

News from Los Angeles Mission

CROSSROADS

Encouraging hearts . . . celebrating recovery

DECEMBER 2020



Give hope this holiday season

**INSIDE: Robert, Violeta and David
share their uplifting stories
of healing and transformation**

**CHANGE LIVES BY
PROVIDING MEALS
AND CARE THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON**

Learn more inside!

A Special Year-End Message Just for YOU!



Dear Caring Friend,

After an unprecedented year of uncertainty caused by COVID-19, I am enormously thankful for friends like you.

Despite the hardship you may have faced because of the pandemic, you have fulfilled the command of Jesus to love your neighbor as yourself — even when that neighbor was living on Skid Row without shelter and without hope.

Please continue to support the Mission this holiday season so that we can continue to find creative ways to help our friends and neighbors. It's times like these that we must reach deep into our humanity to walk in the footsteps of those in need.

When we do that, we touch the Divine.

As you read about David, Robert and Violeta in this issue of *Crossroads*, I pray you'll experience a renewed sense of excitement for what God is going to do through you in the coming year to change lives.

Thank you, my friend, for giving so generously from the heart, so that we can continue to provide renewed hope and brighter futures for those living on Skid Row.

A blue ink signature of Troy Vaughn.

Troy Vaughn
President/CEO

You're helping transform lives .

'I just want to give back, and that's the way it should be'

David got hooked on painkillers after a doctor prescribed them for his chronic back pain.

After years of struggles, he wasn't sure he could still change. Then he visited Los Angeles Mission — and saw Skid Row up close. "I had never seen so much human suffering," David recalls. "It hit me that this is where I was going to be if I didn't get help."



David had sought treatment before, but he insists **there was something different about the Mission that gave him hope.**

"This wasn't just a revolving door where you'd be in for three months and then — *boom!* — you're back on the streets," David explains. "This was a long-term program that helps you get your life back."

David got a fresh start because of you. Now he's on staff at our Urban Training Institute, where he tracks student attendance and manages Bible rosters.

"I just want to give back, and that's the way it should be," he says.

Thank you for making real-life miracles like this possible this Christmas and every day of the year.

'I just want to be the mother that God always wanted me to be'

The day Violeta's children were taken from her was the hardest day of her life. At that moment, she vowed to break the binds of drugs and alcohol that had brought her to her knees . . .

Now, because of your giving, she's on the verge of getting her kids back.

"I'm so grateful for the chance to have my kids again," Violeta says.

Being at our Anne Douglas Center has taught Violeta the importance of living sober and having structure in her life. "I used to think that nobody believed in me," she says. "But the Mission believes in me, and that's pushed me to be a better person."

Violeta has now begun seeing her kids regularly (they live with her mom), and she has become their "teacher" since COVID-19 has made online school mandatory. "I just want to be the mother that God always wanted me to be," she says.



Only through the ongoing gifts of friends like you can we continue helping people like Violeta make real changes in their lives. Thank you for caring.

... just in time for the holidays!

'I either need to get busy dying or get busy living'

Robert spent years helping sick relatives, including his grandfather, his stepdad and his own mother.

Turns out the only person he didn't know how to help was himself.

When Robert's marriage fell apart due to drugs, he began sleeping in the storeroom where he worked. Then a security guard found out what he was doing, and Robert lost his job — and the roof over his head.

Distraught, he told himself, "I either need to get busy dying or get busy living." It was choosing to live that eventually led Robert to Los Angeles Mission.

Getting in to JumpStart, the Mission's short-term program for people considering long-term recovery, proved to be a catalyst for change. He quickly made new friends, learned about God and received several awards. When he graduated, he was offered a position at the Mission — doing COVID-19 screening for people who want to come into the program.

Robert's life was transformed because friends like you faithfully support the Mission, both prayerfully and financially. Thank you for doing all you can to see lives changed.



This Christmas, hope begins with a meal . . . and you!

In spite of COVID-19, Christmas is still happening at Los Angeles Mission this year!

Our \$2.53 meals — a building block of hope — will still be provided by the hundreds. Thousands of new toys will still be distributed to struggling families. And the spirit of Christmas will continue to change hearts and transform the lives of those who will come here looking for a new beginning.

Not even COVID-19 can change that!

This Christmas, maybe more than ever, Skid Row needs what the Mission has to offer — help, hope and the chance for a new beginning. That's why we are committed to doing everything we can to help bring about life change. And why your help is so critically important this holiday season.

It only happens with your generous support. Thank you for doing all you can to be a blessing to your neighbors in need.



'Because of the love the Mission showed me . . . I've learned to care about others'

After graduating from our FreshStart program, Michael got a restaurant job and began attending Bible college. Then COVID-19 hit and he had to quit both.

But the disruption turned out to be a blessing when he suddenly discovered what he's passionate about — helping other people. Now he's working here at Los Angeles Mission in our Outreach Department.

"When I'm interacting with people who come to the Mission for help, I feel like I'm following in Christ's footsteps, doing the same things He would be doing," Michael says. "I want to serve them as best I can . . . whether that's offering them food, a smile or words of encouragement."

He credits Los Angeles Mission — and Mission donors — with helping him develop a heart of compassion.

"Because of the love the Mission showed me when I got out of prison, and the spiritual support they offered me, I've learned to care about others," he says.



UPCOMING EVENTS/ SAVE THE DATES

Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome you to discover the different volunteer opportunities currently available. For volunteer opportunities, please visit lamission.volunteerhub.com or call (213) 629-1227 Ext. 337.



Deduct 100% of your charitable giving, if you itemize

Give before December 31, 2020, and take advantage of the additional tax deductions available this year, thanks to the CARES Act.

Change a Life This Holiday Season

Send back the enclosed reply form with your gift to provide meals, care and life-changing services to people who need help this holiday season. Please give generously and offer encouragement to your neighbors who are struggling to rebuild their broken lives. Thank you!



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The Simplest Way to Make a Difference!



Providing nutritious meals, shelter and care to veterans, children and thousands of individuals experiencing homelessness is an ongoing challenge for Los Angeles Mission. To help us meet that need, please consider becoming a Meals-A-Month partner. This dedicated group of donors provides a steady stream of support that helps us budget and plan more efficiently, stretching every dollar a little further.

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

Weathering the Storms of Adversity

A prominent old tree at a Michigan university unexpectedly crashed to the ground during a storm. The grounds director, Charlie Huizinga, knew what to do.

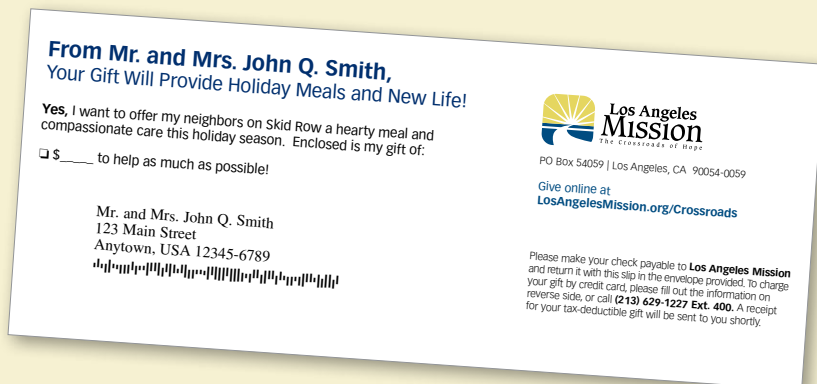
“One day more than a decade ago — looking around the oak I discovered little trees coming up. Acorns were still attached to the root.” Huizinga harvested some of the seedlings and transplanted them onto his property. Over the years they grew to become 20-foot trees. Today, one fills the hole the original oak left behind.*

Unexpected storms of life can be frightening, but God’s plan doesn’t waver. Psalm 9:9 says, “The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.” Here are two ways you can rise up in the face of difficulty:

1. **Pray.** Bringing our fears to God is the first step toward discovering *His* strength to face adversity.
2. **Practice generosity.** Consider exploring creative ways you can impact someone else through giving and be blessed in return. When you give a legacy gift to Los Angeles Mission, you can be certain it will dig deep roots and spring up strong.

**Story adapted from the original by Matt Kycinski*

For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy of “Trusting God Through the Storms of Life” by contacting Troy Vaughn at (213) 629-1227 Ext. 305 or tvaughn@lamission.net — or bless your family today with a God-honoring Will at christianwill.org/lamission.



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