

CHANGING LIVES

134 YEARS OF SERVICE

A MOTHER'S MOTIVATION





Dear Friends,

When I first began my rescue mission career over 14 years ago, I thought I understood the problem of homelessness and because of that, I knew the solutions. I was wrong.

The last 14 years have been a journey of learning, listening and loving.

I grew up in a stable, middle-class home with two parents. We went to church twice on Sunday and lived, in many ways, the "normal" life. Yet it was not normal. One of things I have learned along my journey is that normal does not exist. The risk of thinking it does is that we can then easily judge those in circumstances we have not faced through our perceived views of normal.

In this newsletter, you will read about a mother's courageous journey. She fled domestic violence with her children with no place to go. She provided all she could, but it was not enough. Her love for her children and drive for a better life kept her going. Ultimately, that journey led her to Denver Rescue Mission.

Jesus told His followers that we must welcome in the stranger, give clothes to those who need them, feed those who are hungry, and care for those in need. That is exactly what this mom and children experienced when they came to DRM.

Jesus also said that we should not judge unless we want to be judged. But this is so easy to do. To judge people through the lens of our experience instead of listening and learning about their experience. Our charge is to love our neighbors as ourselves.

I am so glad that DRM exists and that each day we strive to welcome, serve and love all who walk through our doors without judgement. This is the first step toward life change—those we serve and ours.

We could not do this without you. Because of your faithful support we are able to serve men, women and children every single day. Our vision is this: through the power of Christ, work to bring an end to homelessness, one life at a time. Thank you for making that possible.

Grace and Peace,

Dennis Van Kampen | President/CEO

THE MISSION in my words



Kate Cheaves

Kate has volunteered in the Youth Center since June 2025 and serves about three times a week.

Why is it important for you to serve consistently every week?

I hope it means a lot to have someone who they can rely on to be there. I feel like I have gained a better understanding of these kids and the things they've experienced. It has brought me a lot of peace, a lot of patience and a greater sense of empathy.

What has your experience been like with Jo'siah and Lei'Lonnie?

My first interaction with Jo'siah, I was his tutor. He was so silly, but I could tell he is a very smart kid who just needs a little extra motivation sometimes. And Lei'Lonnie, she is the cutest little girl I have ever seen. She is so precious and also full of energy. She just wants to be loved and wants you to wrap her up and hold her.

How would you encourage others to get involved?

It is so much fun. There is just so much love in that room, and the excitement and energy are very positive. I didn't think I would love it as much as I do, but I look forward to it every week and I am sad when I can't go. It has definitely changed my perspective on homelessness as a whole.

"Seeing the impact and the solutions that are offered to these families—it's huge."

A MOTHER'S MOTIVATION



Carrying one bag with all of her family's belongings, Keshia faced a future of uncertainty. Thanks to you, they now have a chance to thrive.

Keshia arrived in Denver with her three youngest children—Jo'siah (seven), Lei'Lonnie (five) and Kyi'Ree (two) determined to escape a domestic violence situation and keep her children safe.

Keshia sought help from family members and shelters, but each offered only temporary support, eventually leading her family to Denver, carrying everything they owned in a single bag.

Hotel after hotel, their family stayed wherever Keshia could afford. Many of those places were in areas that didn't feel safe—especially when it came to walking her children to school. "It was scary because I was in a new area," she said.

Food quickly became one of the hardest challenges. Without access to a kitchen, meals were limited and expensive. Access to food stamps stopped with the government shutdown. There were many days when Keshia skipped meals herself to make sure her children ate.

"I had to focus on that day, because focusing on all the other days was hard," she recalled.

Clothing was another struggle. Especially with Colorado's fluctuating temperatures, they didn't have coats or shoes suitable for the cold weather.

"When we first got here, we had nothing," Keshia said. "Now, everything I have is from donations—from clothes to shoes to comforter sets. I'm very thankful."

As their hotel stay came to an end and shelter options dwindled, Keshia feared they might soon have nowhere to go. Then, unexpectedly, her phone rang.

Denver Rescue Mission had a place for them.

"I didn't even know about it," Keshia said. "I was like, 'When can I move in?'"

In November 2025, Keshia and her children moved into one of The Crossing's Emergency Family Shelter rooms. Immediately, they felt safer—and for the first time in a long while, Keshia could finally breathe.

While the stability is still temporary until the family can move into a home of their own, they now have consistent meals, a reliable place to sleep and access to resources designed to help them move forward.

"This has been the most stable place for us," she said. "Sometimes I think that I'm a bad mom. Like, how did I get into a situation like this to end up in a place like this? I blame myself."

But Keshia has already seen positive growth in her children, largely thanks to the support offered through The Crossing's Youth Center.

Kyi'Ree is in daycare, building language skills and learning to play alongside other children. Lei'Lonnie, once quiet and reserved, is now reading aloud, speaking up and connecting with friends. While Jo'siah is still learning to process big emotions, he is energetic and creative, often drawing his favorite character—Sonic—on everything from notebooks to homework.





For Keshia, the Mission has provided more than shelter—it has offered support and encouragement for what comes next. Through case management, counseling and life-skills classes, she's rebuilding confidence and preparing for the future.

"It feels good to have people who really care about you," she shared. "You need that if you want to keep going."

She's currently enrolled in a case management program, exploring career paths that could one day allow her to help others facing similar challenges.

"I don't want to take just any job," she said. "I want to start a program for single moms. It means something different when someone else been through what you've been through."

Looking ahead, Keshia dreams of moving into a place her children can finally call home—one where they can unpack for good, build routines and feel safe.

"You have to stay strong," Keshia said. "You have to be open to other people and resources. I learned it starts with me. If I don't start, I'm going to be stuck."

Because of compassionate supporters like you, Keshia and her children are no longer just surviving. They are healing, growing and building toward a future filled with hope.

Just thinking about her family walking into their own home for the first time, Keshia said, "I might cry. It's going to be amazing to see my kids' faces when they see they have their own space. I just need stability for them and consistency. I can't give up on them—I'm strong for them."

Your generosity makes stories like Keshia's possible. Donate today to help families find safety and stability at DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives



Scan to Give!

100% Increase in Families Waiting for Shelter Last Year

To meet the growing need, we are preparing to expand our Family Shelter rooms at The Crossing.

Source: Denver Department of Housing Stability



Hope in full bloom

Friday, May 8th

Join us for a festive spring fundraiser!
Live music, delicious food, craft cocktails, and fun interactive activities.

Featured guest speaker Liz Murray, author of *Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*

RSVP at DenverRescueMission.org/Bloom
\$40 per ticket



 Mile High Station



It's Volunteer Appreciation Month!

THANK YOU for your impact last year:
60,644 Hours Served
266 Change Makers

Did you know?

Volunteer hours are the equivalent of 29 full-time employees—you make a big difference!

Volunteer
With Us



OUR CORE STRATEGIES



EMERGENCY SERVICES

Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable



RECOVERY

Equipping men through a life-changing program



TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS

Transitioning people into stability



PREVENTION

Helping stop homelessness before it starts



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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