

# THE Mission



Union Gospel  
Mission of  
**TARRANT  
COUNTY**  
*Serving for 121 Years*

Stories of the Lord's Provision Through You in Tarrant County



Your Generosity  
Helps Keep  
**SPIRITS  
BRIGHT!**

INSIDE: A Smile for Christmas • A Father's Cry for Help • A Former Resident Says "Thank You!"



Don Shisler PRESIDENT

## A Smile for CHRISTMAS

Dear Friend,

If you've never seen a homeless child tear into a Christmas present, you don't know what you're missing. Picture the best reaction you've ever gotten from a child you know and multiply it by ten!

Homelessness is so scary for a child, and fear fills the eyes of so many of the girls and boys when they first arrive. Many have lost everything to whatever tragedy brought them to Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County. A few donated toys minimize the shock and help them feel "normal" again.

You can imagine what the big smiles on their faces mean to the parents who haven't seen a smile there in so long!

Every Christmas we try to stock enough toys for every boy and girl here...for our long-term residents to send their own children...and a few left over for families with last-minute needs. We don't want any child to be left out!

**"Dear friends,  
since God so  
loved us, we also  
ought to love  
one another."**

-1 John 4:11, NIV

Neither, it seems, do partners like you. I love the way Christmas brings out the best in our community. So many people call to ask, "How can we help?" **That's great, because the need in Tarrant County is huge this holiday season.**

Last year, we ran a little short on toys, and I know this year we expect there to be even more children to reassure. There will be thousands of meals to prepare and presents to wrap. Most important of all, we want to welcome every guest with the Good News of Christ's birth.

I hope you'll show your compassion once again as we head into this busy season of ministry. Anything you give will help make spirits bright this Christmas, and we'd welcome your volunteer help or your visit to Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County for a tour.

May God give you a blessed holiday season, filled with reminders of His love and care for you!

In Christ,



# “I’m a father crying out for help...”

The sight of a man pushing a baby carriage around our Men’s Shelter raises a few eyebrows, but Derek doesn’t care. With his baby girl so fragile from sickle cell anemia, his only focus in life is finding a stable new home and getting his two older daughters back. In the meantime, he’s just glad to have a safe place to stay.

## Hard Knocks

Derek’s used to adversity. “I grew up in one of the worst ghettos in the US,” he says. His father wanted nothing to do with Derek and his two siblings. At 17, he was mistaken for someone else and shot three times. He couldn’t move his arm for the next two years, but he still managed to graduate from high school.

Derek was married for 18 years before his wife left him with their two young adopted daughters. “So there I am a single dad with two girls and I didn’t know how to do it,” but he learned. In fact, he even opened a daycare center so he could make a living and still be with his children!

As the girls neared their teens, Derek closed the daycare and started a carpet cleaning business. Money was tight, but he bought a house on a low-interest loan, and the family seemed secure. He and his girlfriend even had a baby girl.

But his girlfriend became violent towards Derek and the children and had to be jailed. Then the interest rates soared and Derek couldn’t afford his house payments. Just that quickly, Derek and the



three girls were homeless, in the dead of winter.

## Safe Haven

We were so glad to offer Derek a place in our new “men with families” room!

Although his older girls had to be sent to a church youth shelter and the separation was painful, Derek remains grateful every day for the caring environment surrounding his baby daughter. “We had to be in the hospital for three days, and [the staff] would call to check up on us. That showed they care. If they see you want the help, they’ll go to bat for you.

“This place is run wonderful,” he says sincerely. And because of compassionate partners like you, “They give me everything that I ask for. I don’t have to buy diapers

or wipes. They give my daughter juice, everything.”

We’ve networked with other agencies to help the whole family find stable housing and get Derek working again. “We’re strong,” he says. “We’ll come out of this.” Then he adds with tears in his eyes, “I’m just a dad and I’m crying out for help. [People say] men don’t care about their kids. I love my kids. I don’t want to be like my father. I’m breaking the chain in my family. At least when I die they can say, ‘He took care of his kids.’”

All Derek needs is a “hand up” to help his family recover from a very tough time, and that’s just what you’ve provided through your generous prayers and gifts. Thank you for making a difference to whole families!

# Thank you for **FOR MAKING** **SPIRITS BRIGHT** at Christmas!

With a holiday feast, a Christmas pageant, special chapel services, presents for everybody, and plenty of decorations, we try to make the season as homelike and merry as possible. We even set up a "toy store" of donated toys so residents can select and send their own children a special Christmas gift. Thank you for giving hope to those who would otherwise be alone this Christmas season!



Read this great letter from a former resident. It may be addressed to our staff, but you play a huge role in new lives like this with your generous support!

Dear Mr. Shisler, thank you and ALL the staff at UGM for helping me. After having done what you do for so long, I'm sure you pretty much do understand how a person feels when they are allowed to rebuild their life.

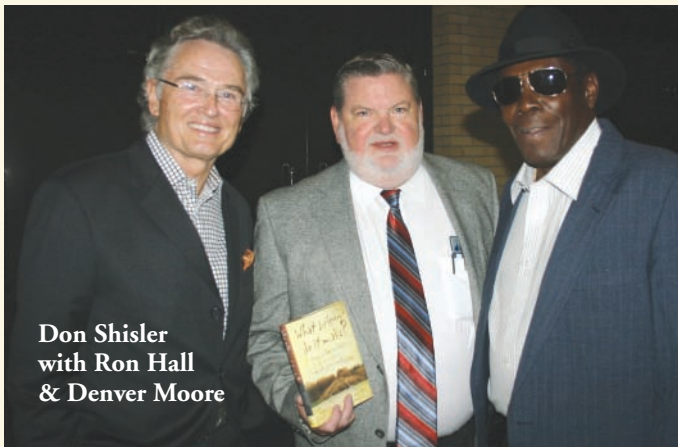
I came to the UGM from the Harris County Jail after finishing my time for possession of crack cocaine. I had lived under the bridge at 145 and FM 1960 with my wife for the previous 2 years. I had begun to wonder when I would get the blessed relief of having a heart attack and dying from a big blast of crack. I weighed 123 lbs. I cannot express the gratitude I feel for the UGM and the staff and residents. Truly God works through people, for without the UGM and my fellow residents I would still be wandering around inside my brain wondering what to do next. Peer counseling at the UGM is a real taste of reality; because everyone wants to see each other succeed, because if you succeed maybe I can. I really owe my life and my sanity to the UGM staff and residents. I would not, could not, no way, in any fashion be anywhere near the man I am today if not for all of you. Again I would like to say thanks, Mr. Shisler, I hope I did okay.

Sincerely yours, with peace, love, and Godspeed,  
Stephen



Janine Turner  
& Juliette

Special thanks to everyone, especially our great sponsors and caring donors, who helped make our Annual Banquet on September 24 a huge success! 675 people enjoyed an evening with our own Ron Hall and Denver Moore, and a guest appearance from actress Janine Turner of *Northern Exposure* and her daughter Juliette.



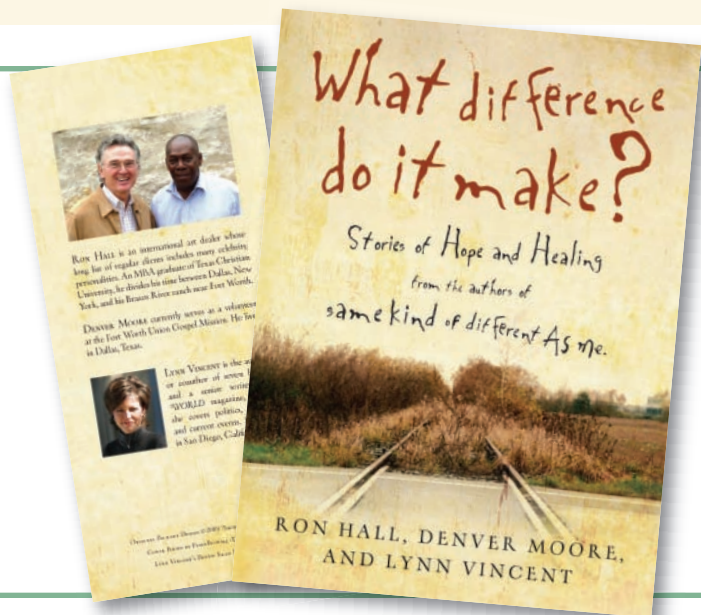
Don Shisler  
with Ron Hall  
& Denver Moore



Wow! Thanks to your steady support, the dedication of our tutoring volunteers, and their own hard work, the boys and girls in our Children's Enrichment Program improved their reading level 10.2% and their math levels 9.5% over the last school year! Every one passed the state Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) achievement test, and four were rated "commended," standing head and shoulders over the majority of students who took the test statewide!



We're thrilled to tell you about the release of Ron Hall and Denver Moore's new book, *What Difference Do It Make?..* Filled with new information and insights from their own lives, the book also inspires with stories of individuals who've made a real difference through simple acts of kindness.



Check out Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County online! Visit our new website at [www.ugm-tc.org](http://www.ugm-tc.org)!

# Get Ready!

“I have no idea what I would have done without UGM,” said the card from a former resident. “My deepest gratitude goes to you and your staff. I am back on my feet and will always remember you ‘et al’ every payday for the rest of my life. I am always your friend and servant. Peter.”

I treasured what Peter wrote, and his death a week later came as a shock to me. He had found his job, and that precious paycheck. But even more, he participated fully in our Spiritual Development program, had a great voice for praise and worship, and found joy in our June ALPHA off-site retreat—all with a grateful heart. In retrospect, God was preparing Peter for a homecoming.

At UGM-TC, we’re about preparing one another for heaven. We don’t know the time of our end on this earth, but God knows. We have only this moment, this day, and it can be our last. We need to get ready for that last day.



Chaplain Stanley Maneikis

God has given us ALPHA to do this very thing. We began a new series, “Challenging Lifestyles,” based on the Beatitudes of Jesus. Some of our residents are leading our small group discussion groups. Cathy Biegel is baking hundreds of homemade cookies for snacks. On average, we have about 140 ALPHA leaders and participants each Thursday evening. God is working His purpose out!

# Please Pray!

- Pray that as the holidays approach, when our residents feel an increased pressure from yet-unresolved issues, they will find true joy.
- Give thanks always for the blessings God has bestowed on us abundantly.
- Pray to be able to share those blessings with others.
- Pray that the homeless and helpless men, women, and children who come to us will welcome and act on the opportunities offered by a caring and competent staff here at UGM-TC, and leave us with hope for a bright and guided future.
- We give thanks for everyone who holds us in prayer, in their hearts, and in partnership.

# Volunteer Opportunities

If you have the time to spare and the heart to share, we can use you at the Mission! Right now, we need friends to:

- Host a needs drive for the Mission (collecting donations)
- Serve a meal
- Sort donations
- Mentor children and adults

Call our volunteer coordinators at (817) 338-8402 today!

# Christmas NEEDS

Can you help with any of the following urgent needs? Donations can be dropped off at our Donation Collection Center, 1111 East Lancaster, during normal business hours or call (817) 284-3255 for a pick-up. Thank you!

- ▲ Alarm clocks/radios
- ▲ Watches
- ▲ Men’s and women’s clothing, all sizes, especially XL, 2x, 3x
- ▲ Socks and underwear
- ▲ Bras
- ▲ Games and electronics for teens
- ▲ Children’s toys and clothing
- ▲ Shoes/boots
- ▲ Coats for men, women, and children

[www.ugm-tc.org](http://www.ugm-tc.org)

# Honors and Memorials



**Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers are with the family and friends of those remembered below. A gift to Union Gospel Mission is a special legacy offering hope to those in need.**

## IN MEMORY OF:

*(gifts received June 22 through August 19, 2009)*

**Mr. William Clinton Bahan, Jr.**  
Mr. & Mrs. George Beggs, III  
Mr. & Mrs. Preston M. Geren, Jr.  
Mrs. Frances Gupton

**Ms. Audrey Belknap**  
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Mr. & Mrs. Jim E. Sharpe

**Mr. Cass O. Edwards**  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Wood

**Ms. Inez Falcone**  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald T. Yaggi

**Mr. Corey Shane Flynn**  
Ms. Norma Risky

**Mr. Herb Fry**  
Mr. & Mrs. Neil B. Christenson

**Mr. Lawton G. Gamble**  
Mr. & Mrs. George Runnion, Jr.

**Mr. Johnny Cleve Garland**  
Mr. & Mrs. D. W. Cope

**Mr. Jerry Burl Gilbreath**  
Ms. Edith A. Hedgpeth

**Mr. Walter H. Griffith**  
Mr. & Mrs. George Runnion, Jr.

**Mrs. Deborah Hall**  
Mr. & Mrs. Carson D. Hall  
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Michael

**Mr. Max Hand**  
Mrs. Cheryl Mitchell

**Mr. & Mrs. George Hanebrink**  
Mr. Dene E. Armstrong

**Mr. Allen E. Hatcher**  
Mr. & Mrs. Ken C. Hatcher

**Mrs. Patsy Hawkins**  
Dr. & Mrs. F. Chip Brown, Jr.

**Mrs. Martha Lou Kelly**  
Mr. & Mrs. George Beggs, III

**Mrs. Megan McCadden**  
Anne L. Biegel  
David Cosby  
James Avery Craftsmen  
Fred H. Evans  
Bethel S. Flynn  
Gene Gray  
Sidney Hargrove  
Helmut Horchler  
Dwayne Jose  
Mark A. Lemke  
John S. Medeiros  
Mosaic Residential  
Daphne H. Motheral-Jose  
Robert D. Scarborough  
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**Mr. James R. Murphy**  
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Mr. & Mrs. Jerry D. Minton

**Mr. Sebert Pate**  
Mr. & Mrs. George Beggs, III

**Mrs. Betty Plummer**  
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**Mr. Ferrol Punchard**  
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**Mrs. Betty G. Reese**  
Ms. Reba J. Gentry  
Mr. & Mrs. John Ryan, IV

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**Mr. Stephen Shafer**  
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Mr. & Mrs. George Runnion, Jr.

**Mrs. Marie Sparks**  
Mr. & Mrs. Hobart Fatheree

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Mr. & Mrs. George Runnion, Jr.

**Ms. Joan Burt Zukoski**  
Mr. & Mrs. B. Thomas Miller, Jr.

**Do you have a loved one you would like to honor? A gift to Union Gospel Mission is an ideal way to celebrate your loved one's birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion, by helping our community's neediest people in their name!**

## IN HONOR OF:

*(gifts received June 22 through August 19, 2009)*

**Jesus Christ Our Lord & Savior**  
Mr. Alphonso Martinez

**Mrs. Madelon L. Bradshaw**  
Mr. & Mrs. Kelly Riley

**Mr. & Mrs. John Fanchi**  
Ms. Patricia O. Williamson

**Mr. & Mrs. Kelly Farnum**  
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**Mr. Joe P. Ross**  
Mr. Jon Robert Bradford

**Ms. Sara Sanchez**  
Ms. Patricia O. Williamson

When you send your memorial or in honor of gift to Union Gospel Mission, you will receive a tax-deductible receipt and a card will be mailed promptly to the bereaved family or the friend being honored, telling them of your gift.

Please mail your memorial and in honor of gifts to:

**UNION GOSPEL MISSION OF TARRANT COUNTY**  
P.O. Box 2144, Fort Worth, Texas 76113-2144

## The Little Missionary

Grace turned seven years old on July 17. She was excited to receive \$31.00 from her family (including some "tooth fairy money") and put it into a "real grown-up purse."

Then the July 24th rains came, and Grace decided she wanted her money to go to homeless people caught in the rain. But on a trip to the library, Grace left her purse in the bathroom, and when she went back to look for it, it was gone. "I just hope whoever stole

it was somebody who needed it," she said.

A few days later, she invited friends in for a sleepover. Pinned to her bed was a note with \$40.00 attached! Undeterred by the theft, and inspired by the gift pinned to the bed, Grace, her sister Carissa, and friend Madison invited everyone in their church to contribute to the homeless.

In August, Grace came to UGM-TC with her mother, father, and sisters to present the \$123.59 they



raised! They also took our brief tour, which included the dining hall, children's playground and library, and a visit with Dr. George Curl, head of our children's tutoring program.

How old must one be to be a missionary? Grace did a fine job and she is only seven years old!



Union Gospel  
Mission of  
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*Serving for 121 Years*

1321 E. Lancaster Ave.  
Fort Worth, TX 76102  
(817) 339-2553  
[www.ugm-tc.org](http://www.ugm-tc.org)

*A local united Christian organization dedicated to providing love, hope, respect and a new beginning for the homeless.*

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Don Shisler, *PRESIDENT*  
*Ascension and St. Mark Episcopal*



I can't  
**THANK YOU  
ENOUGH!**

"I see people come through here all the time and I know they're probably donors trying to decide if they want to help. I just smile and greet them because I'm so grateful."

### No Safe Place

Linda lives at our McFadden Hall, and if you met her, you'd see a quiet, well-spoken lady. She majored in English and History in college, and she's worked a lot of different jobs. When she became disabled, she didn't want to admit she couldn't support herself anymore...until the money ran out and her landlord had to extend credit to keep a roof over her head.

She swallowed her pride and filed for disability support, then went to a shelter for three months. "A friend came and got me from there because he knew how awful it was," she explains. But nervous and disoriented by being homeless, Linda didn't know where to go. She tried another shelter in the Fort Worth area, but never felt safe.

One day, Linda came to eat at the Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County, and she attended our chapel service. Thanks to the food and care you help provide, she learned to trust us, and when a room opened up at McFadden Hall she moved in.

### "I just kept thanking everybody..."

After her hard time on the streets, everything she received here was a surprise to Linda. "At that other place, they gave you daily reminders of just how homeless you were. For the first week here I just went, 'That's provided? Wow! And that's provided? Oh thank you!' I just kept thanking everybody.

"My father was always of the opinion that homeless people are lazy and stupid and want a handout. Well guess what, his firstborn daughter is in the thick of it, and I see the mental health issues, the people who cannot help themselves, the blind people struggling, and hearing impaired, people in wheelchairs, and I'm going, 'Lazy? Really?'"

"I've felt very safe here. The men are all perfect gentlemen. I don't think the rules can make them that way; I think they just are that way by the fact of living here. Those chapel services keep me going. I can get some Scriptures and take a few deep breaths and go on. I just can't believe how generous everyone is."

Please accept this big, heartfelt "thank you" from Linda and everyone else whose life is better today because you care. And if you haven't taken a Mission tour yet, Linda would love to meet you!