

CHANGING LIVES

134 YEARS OF SERVICE



Preventing Homelessness One Family at a Time



Dear Friends,

"Who is getting upstream?" That is the question a room full of homeless service providers was asked several years ago by a major community leader.

I was working in another city leading another rescue mission. I took that question to heart. What if we could get upstream? What if we could prevent homelessness for families before it starts? What if we could keep children in a stable home instead of a shelter or in the back seat of a car? We know at least 50 percent of the adults experiencing homelessness we serve report their first homeless experience as a child. What if we could break the cycle?

That question led us to develop a Prevention program in partnership with public schools in my former city eight years ago, and now here in Colorado. Why public schools? The schools are great at identifying families in crisis. When a school identifies a family at risk of becoming homeless, they refer them to our caseworkers who have been specially trained in prevention. From there we do all we can to not only make sure the family does not enter homelessness but also does not end up in this situation again. This happens through immediate help and connection to ongoing resources like budgeting classes, more job training, etc.

We launched pilot programs in October 2025 with two school districts, Jeffco and Poudre. In the first four months we

prevented 65 families—130 children—from becoming homeless! The average, one-time financial help for a family is just over \$2,900. That is far cheaper than working with individuals and families once they become homeless. You will read a powerful story about one of the first families we helped. The vast majority of our help is through one-time rental assistance because the family is going through a temporary crisis that could force them into homelessness.

Our plan is to add two more school districts this year and, within five years, work with at least 50 percent of the schools in Colorado as well as develop a church-based program. If we do this right, years down the road there will be far fewer people experiencing homelessness because we stopped the cycle for children.

Our vision statement is: "Through the power of Christ, work to bring an end to homelessness in Denver Metro and Northern Colorado, one life at a time." Prevention is one of the many ways we are working toward that vision. With your help we can expand the Prevention program and keep families together and out of homelessness! The answer to the first question is: we are getting upstream through the power of Christ and with your help and support!

Grace and peace,

Dennis Van Kampen | President/CEO

THE MISSION in my words

Nicole is a Prevention Case Manager in Northern Colorado with experience in property management, behavioral health and case management, and is completing a master's in clinical counseling while pursuing Professional Counselor licensure.



Nicole Reichelderfer

What drew you to the Mission?

I grew up in Northern Colorado in a household that had many triumphs but also was impacted by financial instability. Our family, like many of the Prevention families we help, faced hardship due to unexpected medical expenses. Later in life, I found myself navigating through interpersonal relationship violence, leading to a period of being unhoused for safety. I sought a role that aligned with my own values that every human deserves housing stability, mental health advocacy, respect, and humility.

What is your primary focus in this role?

Often families stand at a riverbank of trauma, hardship and hopelessness. This role removes barriers and strengthens support so families can remain safely housed and connected to essential

resources, all with the goal of stronger advocacy for families and fewer households reaching crisis.

"Our program serves as the bridge to help families get to the other side of stability."

How do you see your work here as an extension of your faith?

I view my work as a response to Christ's call to love and serve others with compassion and humility. Scripture repeatedly emphasizes caring for those who are vulnerable, marginalized and in need. *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."* (Galatians 6:2). Supporting these families is, for me, serving not for recognition, but in obedience to the call to care for *"the least of these."* (Matthew 25:40).

Preventing Homelessness, One Family at a Time



When you meet Maddix—a

joyful eight-year-old whose laughter and bubbly personality fill any room—you would never guess the battles he's fought.

Born with complex heart conditions, Maddix has undergone **more than 80 medical procedures** in his young life. He was born with a heart nearly **three times the size it should be**, placing enormous strain on his lungs and other organs.

Meet Our First Prevention Family

While he has received extensive medical care, he has not yet qualified for a heart transplant. For now, doctors estimate his life expectancy may only reach his late teens.

Yet those who know him best—his family, teachers and friends—say he is one of the strongest, most positive and “full of life” kids you'll meet.

“He is the funniest, silliest, most talkative little boy you'll ever meet,” said Audrianna, Maddix's mom. “You would never know how sick he is by talking to him or looking at him. He's very creative, very active.”

“He is unstoppable,” added Cole, Maddix's dad. “No matter the illness, he hasn't let anything stand in his way.”

Through every medical challenge, Maddix has one constant source of strength: his family. Audrianna and Cole

are devoted parents to Maddix and their oldest son Jayden (12). Both serve as Maddix's full-time caregivers, providing **more than 115 hours of care each week**, ensuring he receives the support he needs to thrive.

Jayden, who is living with autism spectrum disorder, is a protective older brother.



What is Prevention?

Stopping homelessness before it starts

The Problem

Families and individuals from low-income or at-risk households sometimes find themselves forced to decide between paying rent or bills that can put them on the brink of homelessness.

Our Solution

- Partnership with public schools
- One-time financial support
- Case management support

= Keeping families at home. Where they belong.

"We couldn't have asked for a better big brother," Audrianna said. "When it comes to an emergency, Jayden jumps into action very quickly."

When Everything Changed

In September 2025, the family received devastating news: the right side of Maddix's heart was beginning to fail. He needed another high-risk, open-heart surgery, requiring weeks in the hospital.

A hospital stay is emotionally draining, and for Audrianna and Cole, it also threatened their home. Because they are paid caregivers for Maddix, **their income stops when he is admitted**, with the hospital becoming his legal caregiver.

"Of anything that I've ever dealt with, that was honestly one of the scariest," Cole said.

"We held it together until he got wheeled into the OR," Audrianna recalled. "Then we both kind of collapsed. We knew there was a high chance we wouldn't see our son alive again."

Suddenly, the family faced an impossible situation: **how to keep their home while fighting for their son's life**. They applied for help from multiple organizations—but repeatedly fell just short. One program required families to live at least 60 miles from the hospital to qualify for travel assistance. Their home was 58.2 miles away.

Determined, Audrianna even printed T-shirts at home featuring Maddix's favorite character, Baymax from *Big Hero 6*, with a QR code linking to the family's GoFundMe.

"I don't care if our phones get shut off or if I go without a meal," she said through tears. "I just want to make sure we have a home for the boys to return to."

A Program Designed for Moments Like This

At a moment when hope felt out of reach, Denver Rescue Mission's newly-launched Prevention program stepped in. Audrianna and Cole's family became the **first family served through the pilot program**, which provides financial assistance and case management to help families stay housed and avoid homelessness altogether.

"Once you get evicted, that's on your record and doesn't go away," explained Prevention Case Manager, Nicole Reichelderfer. "You start struggling to get into places, paying extra deposits, paying extra rent. You also gain stress and it just spirals from there."



The Prevention program partners closely with local schools in Denver and Northern Colorado, where teachers and staff often notice early warning signs that a family may be struggling.

"Schools hear stories every day: a kid shows up and says, 'I had to sleep at my grandma's last night,' or 'Our lights got turned off,'" Nicole said. "We rely on teachers, counselors, cafeteria staff—anyone who hears these difficult stories—to pass it upstream so families can get help."

When Maddix's school learned about his own family's situation, they quickly reached out.

"They were the perfect family because they had applied to so many different programs and missed the criteria just barely," Nicole said. "All these layers were adding up, which was going to lead to them being potentially unhoused."

The Mission quickly helped secure the assistance the family needed. Instead of worrying about eviction notices, Audrianna and Cole could focus on being with Maddix.

"It saved us. It saved us a lot of headaches, heartaches, struggles, and stress during an already incredibly stressful time," Audrianna said.

Resilience & Hope

Nicole has seen a commonality in every family served through Prevention: resilience.

"I wouldn't say there is such a thing as a typical family that we help—everybody's

situation is different," Nicole said. "What makes every family extraordinary is their resiliency."

Today, Maddix continues to fight with courage and determination. His future remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: his family will face whatever comes next, together.

Thanks to the support of their community—and the Mission's Prevention program—this family now has **one less burden to carry and one safe place to come home to.**

"Denver Rescue Mission went above and beyond anything that we could have expected," Cole said.

Audrianna added, "They told us from the get-go that they were going to go through everything, with no guarantees. But just the fact that they were willing to listen and help us pay for as much as they possibly could was more than we could have ever asked for."

**Watch their family's video story on CBS Colorado
[Vimeo.com/DenRescueMission/Maddix](https://www.cbs4.com/video/2023/07/11/denver-rescue-mission-maddix/)**



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it starts. Give today at
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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!



THANK YOU FOR HELPING MOMS
like Audrianna know that they aren't alone.

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Get your company involved at DenverRescueMission.org/Corporate-Engagement

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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



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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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