

News from Los Angeles Mission

CROSSROADS

Encouraging hearts . . . celebrating recovery

DECEMBER 2023



Christmas Hope

INSIDE: How your compassion helped John, Yesica, Shedrick and many others experience real, permanent change.

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

See inside!

Because of You, More Neighbors Have Hope This Christmas!



Dear Caring Friend,

Emotions run high during the holidays at Los Angeles Mission. This time of year seems to remind people of what life *should be*, but isn't. Many of our guests suffered through traumatic childhoods. In fact, the main reason they're here with us is because of what they survived back then.

As our guests wrestle with their life experiences, there are wounds that must be dealt with and scars that need to heal — and it's beautiful to see how our Heavenly Father brings renewal to the most broken of hearts.

There's no better time than the New Year to begin this journey to new life, and I'm so grateful for you because your faithful prayers and support make it all possible. You are not only transforming lives — you're lifting up our entire community, and I'm so grateful for you.

This Christmas season, I hope you will continue caring for the least fortunate people in Los Angeles. Your support will double in impact thanks to our Matching Challenge, ensuring that our doors will remain open to all. Thank you, and God bless you for your compassion!

Troy Vaughn
President/CEO

Thanks to You, John Is a Changed Man

John was raised in South Central Los Angeles. He had a difficult upbringing and was on the streets by age 12. Ever since, John has ridden a merry-go-round of drugs, prison and homelessness.

Last year, however, John experienced a turning point. "I died from a Fentanyl overdose right behind Los Angeles Mission," he explains. "I was outside my body, watching everything. They say Narcan brought me back, but I know God resurrected me. I knew then that God had a bigger purpose for me. That's why I came inside the Mission."

He continues: "So much has changed. My life Bible verse is Isaiah 41:10 — '*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*'"

That's exactly what God has done for John. Now, Christmas means something different to him. "The donors to Los Angeles Mission gave me a gift. I have freedom in Christ and a new life."

Thank you for showing compassion to neighbors like John.



You Gave Yesica a Chance To Heal

Yesica suffered abuse throughout her childhood. She married young, endured severe domestic violence, and relied on drugs and alcohol to numb her pain. Ultimately, she lost her children to the state.

"I never got the chance to bond with my babies," she says. "A lot of times, my heart just couldn't take the sadness, and I wanted to die."

In September 2022, however, Yesica came to the Anne Douglas Center for Women at Los Angeles Mission to get help. "God started working in me, and He became my daddy, my Abba, my husband and my friend. He's been with me all this time."

Yesica learned how to forgive those who hurt her, and she's even re-established contact with her children. She's incredibly grateful for the growth she's experienced, and says, "This Christmas, I pray that God will bless the donors' hearts for what they did for me. They changed my life."

Thank you for the grace and hope you continue to give to vulnerable people in need of a fresh start!



The Meal That Inspired Healing and Transformation

Shedrick's childhood was filled with trauma. His mom and dad were more interested in partying than parenting. His dad gave him his first beer when he was only 6 years old! Three years later, his mom died in a house fire. And shortly after that, his dad went to jail for a crime that tore his family apart. Shedrick's sisters went to live with a relative in California, while he and his brother stayed in Louisiana. Sadly, Shedrick blamed himself for everything that had gone wrong.

Once he had completed school, he moved out to California to reconnect with his sisters. Establishing himself had its ups and downs, but he eventually married a woman he absolutely adores, and together they share five children.

Unfortunately, emotional pain from many deep-seated wounds caused Shedrick to descend further into alcoholism, until his wife told him he was no longer the man she married. Brokenhearted, he moved into a hotel, but alcohol soon cost him his job, his car and the last of his savings. For nearly a year, he survived homelessness — until a policeman suggested he come to Los Angeles Mission for food.

As is so often the case, that first meal was the beginning of his transformation. "Ever since I came, my life has changed dramatically," Shedrick says. "My therapist helped me understand that my childhood was not my fault. Now I'm praying daily, growing closer to God and getting involved in church." Shedrick is also working hard to reconcile with his wife. For all these reasons, he says, "I love Los Angeles Mission!"



Give Hope Through Christmas Meals

Men, women and children surviving on the streets need help, hope and the chance for a new beginning. That's why we're doing everything we can to serve our neighbors in desperate need, and why your help is so critically important this holiday season.

Our \$2.53 meals are one of the most important ways we reach people and help them experience healing and transformation. At the same time, the Mission also provides Christmas toys for children from struggling families, along with a host of other comprehensive recovery services.

Please give generously today to help your neighbors facing homelessness, poverty and hunger. Thanks to our \$100,000 Matching Challenge, your support will double in impact, helping transform twice as many lives. Thank you, and God bless you for sharing His love with those in need.



UPCOMING EVENTS/ SAVE THE DATES

Volunteer Opportunities

Christmas Event – 12/22

Serve the “least of these” (Matthew 25:40) at Los Angeles Mission. Visit lamission.volunteerhub.com or call (213) 629-1227 Ext. 337 to learn about service opportunities.



Deduct 100% of your charitable giving if you itemize

Don't forget to make your tax-deductible gift by December 31, 2023!

A Great Way To Transform Lives in 2024!



With homelessness and hunger both at record highs, our community needs Los Angeles Mission more than ever. You can make a crucial difference for men, women and children in need by 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.



Writing a Spiritual Love Letter

Passing Your Values to the Next Generation

Sometimes referred to as an “ethical Will,” a spiritual love letter is an informal document separate from your legal Will, designed to pass along your Christian values, life lessons and blessings from one generation to the next.

Since this is not a legal document, the content, length and form are completely up to you. The letter should reflect your personality and style.

Most people include these three basic elements:

1. **Beliefs and values.** What are your core beliefs about God? How have your faith and convictions guided your life?
2. **Life lessons.** What truths have you gleaned from life's victories, challenges and disappointments?
3. **Messages of hope.** Which Scriptures have brought you personal encouragement? What are your greatest hopes and prayers for your loved ones?

Once you've completed your spiritual love letter, make sure to save it with your Will in a safe location where your personal representative knows where to find it. You will leave your family a tangible gift of love, hope and encouragement they can carry with them in the years to come.

For additional help, request your free copy of “Writing a Spiritual Love Letter” by calling Kyle Patterson at (213) 629-1227, Ext. 304, or emailing k_patterson@lamission.net.

Help Neighbors Experiencing Homelessness This Holiday Season

Please send back the enclosed reply form with your year-end, tax-deductible gift to provide meals, care and life-changing services to people who need help this holiday season. Gifts must be postmarked before December 31 per IRS requirements in order for your gift to be tax-deductible. Give generously to revive hope for your neighbors who are struggling to rebuild their broken lives. Thank you!

From Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Smith,
Your Gift Will Provide Holiday Meals and New Life!

Yes, I want to offer my neighbors on Skid Row a hearty meal and compassionate care this holiday season. Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ \$_____ to help as much as possible!

Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Smith
123 Main Street
Anytown, USA 12345-6789
[Barcode]

Los Angeles Mission
The Crossroads of Hope
PO Box 54059 | Los Angeles, CA 90054-0059
Give online at
LosAngelesMission.org/Crossroads

Please make your check payable to Los Angeles Mission and return it with this slip in the envelope provided. To change your gift by credit card, please fill out the information on reverse side, or call (213) 629-1227 Ext. 400. A receipt for your tax-deductible gift will be sent to you shortly.

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



LOS ANGELES MISSION DONATION DROP OFF

316 Winston Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Hours of operation are Monday-Friday: 7am-7pm
Saturday: 7am-5pm; Sunday: Closed