

News from Los Angeles Mission

CROSSROADS

Encouraging hearts . . . celebrating recovery

JANUARY 2021



**'Thanks
doesn't
seem like
enough'**

**How the meal you
offered Sergio gave
him the chance to
make a new start in
the new year**

Read about your impact on Sergio's life on page 2 ►

UPCOMING EVENTS/ SAVE THE DATES

Volunteer Opportunities

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



Weathering the Storms of Adversity

A 150-year-old tree near the entrance of a Michigan university recently crashed to the ground during a storm. It was a shock to many, including the grounds director, Charlie Huizinga. *But he 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.” That day, Huizinga harvested some of the seedlings and transplanted them onto his property. Over the years, they grew to become 20-foot trees themselves. Today, one fills the hole the original oak left behind.*

Unexpected storms in 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 three ways you can rise up in the face of difficulty:

- 1. Pray.** It sounds like a simple “Christian” answer, but bringing our fears to God is the first step toward discovering *His* strength to face adversity.
- 2. Serve.** Sometimes an unexpected storm can loom so large we can’t see beyond it, but caring for someone can help shift our focus. Volunteer your time or choose someone to bless today, and see how it blesses you too.
- 3. Practice generosity.** Consider exploring creative ways you can impact someone else through giving. 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.

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.

Change a Life in 2021

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



Stay Connected

Keep track of the latest Mission news, make safe online donations and more.
LosAngelesMission.org



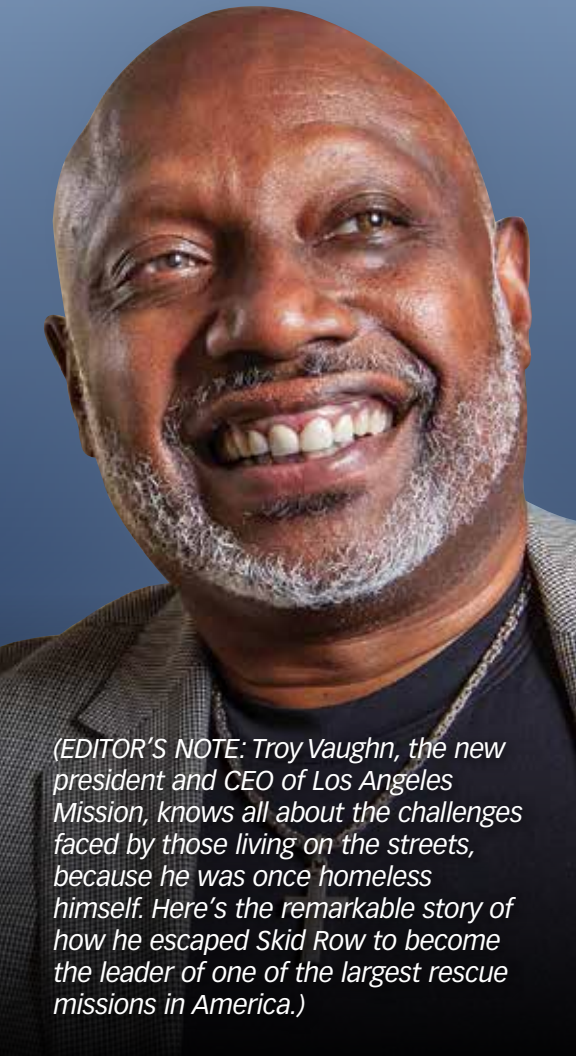
— FROM —

SKID ROW

— TO —

PRESIDENT & CEO

The Inspiring Story
of One Man's Passion
to Help Those
Experiencing
Homelessness



(EDITOR'S NOTE: Troy Vaughn, the new president and CEO of Los Angeles Mission, knows all about the challenges faced by those living on the streets, because he was once homeless himself. Here's the remarkable story of how he escaped Skid Row to become the leader of one of the largest rescue missions in America.)

You Gave Carla the Life 'I've Always Dreamed Of'

For 33 years, Carla tried mightily to break free from the drug scene that was destroying her life. “That’s what crack cocaine does to you,” she says. “It just keeps you chasing the next high.”

In a moment of desperation, Carla even prayed she’d get arrested — just so she couldn’t use. A year ago, she figured she needed more than sobriety — she needed God! — and she came to our Anne Douglas Center.

With the help of her chaplain, Carla discovered a new way of living based on Philippians 4:13, which has become her favorite verse . . .

***“I can do all this through [Christ]
who gives me strength.”***

(NIV)

Today, as she prepares for graduation and a new life in the new year, Carla says she’s looking forward to making up for the “wasted years.”

“It’s very clear I need God in my life,” she says. “That’s the only way I’ll make it.”

Your support of the Mission gave Carla a new start and the chance to live the life “I’ve always dreamed of.” Thank you!



Thanks to you, Carla found the strength she needed to break free from the drug scene. “It’s very clear I need God in my life,” she now says.

Not Even COVID-19 Could Stifle His Recovery

Michael was a month away from graduating from our FreshStart recovery program — and he was doing well — when he contracted COVID-19.

“I was angry,” he says. “I felt sad . . . defeated . . . like I had failed.”

Up to that point, it seemed like Michael had finally regained control of his life. After years of homelessness, he was clean and sober. Once a selfish loner, he now tried to help everyone who crossed his path. Once a high school dropout, Michael was looking forward to finally finishing something.

And then he was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Had this happened a year earlier, Michael might not have been able to pick himself back up. But his growing faith in God, his newfound resilience, and the care he received from the Mission staff carried him through.

“They were like the family I never had,” Michael says. “God answered my prayers.”

Today, thanks to gifts from friends like you, he’s feeling stronger every day and looking forward to making a fresh start after he leaves the Mission.



God’s grace — and your generosity! — kept Michael from stumbling in his recovery after he contracted COVID-19 during his stay at Los Angeles Mission.

An Important New Year's Message Just for YOU!



Dear Caring Friend,

January has brought a surge of guests who are ready to commit to change in the new year. Many came to us for a holiday meal at Thanksgiving or Christmas, and they got a glimpse of what could be possible for their lives.

Won't you join me in praying for them in the new year?

Father,

We're so grateful that You are a GOD who makes all things new. You have worked all things together for our good this past year, and we know You are faithful to do the same in the new year.

We are grateful that through the highs and lows You have remained the one constant in our lives. We purpose in our hearts to build on Your abiding presence and take it into the new year with joy and anticipation of the promise it brings in You. In Jesus' name . . . amen.

Thank you for joining me in this life-changing work through your continued generosity and prayers!

A blue ink signature of Troy Vaughn.

Troy Vaughn
President/CEO

How Sergio Found New Life, Starting with a Meal



One meal — a meal that you provided — completely changed the course of Sergio's life.

A year ago, for reasons he still doesn't understand, Sergio was unexpectedly "asked to leave" his parents' home and then ended up on the streets.

For three weeks, he slept on the steps of a local church and rotated between two sets of clothes. "I was struggling, but it was embarrassing to keep asking friends for help," he says.

He came to Los Angeles Mission for something to eat. Then he discovered everything the Mission has to offer — meals, a bed, showers, clothing — and jumped at the chance to join our FreshStart recovery program.

Soon, Sergio was praying and listening to his counselors, and he was given a job he found he loved — working in the Mission kitchen. "Sometimes, I'd see myself in the people going through the food line," he says, reminding him of just how far he'd come.

As Sergio prepares to graduate from our program, he wants to thank friends like you for providing that first meal that opened the door to a brand-new life.

"Thanks doesn't seem like enough," he says. "Maybe someday I can pay you back."

Sergio is a real-life example of how your generosity impacts the lives of those who walk through our doors. Thank you!



Despite the masks he and Mission Head Chef David Thomas are wearing, Sergio still sees himself in the people going through the Mission food line, reminding him of just how far he's come.

For three years, Troy proudly served his country as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps. During that time, he learned resilience, perseverance and how to respond when the unexpected happens.

But nothing could have prepared him for the news he got one day over the phone — when he was told his father had passed away from a drug overdose.

“My life was shattered into pieces,” Troy recalls.

To deal with the overwhelming grief and despair that now consumed him, he turned to controlled substances and eventually cocaine. Troy explained, “My father’s addiction soon became mine,” which landed him on Skid Row with no hope — and no way out . . .

. . . until the Lord spoke to him one day.

“God told me to leave my cardboard box and get help,” he says. Troy went through rehabilitation, giving him the tools for long-term sobriety that “saved my life.”

From that day forward, Troy vowed “to do everything I could to help others living on Skid Row.” True to his word, he founded Christ-Centered Ministries to help men and women transition from recovery programs to healthy, stable environments. Later, he became pastor of Inglewood Community Church to further help survivors of addiction and homelessness.

Today, as the head of Los Angeles Mission, Troy says, “Struggling people across Los Angeles are counting on the Mission for help, hope and opportunity. I believe it takes compassion, courage — and most of all, love — to change lives.”

He adds, “I just want to share that love with all of you and those we serve.”