



RESCUE MISSION NEWS

Spring

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A Foundation for TRANSFORMATION



There were many attempts to change—to make amends to the people he'd hurt and be a better parent to the children he loved. But, as he was frustrated to discover, it's difficult to do the right thing without guidance and opportunities. Finally, at rock bottom, he overdosed three times, but God saved him. So he prayed: *God, if you won't let me die, do something with me.* And He did.

"I was born unmanageable," says James. "I was in street gangs. I was in prison. I've been shot. I've shot people. I used drugs. I sold drugs. I managed escorts online. And I made a decent living doing it."

Read how God changed James' life on Page 2.

www.BridgeportRescueMission.org

SERVING THE HUNGRY, HOMELESS AND ADDICTED OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Get Connected

Dear Friend,

They come to us homeless, addicted, emotionally burdened and spiritually distressed. The people in our care are at the lowest point in their lives and seeking a foundation on which to rebuild their futures from the ground up. At Bridgeport Rescue Mission, we know the only solid and permanent foundation for a meaningful life is a relationship with Christ.

Our compassionate counselors and staff provide the building blocks—programs and services rooted in God's Word. And our donors and volunteers—friends like you—come alongside us to offer strength and stability through your helping hands, financial contributions and faithful prayers. In this issue, you'll read how we help men and women build a foundation for success through changed hearts, restored health, renewed relationships and vital education that empowers them to live productive and meaningful lives. God bless you for being part of it.

In His service,



Rev. Terry Wilcox
Executive Director

“Do Something With Me.”

... James' story, continued from the cover

Submitting to his mother's desperate pleas, James entered a detox facility. Then knowing he would need a structured foundation on which to rebuild his life, he joined Bridgeport Rescue Mission's recently redesigned New Life Discipleship Program. “When I found out it was a spiritual program, I knew it was where God wanted me,” he says.

James would later become the first graduate of the restructured program. “That meant something to me,” he shares. “I was going to be used to honor God and I tried to put my all into everything the Mission had for me.” He excelled in his recovery and life-skills courses and poured his heart into his discipleship classes. Through work-therapy he served meals to hungry people. He washed clothes for his fellow residents and folded them with love. And he diligently cleaned the Mission offices. And all the while, James says, “God was tendering my surrender. He was teaching me how to serve.”

Last year James went from cleaning the Mission's facilities to cleaning the house of God when he was offered a salaried position with benefits at Black Rock Church. “I knew this was of God's doing, because it was directly serving His people,” he says. Today James is also enrolled in college, has a place of his own and is blessed with many opportunities to serve the Lord, including sharing his testimony and experience with inner-city kids. Among his greatest joys has been restoring his relationship with his own three children. He attended his oldest son's graduation from high school and is proudly supporting him as he goes on to college.

“Awesome stuff is happening,” he says. “I give all the glory to God!”



Executive Director Terry Wilcox and the Bridgeport Rescue Mission leadership team provide direction for the programs and services, which create a Christ-centered foundation of success.

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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**

Your gifts and prayers allow Bridgeport Rescue Mission to provide a faith-centered foundation upon which lives are rebuilt, families are restored and hope is renewed. Thank you for your continued partnership.

Your Giving Provides a Foundation for Success

Faithful and consistent giving allows Bridgeport Rescue Mission to be a place where men and women can surrender to God, allow Him to change their hearts and minds, discover His purpose for their lives, and become contributing members of their families and their communities. Along with our staff, donors play a crucial role in building a foundation of hope for our neighbors in need through these comprehensive programs and services:

To learn how you can become a Monthly Giving Partner, see the flap on the right.

In Bridgeport

- Emergency shelter for homeless and displaced men, women and mothers with children
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner free of charge for Mission students, guests and low-income members of the community
- Food Pantry Bags with enough food to feed a family in need for a week
- Hot, nutritious meals six days a week from our Mobile Kitchens for community members struggling to make ends meet
- Special holiday meals, gifts and coat distributions
- Clothing, personal items and household goods
- Referrals to medical, legal and other social-service agencies
- Long-term Christ-centered addiction recovery program (see article below for more information) for men and women
- Spiritual formation, addiction recovery and life skills



In South Norwalk

- Hot, nutritious meals four days a week for community members struggling to make ends meet
- Good used and new clothing for children and adults
- Holiday distributions of warm coats and Food Pantry Bags

Mobile Kitchen

- Serving meals daily at four sites in Bridgeport and four sites in South Norwalk
- Offering special holiday dinners at Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Staffed by caring volunteers, including individuals and groups from local churches, businesses and civic organizations
- Brightening lives by sharing clothing for all



New Life Discipleship Program Offers Strong Biblical Foundation

Over the past year our New Life Discipleship Program has been redesigned toward the goal of implementing the best faith-based addiction recovery in the state for adults who have no financial resources to seek recovery on their own.

Our approach focuses on *spiritual formation*, *addiction recovery* and *life skills*, and fully integrates the Genesis Process, a relapse prevention curriculum incorporating the clinical facts related to addiction, blended with the values of the 12-Step Program, undergirded by biblical principles. The seven-month residential program includes physical recovery, case management, counseling, classroom participation, transitional living and job-readiness training.

New Life Discipleship Program continued on Page 4.



Monthly Giving Partners Provide a Foundation of Financial Support



By pledging a gift of \$15, \$25, \$35 or more each month, our **Monthly Giving Partners** provide a predictable stream of operational income to help Bridgeport Rescue Mission meet expenses averaging over \$250,000 each month. This foundation of support allows us to be better stewards of our resources and, as a result, provide a more effective outreach of

programs and services to meet the needs of our neighbors who are homeless or poor. And because gifts can be automatically charged to a credit card, monthly giving offers an efficient and trouble-free way to support the Mission all year-round.

If you're not already a **Monthly Giving Partner**, we encourage you to become part of this vital group. Simply check the box on the reply card and we'll contact you to set it up. Or for more information, please call Kim Faucett at (203) 333-4087, ext. 113.

"We recently became Monthly Giving Partners and are blessed to know we're helping the Mission care for the homeless and less fortunate on an ongoing and consistent basis. Having our monthly gift charged to our credit card makes it convenient for us and provides a foundation of support that is vital to Bridgeport Rescue Mission."

—Gene & Marilyn Lofaro

A Call to Churches Stuff-A-Truck to Feed the Hungry

Bridgeport Rescue Mission invites your church to take part in our **Stuff-A-Truck** food drive program to help collect the thousands of nonperishable food items that are needed to prepare the meals we serve year-round in our dining room or distribute from our Mobile Kitchens.

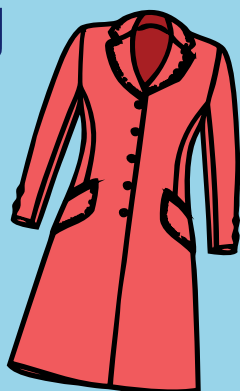
Simply select a Sunday your congregation would like to participate and the Mission will station our truck in your church parking lot to receive the donations and provide a receipt. Let your congregation know in advance that we'll be there, and ask them to bring food from the list below. To schedule a **Stuff-A-Truck** Sunday, contact Perri at (203) 333-4087, ext. 112.

Visit our
website for other
Stuff-A-Truck
locations
throughout the
summer!

Food items needed:

Canned tomato sauce
Canned tuna
Canned fruit & vegetables
Canned ravioli & stew
Boxes of macaroni and cheese
Bags of rice
Ramen noodle soup
Peanut butter & jelly
in plastic containers

Spring Cleaning for Coats!



Each holiday season Bridgeport Rescue Mission gives away more than 15,000 coats to our neighbors in need. As you clean your closets, please donate coats and other winter wear to the Mission! Deliver your contributions to our Donation Center—1069 Connecticut Avenue, Unit 2B, in Bridgeport—Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Coats and jackets (all sizes, for children and adults)
Hats, gloves and scarves (for children and adults)
Winter boots (all sizes, for children and adults)

New Life Discipleship Program *(continued from Page 3)*

This model is also being modified to meet the needs of the mothers and kids we serve in our Guest House for Women and Children who often face life challenges not rooted in addiction. For this special group the recovery component is replaced with an emphasis on healing and parenting for the mothers and on coping strategies for the children.

Your ongoing financial support is essential in allowing us to expand this and other programs to meet the specific needs of hurting and homeless men, women and children and your gift today will be so deeply appreciated.

The Mission is blessed by two highly dedicated staff members who bring professional leadership to our New Life Discipleship Program.

MaryAnn Gardner (right), director of our men's program and shelter services, holds master's degrees in education and clinical counseling, is a board-certified human services practitioner, serves as an adjunct professor and holds an honorary doctor of divinity. She previously worked as lead intervention specialist for a nonprofit agency within the criminal justice program, offering counseling and guidance to men and women battling homelessness and substance abuse. "I feel blessed to be here every day, watching students progress through the phases of the program, grow spiritually and evolve into wonderful men of God," she says.

Yeharar Vielot (left) is director of our women's program and shelter services for homeless women and moms with children. Through her mix of experience in substance abuse counseling, case management, ministry outreach and human resources, she was uniquely prepared for her current role when God called her to Bridgeport Rescue Mission. "I'm reminded of God's grace every day," she says. "In love, with Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, we're doing what the Lord is leading us to do, and that's the goal of the program."



Thank You for the Holidays!

Toys for children, helping hands to serve meals, financial donations to ensure all those in our care and struggling members of the community experienced the joy of the holiday season. For all this and more, we thank everyone who made our annual outreach possible, including these enthusiastic groups:



Volunteers from **Guideposts** assisted at our Prayer Table and donated the Guidepost packets we distributed to our guests.



Ashcroft employees took part in our **Great ThanksGiving Project** for the first time, handing out coats to grateful men, women and children.



Associates from the **McIntyre Group** enjoyed their first experience volunteering at our **Great ThanksGiving Project**.