

# WE'RE GETTING RAVE REVIEWS



Chef Paul Byron says he “chased the dollar” a long time. “In the restaurant business, you deliver a beautiful meal on a hot plate to a stranger who paid \$22.50 (or more!) for it, but you never see a smile on his face.”

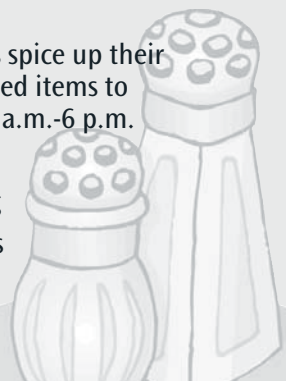
So Chef Paul stopped chasing dollars and started cooking for smiles in January, when he became chef at Bridgeport Rescue Mission. “We put a meal on a tray—not a fancy plate—and we put our hearts into it and get a smile because we’ve changed someone’s day!”

The “we” is Chef Paul’s team, the New Life Discipleship Program students under his supervision. “I’m training seven guys in every area of food preparation. And, they are getting rave reviews. This job is everything I’ve searched for!”

## SPICE UP *Our Kitchen*

Help Chef Paul and his trainees spice up their cooking. Bring these urgently needed items to 1088 Fairfield Avenue, weekdays, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

- Protein (meats of all kinds)
- Spices and herbs for flavoring
- Milk and other dairy products





Linda Casey  
Director of Development

# Help Us Avoid "Summer Slump"

It's a fact of life for most nonprofit agencies. Summer slump occurs because good folks who truly care about the hurting people in their communities forget to give during the busy months of summer.

Bridgeport Rescue Mission does not seek or accept any government funds that compromise our Christ-centered mission. Instead, we count on you to partner with us in tending to the needs of the homeless and hungry of Bridgeport and beyond. Your summer gifts ensure we can continue our services uninterrupted.

Here are simple ways you can give:

- Make a one-time cash gift this spring to cover the regular gifts you'd normally give throughout the summer.
- Give monthly through your credit card. Fill out the back of the enclosed response form to make automatic gifts through your credit card. It's

worry-free, hassle-free and guarantees the Mission's financial foundation remains strong.

- Make a gift of stock. When you give stock held more than one year to Bridgeport Rescue Mission, you avoid all capital gains tax. And, you may take the full market value of the gift as a charitable deduction on your income tax.

Because you give faithfully, we can continue to help hungry, homeless and addicted men and women in Fairfield County fight poverty from the inside out.

So please, before you head to the cabin, beach or mountains, don't forget to give to Bridgeport Rescue Mission.

Contact Linda Casey, director of development, at (203) 333-4087 or [LMCasey@BridgeportRescueMission.org](mailto:LMCasey@BridgeportRescueMission.org). Read more about all your giving options when you visit [www.BridgeportRescueMission.org](http://www.BridgeportRescueMission.org). Thanks and God bless you.

## Give Confidently



Here are five reasons you can give confidently to Bridgeport Rescue Mission:

1. Bridgeport Rescue Mission is a member in good standing of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions ([www.agrm.org](http://www.agrm.org)) and with the Christian Stewardship Association ([www.csa.org](http://www.csa.org)).
2. We submit to an annual audit by an independent accounting firm and are guided by a board of directors who understands its responsibility to oversee our programs, policies and stewardship practices.
3. We maintain an open book and open building policy. What does that mean to you? You may call to schedule a look at our audit or a tour of our buildings any time.
4. We promptly receipt your financial contributions, usually within a week.
5. We never rent, sell or trade the names on our mailing list. Never!

Want to know more? Contact Director of Development Linda Casey at (203) 333-4087 or [LMCasey@BridgeportRescueMission.org](mailto:LMCasey@BridgeportRescueMission.org) with your questions or concerns. We look forward to hearing from you.



Whether your gift is cash, a bag of groceries or a helping hand, you are making a difference in this mission field right in your own backyard! Thanks for all you do.

Get a firsthand look at Bridgeport Rescue Mission and the people you are serving by scheduling a

*Friday Lunch-n-Tour.*

E-mail Linda Casey at

[LMCasey@BridgeportRescueMission.org](mailto:LMCasey@BridgeportRescueMission.org)

or call (203) 333-4087.



# RESCUE MISSION NEWS

SERVING THE HUNGRY, HOMELESS AND ADDICTED OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY

## Living FROM THE Heart

Earl Garner turns from the stove and watches the people eating dinner in Bridgeport Rescue Mission's dining room. As he sees the satisfaction on each diner's face, he is overcome with gratitude for God's redemption, for the Mission and for the hungry people enjoying his food.

Almost 30 years ago, Earl suffered the loss of his 10-month-old son when the baby was given the wrong medication for a heart condition. Weeks later, his 2-year-old son died, a victim of the 1978 Hong Kong flu pandemic.

Angry at God, Earl headed for California where he joined a gang. "I'd grown up in church and knew about God, but I was hardhearted," he explains. "I ended up on the streets, a soldier in a gang. I almost lost my life several times."

In 2005, Earl returned to Connecticut and joined a program for alcohol addiction in Norwich.

After completing the program, he and several buddies moved in together, but one day, he smelled liquor in the house and knew he'd struggle to remain sober there.

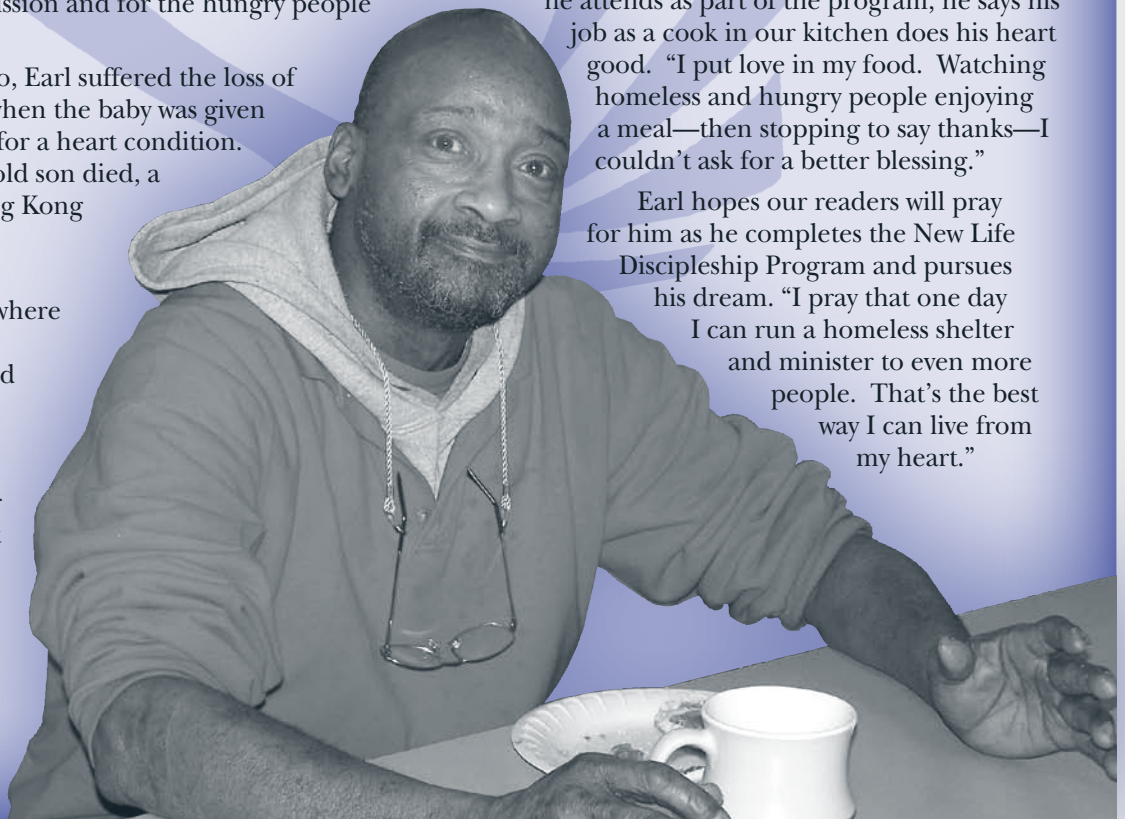
Earl's brother, a pastor, told him about Bridgeport Rescue Mission. Soon, Earl was enveloped in the love and support of the staff and his newfound "brothers" in our New Life Discipleship Program.

"Fellowship is important to me," Earl says. "I'm from a big family with 10 brothers and four sisters. Being here is like having another family."

In the six months Earl has been in our recovery program, he's grown to love and trust God. "After reading what God went through with His Son, who am I to be mad at Him? I'm one of *His* soldiers now," he says. "If I could open my heart and let you see it, you'd see what I can't explain."

While Earl enjoys the Bible study and other classes he attends as part of the program, he says his job as a cook in our kitchen does his heart good. "I put love in my food. Watching homeless and hungry people enjoying a meal—then stopping to say thanks—I couldn't ask for a better blessing."

Earl hopes our readers will pray for him as he completes the New Life Discipleship Program and pursues his dream. "I pray that one day I can run a homeless shelter and minister to even more people. That's the best way I can live from my heart."





Terry Wilcox teaches students in the New Life Discipleship Program during a Wednesday morning General Assembly.

# Get Connected

Dear Friend,

I don't get down very often. When I do, I'm a little annoyed that people around me are still upbeat, smiling ... even laughing! For that brief time, we have nothing in common. We are worlds apart.

That's how I imagine it feels to be the homeless man or woman who walks the streets of Bridgeport. The sun might be shining. People on the sidewalk stride by with purpose ... a destination. But the homeless person feels cold, lost and alone.

No one understands the suffering of the homeless better than someone who has been there. That's why we are enthusiastic about giving students in our New Life Discipleship Program opportunities to share and grow together.

There's something comforting about the words, "I've been where you are." It means someone fully understands what you are going through and knows for a fact that if he or she made it, you can, too!

You, our faithful friends, share your resources, time and prayers with Bridgeport Rescue Mission. When you add the healing power of Christ's love reflected in the empathetic actions of our staff, volunteers, and yes, our students too, this becomes a place of transformation. Thanks for living—and giving—from your heart.

Your Servant in Christ,

Terry Wilcox  
Executive Director



**Fighting Poverty  
from the Inside Out**

**Bridgeport Rescue Mission**

1088 Fairfield Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605  
(203) 333-4087

[www.BridgeportRescueMission.org](http://www.BridgeportRescueMission.org)

Terry Wilcox  
Executive Director

Linda Casey  
Director of Development



## IN MEMORY OF THE FORGOTTEN

In recognition of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, Bridgeport Rescue Mission's choir, made up of members of the New Life Discipleship Program, pictured here, participated in a service held at Homes for the Brave, December 21.

In addition to those representing local service agencies serving the homeless were Mayor Bill Finch, homeless advocate Senator John McKinney, a full Army honor guard and the Patriot Guard Riders.



"We were privileged to be part of this event, and proud of our choir members who sang with hearts of compassion," says Terry Wilcox.

### Because You Gave 2007

Because you cared enough to give, Bridgeport Rescue Mission met the following needs in 2007

#### January-December 2007

Nights of shelter provided: 27,180

Meals served: 175,000

New Life Program graduates: 20

**Take Note!** With the opening of our new women's shelter, we've increased the average number of nights of shelter by 21 percent and increased our budget by 23 percent to maintain the additional housing.

# A Day in Our Lives

*Each day at Bridgeport Rescue Mission is structured carefully for students in our New Life Discipleship Program. Here's a look at how program student Dorian Schafer, 54, and Program Director Father Michael Moran spend their days.*

## 7 A.M.

As Father Michael grabs a last cup of coffee before heading to work, Dorian puts finishing touches on his sleeping area at the Mission and heads for the dining hall for breakfast at 7:30. "If you don't get up, you don't get breakfast," he quips.

## 8:15-NOON

Dorian and his program brothers join Father Michael for Bible study, followed by life-skills courses that run the gamut from anger management to budgeting.

"Many residents have trouble with simple tasks others take for granted," explains Father Michael. "When you're involved in drugs or alcohol, common sense is the first thing out the window." Dorian, who has been a student in the program since March 2007, adds, "You don't realize at first you need those things. You get desensitized from a lifetime of addiction."

## NOON

At noon, students eat together and discuss the afternoon's job assignments, including household duties and volunteer projects. "We sort and distribute donations to the women's shelter and other areas," Dorian says. "And, we have to keep our house in order." As a veteran student, Dorian often answers the phone, assigns jobs and supervises newer brothers in the program.

"The men also volunteer as a way of thanking God for giving them back their lives," says Father Michael. "To whom much is given, much is required."

"I agree," Dorian says. "I owe God big time! I'm saved and I want to give back."

## 1-4:30 P.M.

While Dorian and other residents accomplish assigned tasks, Father Michael proceeds through a

whirlwind of problem solving, counseling, evaluations, reports and correcting—all coupled with constant prayer. "The most common phrase I hear is 'Father Michael, do you have a minute?' But it's a wonderful sound to hear," he says.

## 4:30-7 P.M.

Role call at 4:30 is followed by an exchange of prayer concerns, tomorrow's work schedule, and, sometimes, special surprises!

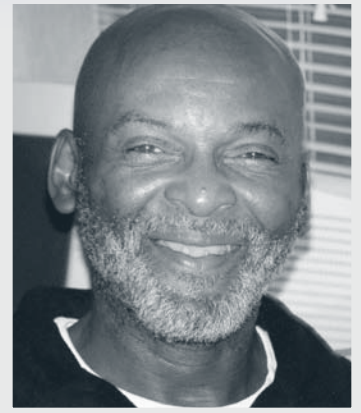
"Today, we honored four residents with new Bibles for going above and beyond the call of duty," Father Michael smiles. Dorian says, "You never know when you will be recognized for your hard work. It's good for our souls." Both agree Chef Paul's team will serve a dinner that's good for the soul, too!

## 7-8:30 P.M.

Chapel each night is often the highlight of the day. "It's uplifting," Dorian says simply. Father Michael, who leaves for home during the dinner hour, notes, "Going home is the hardest thing I do each day."

Most of the New Life Discipleship Program students head for bed early, tired but satisfied, after a day of learning, hard work and camaraderie. "I'm trying to set boundaries for the rest of my life and I'm glad I'm not doing it alone. I came here and I'll leave here an individual, but I'll take part of this place with me when I go," Dorian says.

"These guys call each other brother for a reason," Father Michael concludes. "That's why this is my passion. Every day I see lives changed through Christ."



Dorian Schafer, a student in our New Life Discipleship Program, says he "owes God big-time!"



## I've Found My Passion

Father Michael Moran came on board as program director at Bridgeport Rescue Mission, October 2007. Ordained in the Southern Episcopal Church in 2002, he believes a relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior is essential for recovery.

Father Michael obtained a Master of Divinity from Yale University and a Master of Business Administration from Sacred Heart University. Born and raised in Bridgeport, he resides in Shelton with Grace, his wife of 26 years.

Father Michael says everything he's learned from previous jobs and school helped prepare him for his job at the Mission.

# COMPASSION IN ACTION

## *Bring Beauty* TO THEIR LIVES



A program student in last summer's vegetable garden.

If you enjoy gardening, we invite you to help beautify our grounds. We'd love to have individual or group volunteers bring and plant easy-to-maintain perennials! Contact Jill Monroe at (203) 333-4087, ext. 102 to volunteer. Thanks!

## The \$10 Bill

Pastor Ron crumpled and stomped on a \$10 bill during his sermon at the Mission's General Assembly. Holding it up, he asked, "Does anyone still want this?" Of course the answer was yes!

"No matter how crumpled or ripped up we are, God sees us as highly valuable," he concluded. Our students' eyes lit up as they realized God valued them just as they are.

Then, Pastor Ron invited everyone to check under their seats to see if a dot was stuck there; the person who found the dot won the \$10 bill!

After the General Assembly ended, the once-homeless woman who won the money decided to give it to her church. "I'm constantly amazed that those with the least have the easiest time giving up what they have," said Terry Wilcox, executive director.