

News from Los Angeles Mission

CROSSROADS

Encouraging hearts . . . celebrating recovery

December 2019



The Gifts of Hope and Promise for a Better Future . . . Start Here

INSIDE: Brian, Michael and Lucille share their
inspirational and transformative stories.

**PROVIDE MEALS,
HOPE AND
OPPORTUNITY THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON.**
Learn more inside!

Renewing Hope and Restoring Futures



Dear Caring Friend,

Every year we embrace thousands of people who are homeless, and no two stories are alike. But if these neighbors have one thing in common, it's that they have lost any sense of security. They have no supportive community. And so many have lost all hope. That is where you come in.

There *is* hope and there *is* a future for those we serve — thanks to *you*. That's because your support of Los Angeles Mission and our life-changing programs are giving people a fresh start and, in turn, a better life. People like Michael, Lucille and Brian, whom you will read about in this issue of *Crossroads*, are living proof.

By embracing our mission and those who have fallen on hard times, you are helping people in practical and profound ways. Thank you, my friend, for giving so generously from the heart, so that we can provide renewed hope and brighter futures for our Los Angeles neighbors in need.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Herb Smith".

Herb Smith
President/CEO

Because of You, They H

"You are a blessing
for people like me.
Thank you."

After 27 years of off-and-on homelessness, Brian knew he needed help. He had spent countless holidays alone on the street. "The streets are lonely," Brian says, "but they're even lonelier on Christmas." He didn't know what form help would take, just that he was tired, hungry and desperate for change. Brian first came to Los Angeles Mission hoping only for a hot meal. But along with that meal, Brian found the inspiration and assistance he was looking for. He has since completed our Fresh Start program and is currently in Life Start. Brian has worked hard with our counselors to build the skills he needed, and he is ready for the next chapter of his life. "I have a job, I finished my education," Brian says. "And most of all I'm reuniting with my family."

Because of caring people like you, Brian was able to change his life. "You are a blessing for people like me. Thank you."



After nearly three decades
on the street, you helped give
Brian redemption and the
chance for a new life.

"Lives are changed here
every single day."

When Michael stepped out of prison 15 months ago, he had nowhere to go. No one to call. Faced with a choice — living on the streets or walking through the doors of Los Angeles Mission — Michael will tell you today, he made the right one. "At first I was overwhelmed," Michael says. "But people who love God and who were willing to extend a warm welcome were waiting for me. It was absolutely freeing and a blessing." Last year, Michael served others at our annual Christmas event. This year, he's looking forward to celebrating again with his new Los Angeles Mission family — staff and students alike. As a graduate of the Fresh Start program, Michael now has a full-time job and will be beginning Bible college soon.

"If I didn't have the Mission, I would have gone from prison to the streets," Michael says. "This place really helps people change their lives for the better and [provides] for those too broken to help themselves."



Thank you for helping
men like Michael transform
their lives.

I've Been Transformed

"If it weren't for your generosity, I would be lost."

When Lucille lost her child, she tumbled into a world of pain, loneliness and despair. She turned to drugs to fill the void in her life. "I became lost," Lucille says. "I didn't like or value myself." Thankfully, she ran into a graduate of the Anne Douglas Center, who explained how we could help. "When I arrived, the Center was full of love and understanding," Lucille says. "I knew I would be safe." Through our program, Lucille has regained her footing. "The person who walked through the doors before didn't like herself," Lucille says. "Now I know God loves me, and I have come to love myself — something I couldn't have believed!" Today, Lucille is thankful for her changed life. She is working on getting her GED and is excited to reconnect with her family for the holidays.

Thanks to your generosity and prayers, Lucille is no longer lost, her life is headed in the right direction and her future is bright!



Your support helped Lucille learn to love herself again.

HOMELESS AT CHRISTMAS

You can be a child's Christmas miracle.

Christmas is the hardest time of year for children who are homeless. While their friends look forward to singing carols, baking cookies and counting presents under a decorated tree, for these kids Christmas Eve is just another night spent sleeping on the street or in a car. **And with 24 percent more children homeless in Los Angeles than last year, your help is needed now more than ever.**

"The longer children go without stable housing, the more likely they will fall into the cycle of homelessness and poverty," says Herb Smith, Los Angeles Mission President and CEO.

With your help we can break the cycle and make sure these kids are set up for the best life possible. Your continued support is truly a Christmas miracle. Thank you.

Give the Gift of Help and Hope!

Every \$2.03 you share provides a hot Christmas dinner and more.

We're still preparing for our annual Christmas dinner on December 23. Just like last year, we expect record crowds and anticipate serving more than 3,000 of our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Surrounded by the sights and sounds of the season, our guests will receive a meal, hygiene kits and even presents from Santa.

But the food and fun are only possible with gifts from friends like you and the participation of our sponsors. The Mission is so grateful to have help from our friends at Festival of Children, JAKKS Toys, The Ark of Montebello Church and an anonymous donor. And we're grateful to friends like you, who make it such a blessed and wonderful day that shows God's love in action right here in the heart of Skid Row.



UPCOMING EVENTS/ SAVE THE DATES

12/7 & 12/18

Volunteer Orientation

If you'd like to volunteer at the Mission, it's important for you to attend an orientation session. To register for the next orientation, please visit us at LosAngelesMission.org/act.

12/23


Christmas Street Event

Experience the spirit of Christmas when we provide turkey dinners with all the fixings for all and toys for children.

For information on more upcoming events at
Los Angeles Mission, please call (213) 629-1227
Ext. 400.



The Simplest Way to Make a Difference!



Renewing hope and restoring futures often starts with a meal. However, providing nutritious meals, shelter and care to all those experiencing homelessness is a challenge. Looking ahead to a new year, you can make a difference and support Los Angeles Mission by becoming a Meals-A-Month partner. Your automated monthly gift will help us to plan and budget more efficiently, enabling every dollar to be maximized to provide meals, care and shelter to our guests.

To sign up online, visit us at Give.LosAngelesMission.org. Or call (213) 629-1227 Ext. 334 to join by phone.

Leave a Lasting Legacy — Even If Your Situation Changes

For 28 years, John and Stella Chan arrived at their shop at 2 a.m. every morning to bake donuts . . . until Stella suffered an aneurysm, forcing John to run the shop alone. Everything began to suffer, until a customer asked about Stella's absence. News of her illness spread quickly, and now local residents are hurrying to empty John's daily inventory so he can close early — often before 8:30 a.m.!

Sometimes Plan A doesn't turn out like we hoped, but that doesn't mean Plan B can't still be a blessing. How can you think differently about the future?

- **Reframe.** Remember what is true. Psalm 73:26 says “. . . God remains the strength of my heart . . .”
- **Recalibrate.** Circumstances can bump us off course — but God can help us find our new normal.
- **Reimagine.** When things fall apart, we have an invitation to dream anew. Do you want to impact lives? We love when people explore creative ways to serve with us. Some have even chosen to include Los Angeles Mission as a beneficiary of their Will, so they can bless their family and change lives too.

For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy of "When Plan A Falls Apart" by contacting Herb Smith at (213) 629-1227 Ext. 305 or hsmith@lamission.net — or bless your family today with a God-honoring Will at www.christianwill.org/lamission.

You Can Change a Life Today!

Send back the enclosed reply form with your gift to provide meals, care and life-changing services to people who are alone with nowhere else to turn. Please give generously and offer your encouragement to neighbors who are rebuilding broken lives one day at a time. Thank you!



Los Angeles Mission
303 E. 5th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013
(213) 629-1227 Ext. 400

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Los Angeles, CA 90013