

THE Mission



Union Gospel
Mission of
**TARRANT
COUNTY**
Serving for 124 Years

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



THANK YOU

for bringing homeless men,
women, and children in
from the cold!

INSIDE:

- YOU Made the Holidays Sparkle!
- A Surprise for Everett
- The Crisis of Cold

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 2



DON SHISLER PRESIDENT & CEO

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Dear Friend,

The first message I want to share with you in the New Year is just this: **thank you.**

Last year was one of our busiest ever, and we've just finished a truly amazing holiday season – when **urgent needs were met and lives were changed every day because of your compassionate partnership.**

It was a hectic season . . . with so many people to care for, but the joy of creating a safe, family environment for the lonely and hurting was worth it. Please take a moment to look at the photos on page 5 to see what you helped make possible!

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

–Luke 6:38, NIV

I also loved seeing the volunteers pour through our buildings and discover that because of your support, Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County is so much more than they thought.

Most arrive thinking of us as a place providing little more than a warm bed and a good meal. They're amazed when they learn about our spiritual support, educational opportunities, medical care, job skills training, and more. I know many volunteers found their own lives transformed by the experience of being God's hands and feet to those in need.

The second message I want to share with you today is: **please keep up the good work.**

I don't have to tell you that the job situation continues to be tough in our area. **And right now, the need for family and women's services is exceeding our capacity to shelter them.** And I believe God is calling us to care for even more people in 2012.

That's why we need friends like you to stand with us again.

Already, we're planning the most effective and efficient ways to use our resources, building partnerships with local churches, and seeking new ways to meet the needs we see every day. My promise to you today is, **we'll use every penny you send to the fullest in the service of the least, the last, and the lost.**

In this issue of *The Mission*, you'll see some of the many ways your support is bringing Tarrant County's homeless "in from the cold" both physically and spiritually. Please join us again in the New Year to help meet this growing need!



DESPERATE LAST RESORT LEADS TO NEW LIFE FOR EVERETT

END IT ALL. THAT'S WHAT EVERETT WANTED TO DO.

End the unemployment . . . the addiction . . . broken relationships . . . and failing mental health. In one last fatal act, he would end his life and it would all go away. Fortunately, God had other plans.

A New Beginning

God sent someone to rescue Everett that day . . . and not long after, brought him to Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County, where your generosity gave him the safe, supportive atmosphere he needed.

"I've never been in a shelter," he says, "so I didn't know what to expect when I first got here. I didn't know who I could talk to or if I could trust anybody.

"But I have definitely built some relationships since I've been here. Everybody here is on the same page; they share in the same struggles. **That's been important to me, finding people to connect with.**"

Connecting with God has also made a real difference in Everett's life. "I've never had a lot of patience," he admits, "but here I've learned to take things slow and listen to what God is saying. The ALPHA program is pretty fun and very enlightening, too."

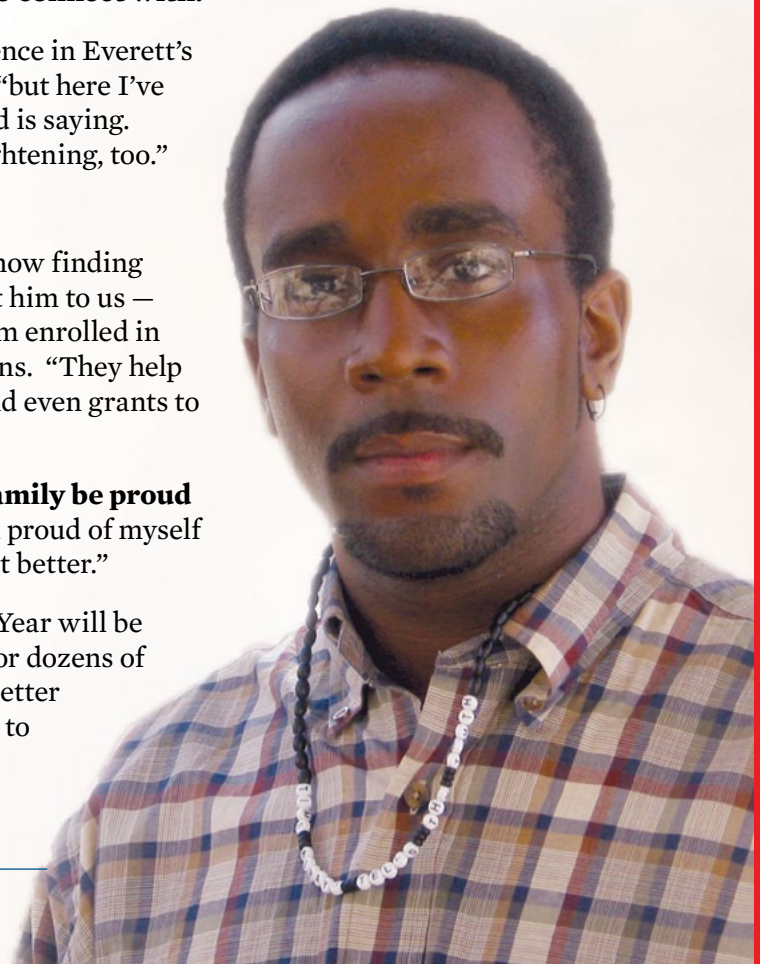
Next Steps and New Life

Thanks to the gifts of friends like you, Everett is now finding Godly solutions to the problems that first brought him to us — and working towards a new, independent life. "I'm enrolled in the Mission's career training program," he explains. "They help you with résumé building and interview skills, and even grants to go back to school.

"I want to be successful and have my whole family be proud of me . . . and I want to be proud of myself. I'm proud of myself now because I'm taking the steps necessary to get better."

Because of your prayers and generosity, the New Year will be filled with new opportunities for Everett — and for dozens of other men whose lives you've helped to put on a better path. Thank you for your continuing partnership to make this a place of hope and healing!

Your compassionate support will fill the New Year with new beginnings for men like Everett!



As we begin a new year,
we also begin one of
the hardest — and most
dangerous — seasons
to be homeless.

THE CRISIS OF COLD

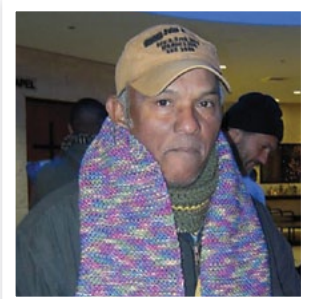
How important are the hot meals and warm beds you'll provide to Tarrant County's homeless men, women, and children this winter?

Honestly, they could be the difference between life and death.

As we begin a new year, we also begin one of the hardest — and most dangerous — seasons to be homeless.

The average overnight temperature in Fort Worth in January is only 34°F. And while January is usually the coldest month, last February we spent 100 hours below freezing, and set a record low temperature of 15°F.

Please give generously this winter to bring our neighbors in need in from the cold — physically, by providing shelter, and spiritually, by welcoming them into our Christ-centered care. As their faces show, they truly appreciate your kindness in their time of crisis!



YOU MADE THE HOLIDAYS SPARKLE!

From hard-working volunteers and staff, to partners who prayed and gave, the holidays at Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County were truly a team effort this year.

Thank you for showing our guests and residents you truly care, by giving them special holiday meals, chapel services, even individually chosen Christmas gifts. Those who had no family found one here, with your help. **Serving some of our biggest crowds ever, we witnessed many lives changed by God's love and your generosity.**

God bless you for making the holidays bright for homeless and poor men, women, and especially children!



★ Thank you for helping Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County be God's healthy place to end homelessness — one person at a time! ★

"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins. — Mark 2:22, NKJV

It is now 2012. Reflecting on 2011, we can say, "Yesterday is past, today is here, tomorrow is yet to come." Jesus' words in Mark 2:22 remind us of new blessings, new mercies, and abundant grace coming to us here. As we grow in Christ, we shed the "old wineskins" to receive Him.

In nature, as animals grow, the old sheds off: new antlers grow, snakes shed their skins, and sea creatures grow new shells. So it is with the knowledge about Christ. To receive Christ afresh and renewed, means we have to shed our "old clothes" and take on new attitudes, new responsibilities, a new way of doing business. The gospel is wasted if we continue to live in last year. The old "wineskins" cannot receive the renewing message of Christ.

How many of us are willing to shed our facades, the comfort zone we live in, and take on a "new skin," so to speak? This is precisely what God is asking us to do. Think of our residents who come to us



CHAPLAIN STANLEY MANEIKIS

with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Because of careful attention to their needs, we share the Gospel of Jesus' love. Soon the old "wineskins" come off, and the new "wineskins" appear. You can see the difference. That is why we are here, this year, in 2012, to do the Lord "true and laudable service," refreshed and renewed.

I like what we read in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." (3:22-23, NKJV)

For 2012, we wish you every Blessing in Christ Jesus!

Please Pray!

- For a renewing of our minds, to shed the old wineskins holding the old wine gone bad, to receive the enriching love of Christ.
- As Paul did over the Philippian, pray that God works in us to will and to do His good pleasure, in our vocation as Christians at home, at the workplace, and at UGM-TC.
- That new guests will be served according to their needs, "full measure, pressed down, and running over."
- For more Christians to be exposed to what ALPHA accomplishes, and come down to the Mission to help us with this.

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 drive for our needs here at the Mission (see needs list at www.ugm-tc.org)
- Host a birthday party or baby shower for our adult residents
- Serve a meal or do pantry work at the Mission
- Provide tutoring assistance to children

For more information or suggestions, please call our volunteer coordinator, Malorie, at 817-332-2922 today!

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE



On January 12, we began "an opportunity to explore the meaning of life" through our ALPHA Course. Topics include "Is there more to life than this?," "Who is Jesus?," and "Why did Jesus Die?" We'll hold an overnight retreat with presentations on the Holy Spirit of God, and we'll end with a great celebration on April 26th.

One thought nags me constantly, the need to bring the Gospel to people who have not heard of Jesus, or experienced the transforming love because of God's power over us. I often say, "Once you let God into your heart, Jesus is soon to follow." The ALPHA experience is very much needed to bring people into the Knowledge and Love of God. We have a generation or two to reach, and the time is running short.

PROTECT THE BLINDSIDE: TACKLE HOMELESSNESS



SAVE THE DATE
UGM-TC 2012 Luncheon
February 16 11:30 a.m.

Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom
Special Guest:
Leigh Anne Tuohy

DON'T MISS LEIGH ANNE TUOHY AT OUR UPCOMING BANQUET!

Leigh Anne Tuohy, whose inspirational story of compassion in action hit the big screen in *The Blind Side*, has graciously agreed to make her **first-ever appearance in Fort Worth** at our banquet on **February 16!**

You won't want to miss her insights on overcoming homelessness one life at a time — or the celebration of all the lives you're helping to change through programs for women and children at Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County.

Reserve your tickets now to join us for lunch, Thursday, February 16, at the Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom. Remember, all proceeds directly benefit the work of providing food, shelter, and lasting hope to the homeless.

For sponsorship or ticket information, please contact Alyson Pollak at event@ugm-tc.org or 817-338-8406. Don't wait — we expect a full house for this uplifting event!

New Ways to Keep in Touch

This year, it's easier than ever to see how you're making a difference every day at Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County — and stay on top of news and events you need to know.

Here are four simple ways you can keep in touch today:

1. Visit our blog at www.ugm-tc.org/about/blog
2. Include your email address on the enclosed response form to receive news and opportunities via email

3. Find us on Facebook



4. Follow us on Twitter



Annual Warehouse Sale

Is your living room looking a little tired? Or has your rec room turned into a wreck? You'll find plenty of quality furniture and must-have accessories at the Annual Warehouse Sale!

It's the perfect reason to redecorate, because every purchase will support emergency care, spiritual growth, and true life change for the guests and residents of Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County.

The sale takes place on February 23, 24 & 25 at the Will Rogers Memorial Center Poultry Barn. Parking will be across the street from the barn on the South Side. Mark your calendar now and don't be late!

**ANNUAL
WAREHOUSE
SALE**
Feb. 23-25

"I'M A CHANGED PERSON!"

Your support warmed
Denise physically
and spiritually!



Ask Denise how she's doing today, and she'll answer with her trademark big smile and the words, "I'm blessed!"

That's not the answer she'd have given you a year ago . . .

Putting the past behind her

When she started coming to Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County for breakfast, Denise was trapped in a cycle of addiction and in trouble with the law. But, touched by the kindness she received and realizing she needed to make a change, she soon asked to join our life-recovery program.

Denise entered our program, and she remembers, "It was getting really cold that day." So she was very grateful for a warm bed to sleep in . . . and even more grateful for the help she received to overcome her past!

"My counselor says, 'you can't forget the past,'" she explains, "'but you can put it behind you.' That's what I'm doing. I'm in a program now that helps you get your GED, and I work for the daycare here."

The most important thing she's learned, she says, is "if you're going to make a change, you've got to keep your Father above you. My Father is not going to let me fall. I'm a changed person. I'm God's child. It's wonderful here. That's all I can say."

Sharing the joy

In fact, Denise wants to share her newfound joy with everyone she meets. "If I see a young lady crying, I tell her, 'Lay your head on my shoulder and I'm going to lift your spirits back up.' I even stop homeless people in the street and tell them to call this number. I tell them, 'God doesn't want you to be this way.'"

And in her deep concern for those still trapped by the past, she says urgently, "Union Gospel Mission needs to expand. There are more people out there who need the same help I am receiving now. The need is great."

Through your generous support, Denise certainly has come a long way. Please continue to stand with us this winter as more women like Denise come to our doors seeking a new life. As she says, the need is great!

"There are more people out there who need the same help I am receiving now. The need is great."



1321 E. Lancaster Ave.
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(817) 339-2553
www.ugm-tc.org

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

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