joy it brings to our kids—and the relief it offers their parents—is truly priceless.

We all know the excitement that comes with opening presents on Christmas morning. By making our kids' Christmas dreams a reality, we, in turn, help them know and feel that they are worthy of that joy too."

-MC Crawford,
Children, Youth & Family Manager



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Support Our
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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

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