



# RESCUE MISSION NEWS

2017  
Spring



A PUBLICATION OF BRIDGEPORT RESCUE MISSION

## The Start of Something *good!*



The simple decision to walk through the Mission's door can mean the start of something good for a homeless man, a broken woman or a needy family. A hot meal begins the process of rebuilding stamina and strength. A prayer of encouragement leads to renewed self-esteem. A computer training class sets in motion the steps to finding a stable job.

Because of your goodness—the kind compassion you show through your gifts and prayers—we are there for every individual who seeks our help. *Inside, please read about the "good" taking place every day, in so many ways, at Bridgeport Rescue Mission.*



www.BridgeportRescueMission.org

SERVING THE HUNGRY, HOMELESS AND ADDICTED OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Executive Director Terry Wilcox, along with the Mission's Sous Chef Freddie (left) and Chef Pat (middle), are grateful for our newly renovated kitchen where hot, wholesome meals provide a good start for a day of learning and growing.

## Bridgeport Rescue Mission

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**Rev. Terry Wilcox**  
Executive Director

**Donna Romano**  
Director of Marketing

All stories and photos in this newsletter are of students and guests at Bridgeport Rescue Mission.



Fighting Poverty  
from the Inside Out  
and Serving the  
Hurting and  
Homeless of Coastal  
Fairfield County

# Get Connected

Dear Friend,

He stood and walked to the front of the room where our staff and New Life students meet for a weekly general assembly. The intent of this weekly meeting is to inspire, inform and encourage life transformation. Each week, everyone has the opportunity to speak to their challenges and progress. Bob would not likely attract anyone's attention. However, with his few words you knew "something good" had begun and it was dramatic!

He told of his family—11 children... an abusive, alcoholic father... the death of his 3-year-old brother. Bob, then 13 years old, was blamed for his brother's death. What followed was a life of guilt, addiction and enough money to support his destructive lifestyle. As I empathized with his tragic story, I thought, "My God! Without a miracle, this guy will never overcome his past!"

Bob shed some tears (most of us did), he started to smile, then told of counseling with our men's director, MaryAnn Gardner, a few days earlier. She helped him find God's forgiveness and leave behind the lies and life choices that had crippled him. He said for the first time since he was 13 years old he was free! He knew he was forgiven, and the guilt was gone!

Bob is 64 years old and "something good" has started! When did it start? I don't know. Perhaps with a praying grandmother, or MaryAnn's decision to work at Bridgeport Rescue Mission, or when Bridgeport Rescue Mission was started 24 years ago, or when donors like you decided to support our ministry with your gifts and prayers. Thank you!

In His Service,

*Terry Wilcox*

Rev. Terry Wilcox  
Executive Director



## A GOOD START TO A

# Bright Future

After losing his job... then his car... and finally being forced to leave the home he shared with a relative because of his drug use, 23-year-old Joshua lived on the streets for nearly a year. "I had nowhere else to go," he says. "I didn't want to be a burden on my family." When he grew tired of being cold and hungry, he came to our emergency shelter, where a safe bed and a hot meal were the "good start" he needed to turn his life around. Today he's growing in his faith, embracing our guidance and looking forward to living on his own. "Life is starting to get better!" he says.





# Supportive Housing Offers the Next Step to a Good Start



***"I thank God for giving me the courage to come up these steps and to be where I am today!"***

***—Sammy***

Graduation from our New Life Program is recognition and acknowledgment of the many forms of transformation that have taken place in a man or woman's life. Our graduates have regained their sobriety... adopted healthy habits and positive behaviors... repaired relationships with loved ones... and become an active part of a Christ-centered community.

Yet the transition from the Mission's care to the "real world" can present many challenges, not the least of which is securing stable employment. Our new Men's Supportive Housing Program (MSHP) provides graduates of our New Life Program as well as other Christian programs with transitional housing, case management and in-house apprenticeship positions to assist them in their transition to independent living.

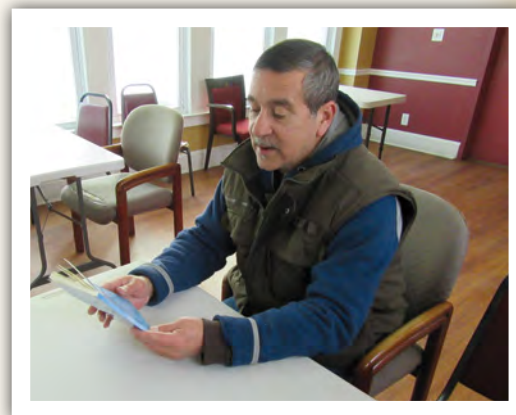
Sammy is one of the program's first participants, and he proudly tracks the length of the sobriety he's worked hard to achieve. "It's been one year, two months and three days," he recently shared. Years of alcoholism cost him his job and his home. He was sleeping in his car—then it was stolen. "I had nowhere to go, so I came to Bridgeport Rescue Mission," he says.

Sammy is currently in the "job search" status of our program, working with a case manager to create a specialized plan for locating employment or determining if additional education or job training is needed. Apprenticeship status is offered for men who apply for and are accepted into a position within the MSHP. Men on work status have jobs with a sustainable income. All men are asked to pay a sliding fee based on their income or are assigned community service projects until employment is secured.

To provide a foundation of accountability, men connect weekly with a sponsor, a spiritual advisor and a pastor—a team dedicated to helping them maintain their positive path. Men also attend outside recovery groups and continue their involvement in a local church.

Residents of the program are also required to perform chores to help with the daily operation of the Mission, such as sorting donations for our Food Pantry. "Whatever needs to be done, I do it," Sammy says, always serving with a joyful heart.

For most men, the duration of the MSHP is one year, but the ties they form with one another, their sponsors and the staff will continue to provide a network of support as they return to their communities, prepared to lead independent, productive and godly lives.



To learn more about this vital new program—including financial needs and volunteer opportunities—contact MaryAnn Gardner at (203) 331-8982, ext. 101 or [MGardner@BridgeportRescueMission.org](mailto:MGardner@BridgeportRescueMission.org).

# THANK YOU FOR the Holidays

Turkeys for holiday meals... toys for children and blankets for families... coats to keep people warm.

For all this and more, we thank the scores of donors, volunteers and corporate sponsors who made our annual holiday outreach possible.



## CORPORATE COMPASSION IN ACTION

We're grateful for the holiday and year-round support of these generous partners:

### **Gold Partners**

Affinion Group  
G.E. Capital  
PrimeLine  
Reed Exhibitions

### **Bronze Partners**

Anholt Services (USA), Inc.  
Bank of America  
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Mercedes-Benz of Fairfield  
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Citizens Bank  
Grafton Data System, Inc.  
Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder  
Newtown Savings Bank  
Unilever

### **Silver Partners**

Barrow Street Advisors  
People's United Bank



## *A Special Note of Gratitude . . .*

Stamford-based **Affinion Group**, a global leader in loyalty and customer engagement, launched an official corporate partnership with Bridgeport Rescue Mission in 2016. The partnership brings the Connecticut-based corporate leader alongside the Mission's work to fight poverty and help our hungry and homeless neighbors in Fairfield County. In addition to financial support, Affinion Group established an ongoing employee volunteer program, including a year-round calendar of events and team-building activities that will benefit the Mission and bring increased awareness to the plight of those who are hungry and homeless in our region. We're grateful to this partner for its many levels of support.



## Your Ongoing Gifts Start Something Good Every Day of the Year...

### **For those who are homeless**

- Emergency shelter, meals and clothing for homeless men, women and mothers with children
- Faith-based addiction recovery, along with spiritual guidance, case management and life-skills training
- Referrals to medical, legal and other social-service agencies
- Supportive housing and guidance as program graduates seek employment and transition into the community

### **For struggling neighbors in Bridgeport and South Norwalk**

- Food, clothing and household items for low-income families and individuals
- Holiday distributions of warm coats and Food Pantry Bags

### **From our Mobile Kitchens**

- Meals served daily throughout Bridgeport and South Norwalk
- Encouragement offered by volunteers from local churches, synagogues, businesses and civic groups
- Clothing and other items distributed to meet needs in impoverished neighborhoods

***Your continued support is deeply appreciated. Please send a gift today!***

