



UNION GOSPEL MISSION

# LIFECHANGE. LETTER

Feeding the hungry, restoring the addict and loving our neighbor since 1927.

APRIL 2020

## Vanessa's Story: A family again

Hopeless, alone, addicted, and on the edge of death from complications of a miscarriage, Vanessa's four children were about to be adopted out from the foster care system. "I was convinced that I was going to lose my kids forever," explains Vanessa. One day in desperation Vanessa prayed, "God, if you could find me a place where I can have my four kids with me, I'll leave this lifestyle and never turn back."

A few days later while Vanessa was looking at

social media on her phone, she ran across an old friend's profile that went to Union Gospel Mission's LifeChange for Women and Their Children. As she looked at her friend's story on social media, she thought, "This could be the program for me!" After several calls to the mission office, Vanessa was accepted into the program.

Scared at first, she was soon overcome by the love given by the other residents and staff. "I could feel the love here, I could feel that it was

*"This is a place where we can heal together as a family."*

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okay to be myself."

While Vanessa was working on healing and learning how to overcome cycles that have overwhelmed her in the past, the mission staff worked with her to help get her children out of foster care and bring the family back together again.

Vanessa's four children, ages 12 (twins), 8, and 3, were able to join Vanessa at LifeChange for Women and Their Children on December 24th of last year. "That was a very special Christmas," smiles Vanessa. "This is a place where we can heal together as a family."

"The best thing about being here," says Bobby, Vanessa's 12 year old son, "is that there are other kids here that are going through the same thing that you are. You don't feel like you're the only one going through stuff."

As part of recovery the women and children get mental health counseling, and attend parenting classes

to help build a healthy environment for themselves and their children.

"I'm so thankful, because of the generosity of others, I can take the time to work on myself... time to heal and to break the cycle," says Vanessa.

UGM's LifeChange is a Christ-centered recovery program where residents live and work in a community of people committed to transforming their lives and breaking the grip of addiction. LifeChange consists of counseling, work therapy, discipleship, and transitional after care, at no cost to the resident.

**If you know of a woman battling addiction, homelessness, or domestic abuse and she is interested in a LifeChange, then contact LifeChange for Women and Their Children at 503-802-2271.**

## Become a Heart of Hope Monthly Partner

By becoming a Heart of Hope partner, you can make an even bigger impact in the community!

### Reasons to join Heart of Hope:

- **Reliable Income:** Monthly giving helps provide stable support to vital Mission programs like meals, clothing, and addiction recovery. The Mission can more effectively plan with support the Mission can count on.
- **Reduced Administrative Costs:** Heart of Hope members receive reduced mailings, with just occasional newsletters and one annual receipt each January, saving the Mission anywhere from 30% - 75% in mailing costs, this means more money goes straight to the ministry.

- **It's convenient:** With the automated Heart of Hope program, you don't have to hassle with checks, envelopes and stamps. Your gift comes automatically to the Mission each month.

By being a Heart of Hope Monthly Partner, you are taking a stand against poverty, addiction, and homelessness, joining what God is doing among our most vulnerable neighbors.

Monthly giving can be set up by calling 503-274-4483 or visiting [ugmportland.org/heart-of-hope](http://ugmportland.org/heart-of-hope)



### Volunteer Profile: Annette

Annette recently retired after working 33 years for the federal government with budgets and accounting.

One day at her home church, the Adult Discipleship coordinator asked her if she was interested in helping at LifeChange for Women. Annette knew this would be a good fit for her,

emotionally and spiritually, so she said 'yes,' and became a volunteer teacher and staff assistant.

"Currently I work the Receptionist desk during staff meetings, and then I facilitate a class on Emotions, Money, and Budgeting," explains Annette. "The class is faith based and looks at how God views money, the emotions that people get caught up in when dealing with money (comparison, envy, discontentment, etc.). The goal of the class is to provide tools so the women can understand their financial situation and work to gain financial stability."

"I really like getting to know the women at LifeChange and facilitating a class that uses one of the talents God gave me," said Annette. "I also really miss the social side of working, so this gives me an opportunity to be with people and to share my experiences and my faith."

**Are you looking for ways to share the gifts God gave you? If so, please call 503-274-4483 or visit us at [ugmportland.org/volunteer](http://ugmportland.org/volunteer) to get involved.**

### UGM BY THE NUMBERS: OCTOBER 2019-FEBRUARY 2020



**TOTAL MEALS**  
128,355



**SEARCH+RESCUE KITS**  
10,270



**EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES**  
788



**VOLUNTEER HOURS**  
6,454



**CHAPEL ATTENDANCE/DINNERS**  
9,734



**SACK LUNCHES**  
3,888



**HOT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH**  
36,513

"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." 1 John 4:12

**APRIL 2020**

# BILLBOARD

A Message from Union Gospel Mission  
Director Bill Russell



How did Janet's unborn baby save her life?

Janet was addicted to opiates and found herself in jail and pregnant. Fortunately, her addiction hadn't harmed her baby. DHS let her know that the baby would be under their custody and taken at birth if Janet didn't deal with her addiction. Today, Janet is a proud college student who has full custody of her healthy child.

It is great to watch women come into our LifeChange center. They step away from abuse and start walking with God. That walk leads to healing, learning, and growing.

I look beyond the redemption of Janet, and I think of the return on investment in the child's life!

Most LifeChange residents come to us in their late 30's. The children in the program are all relatively young, many in elementary school. When the mom begins LifeChange, the ripple effect on her kids is incalculable. We have seen children who came through the LifeChange center become healthy, happy high schoolers, and some are now entering college. We are optimistic and eager to see how their lives unfold now that the generational curses of abuse and addiction are broken.

With Mother's Day just around the corner, please join us in praying for all the brave moms at our Women's LifeChange Center. We are so encouraged by how God is changing lives and impacting generations to come!

Bill Russell  
Executive Director

## A Word of Encouragement During These Challenging Times

Scripture warns us that things can change "*in the twinkling of an eye.*"

There is something true about the notion that "*there is nothing new under the sun.*"

Certainly, technology, scientific advances and many things are new to history. The "nothing new" part is about humans having to deal with setbacks and pandemics. We will always be disoriented when things turn quickly and we are forced to change our expectations and even our habits.

**The unchangeable one is God**, who "*is the same yesterday, today and forever.*" I take great comfort in the fact that God has seen it all, and that "*he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus.*" (Philippians 1:6)

Bill Russell  
Executive Director

*"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."*

1 John 3: 2-3 (NKJV)

## LIFECCHANGE LETTER

is a publication of Union Gospel Mission

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