



RESCUE CHATTANOOGA

News from Chattanooga Rescue Mission

HOLIDAY ISSUE 2010

www.chattanoogarescuemission.org

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When I came to the Mission

I was terrified, broken and all alone

My name is Carol. It never seemed to end. The abuse went from morning to night. I was with my husband for 20 years and the beatings started from day one. One night while I was asleep, he broke a plate over my head, and I was covered in blood. Yes, he was an alcoholic. But he didn't have to get high to be mean. He lived without remorse. *It was always my fault.* I prayed the whole time he was abusing me. It took considerable courage to leave him.

I'm thankful He never gave up on me. I'm just glad I'm alive, and I'm here because of God's mercy and grace.

But his abuse did drive me to a nervous breakdown — and I turned to alcohol to numb the pain. During one of my emergency visits to the hospital, my blood alcohol level was so high the doctors wondered how I would survive. By now my family wanted nothing to do with me. If I hadn't come to the Chattanooga Rescue Mission, I would have probably died. When I came here I was terrified and broken. But a couple of the women made my bed for me, and I finally had a restful night's sleep. I wonder if you can imagine how that felt. I was safe...at last.

The Mission is so much more than a shelter

Now I'm working through my response to the abuse. I'm receiving counseling. I'm rebuilding bridges with my family. I'm attending classes and I'm getting closer to my God. It's with tears streaming down my face I tell you even my daughter came to see me. She is so happy her mother is finally getting the help *she* needs.

The Mission is so much more than a shelter. It's a place where I'm allowing God to take over my life. I'm thankful He never gave up on me. I'm just glad I'm alive, and I'm here because of God's mercy and grace. Thank you for all you do through your donations and acts of kindness and generosity to help make a place like the Mission possible.



An Encouraging Word from Dale Grisso
Director of Men's Discipleship Ministries

You've probably seen the television show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. In similar fashion, an *extreme makeover* is pretty much what God does to our guests when they decide to allow Him to take control of their lives. Suddenly, the past is no longer desirable...old things pass away and all things become new.

Here's what we know is true: *when you make one bad decision it's much easier to make another bad decision, and another, and another.*

That first wrong choice may have been to experiment with alcohol or other drugs at a young age. It may have been dropping out of school...or no longer attending church...or engaging in shady business practices. Life is cumulative...and poor choices invariably add up. When those wrong decisions finally come home to roost, that's when folks seem to come through our doors.

Even a floor is better than sleeping on our streets

But for whatever the reasons people come to us, we accept everyone with open arms and with God's love and compassion. Right now we are at capacity, with many of our guests having to sleep on the floor. But even the floor is better than sleeping on the streets of Chattanooga. We're also facing larger than ever expenses. It's not unusual for our electric bill to top \$3,000 in a given month. But we'll always do whatever it takes to shelter, clothe and feed the needy who come to us for help.

You've been so generous to the Mission over the last year — even when I know you also feel the economic pinch. That makes you a special friend, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Now the holidays are approaching, and even more homeless people will stream through our doors. Thank you for whatever you can give to help us show homeless men and women our Savior's love — love that often starts with a hot meal and a clean bed. Happy Thanksgiving and a blessed Christmas to you from the entire Mission staff.

Your servant to the needy,

Dale Grisso

Dale Grisso, Director of Men's Discipleship Ministries



"Thank you for whatever you can give to help us show homeless men and women our Savior's love — love that often starts with a hot meal and a clean bed."

What Do the Holidays Mean to the Homeless?

It's an annual occurrence when the holidays come. Parties, cantatas, big meals, special football games. . . . In the midst of all the hustle, I wonder, do we ever stop to consider what the holidays mean to a homeless person?



The homeless person, in all likelihood, has experienced rejection from his family. He doesn't have the means to get to the restaurants, to the malls, to the parties. He feels cut off from society and the things which we treasure most about the holidays: home, family, security.

Yet homeless people have feelings too. They crave love; they want to enjoy the spirit of the hour. That is why at CRM we try to make the holidays a special time. **We go all-out for Thanksgiving and invite the homeless to come to "our house" for dinner. For Christmas, we put up a big tree with all the decorations.** To top it all off, loving, caring volunteers like you help us gather toiletries, clothing accessories, and treats so that our friends will have a special Christmas gift on Christmas Day. It's our way of saying, "You are special to us!"

Our Shelter Guests Thank You

Expressions of gratitude are not reserved for Thanksgiving Day at CRM. As shelter guests pass through the halls they will say, **"Thank you so much for all you do."** We hear "thank you" for the water coolers we put out in the summer and for the coats, hats, scarves, and gloves we give them in the winter months. They are especially appreciative for being able to be in a heated building instead of out on cold streets.

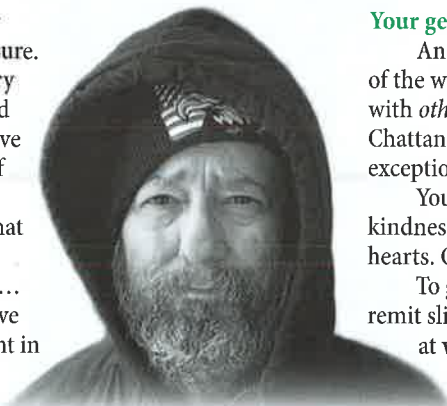
While we certainly appreciate the hugs we receive, we are keenly aware of the fact that those hugs of thankfulness truly belong to those who donated the clothing, the sheets, the towels, the soaps, the toothpaste. They belong to those who gave of their substance to pay for the electricity and the operating costs. Their "Thank you" and their hugs rightfully belong to you!

Thank you for your generosity in the past.

Now the holidays are here, and the homeless still need to know you care

No question about it. God could have chosen other methods. More dramatic announcements, to be sure. He could have sent His Son trailing clouds of glory through suddenly opened heavens with legions of winged angels at his side serving as bodyguards. Or He might have announced the arrival of His Son through a succession of horrendous seismic shocks, torrential floods, enormous (perhaps even scary) voices of thunder or other means that would certainly have gotten humankind's attention.

But no. That was not the plan. It was a baby. A *baby*... born of a humble girl in a stable. Who but God would have thought of such a thing? Yet, it was at this precise moment in time that Love was set forth on His mighty mission.



Your generosity allows us to declare the gift at Bethlehem

And it is this baby, this child of Bethlehem, this Savior of the world, this King of Kings whom we celebrate and share with *other* homeless folks who come through the doors of Chattanooga Rescue Mission this holiday season. With one exception: *here, there is always room in the inn.*

Your faithful support keeps our doors open. Your kindness brings joy and peace to shattered spirits and broken hearts. God bless you for all you do.

To give your generous holiday donation, please use the remit slip enclosed, or you may make your donation online at www.chattanoogarescuemission.org. God bless you for being a friend to the homeless, the helpless and those who've lost their way. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to you and your family.

"You have been generous beyond words in weeks and months past. How could we make it without you? Simple answer: we couldn't."