



UNION GOSPEL MISSION

LIFECHANGE LETTER

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

CHRISTMAS 2020

Dave's Story:

I Didn't Feel Worthy

Dave is only a few months away from graduating Union Gospel Mission's LifeChange recovery program.

"Without the donors and volunteers, I wouldn't be here," says Dave. *"Without them I wouldn't have survived. I owe them my life!"*

Dave, a Navy veteran, suffered from alcoholism and severe depression that caused him to be homeless for over 10 years. Holidays were especially hard.

"Being homeless you miss out on connection; people ignore you," he says. *"Sometimes I would stand out on the freeway onramp holding a sign, not for the money, but to have that connection with people."*

When UGM's Search + Rescue first met Dave, he was living in a tent in the sloughs by Delta park, AKA "Tweaker Island."

Search + Rescue continued to meet with Dave and others in their camp every Thursday night for over a year. That winter was especially cold.

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"I get real satisfaction from helping others." —Dave

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I Didn't Feel Worthy Continued from front...

With over a foot of snow on the ground, Dave thought that Search + Rescue wouldn't be coming out that Thursday. Fortunately for Dave, the Search + Rescue "Love Van" did show up that night.

He was on the verge of hypothermia.

"All I wanted to do was lay down and go to sleep."

But the Search + Rescue volunteers insisted that they take him to a warming shelter. *"I guess they saved my life that night,"* says Dave.

From there he decided he needed a change. Dave started asking about getting into Union Gospel Mission's LifeChange program.

"I'm here in the mission, warm and dry with my belly full, and my heart hurts for the people still out in the cold," Dave says. *"I didn't feel worthy."*



For almost a year now, Dave has been serving on the Search + Rescue van two nights a week. He's even been able to serve and testify to the people he camped with in Delta park.

"I get real satisfaction from helping others. I want to continue helping others for as long as I can. It's a real blessing to me."

UGM serves over 250,000 meals a year. The people that help serve those meals are the people that come off the streets and into LifeChange. *"Its work therapy where residents get to be productive and help other people in need,"* says Bill Russell, Union Gospel Mission, Executive Director. *"It's one of the best win-wins that I've ever encountered."*

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 someone battling addiction or homelessness and they have had enough and are interested in a LifeChange, please contact our Intake Coordinator at mensintake@ugmportland.org or call 503-274-4483.

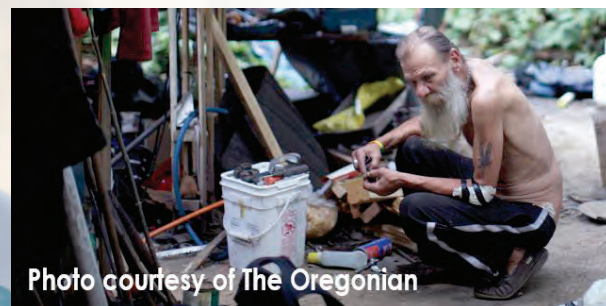


Photo courtesy of The Oregonian

Dave at an encampment at Delta Park.

UGM BY THE NUMBERS: OCTOBER 2019-SEPTEMBER 2020



TOTAL MEALS
263,873



SEARCH+RESCUE KITS
29,543



EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES
1,297



VOLUNTEER HOURS
8,060



CHAPEL ATTENDANCE/DINNERS
20,176



SACK LUNCHES
8,370



HOT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
95,392

MERRY

Christmas

From All of Us at Union Gospel Mission



AS WE APPROACH the conclusion of possibly the most consequential year of our lifetime, we pause to acknowledge the contributions of key partners like you, who have come to the rescue of so many of our hurting friends and neighbors on the street.

You are our heroes.

May 2021 fully reflect the newness in Christ that we celebrate at Christmas.

UGM Volunteer Spotlight: Sally

After retiring from OHSU, Sally thought she might like to volunteer somewhere she could work with books. One afternoon while she was shopping at the Union Gospel Mission Thrift Store, she asked a volunteer at the checkout if they needed help keeping up the book section.

Since that day Sally has been faithfully volunteering at the Thrift Store twice a week for over two years.

"I really feel quite lucky to be here," smiles Sally. *"I really enjoy the staff*

and residents. Everyone is helpful and friendly . . . and of course I love working with the books."

Sally encourages people to consider volunteering their passions. And if you enjoy books, come check out one of Tigard's best kept secrets, the UGM Thrift Store book section!

For more information on volunteer opportunities, please call 503-274-4483 or go to ugmportland.org/volunteer



"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:8-9

DECEMBER 2020

BILLBOARD

A Message from Union Gospel Mission
Director Bill Russell



A Season for LifeChange

Back in the 1970s I was working to get through law school. I didn't have any spiritual life and I coped with my anxieties with alcohol. I had to spend one night in my vehicle. It was SO COLD. I woke up shaking uncontrollably.

I have compassion for people who are driven by addictions and bad choices. One bad choice leads to another, and many live night after night in a tent or a vehicle.

But the same God that saved me from a miserable fractured life still saves men, women and children living in horrible situations. For years I have watched God use the holiday season to draw people back inside, back to sanity, and to full forgiveness and a new life. There is something about being alone and miserable during Christmas that brings conviction that a bad life must change, or it will end.

Please invest in change this season. LifeChange is a place where we see broken people have a chance to start all over again, learn from past mistakes, learn a new way of living and escape misery.

Jesus came to earth to allow us to exchange our brokenness for his wholeness. I believe that is the greatest Christmas gift ever! I also know that your gift to UGM will be used to deliver this gift of God to many hurting men, women, and children! The wise still seek him.

Merry Christmas!

Bill Russell
Executive Director



Winter Needs at UGM

Experiencing homelessness is never easy, but the winter months can be especially miserable—even life threatening! Our team continues to reach out to our neighbors in downtown Portland and all over the city with our Search + Rescue van.

Items we currently need are:

- * Blankets
- * Coats
- * Gloves
- * Hats
- * Hand warmers
- * Travel size hygiene items (toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner)

For the Women's Center:

- * Children's toys
- * Twin bed sheets, comforters, and new pillows

Donations can be dropped off at 3 NW Third Avenue in Portland or purchased through our Amazon Wishlist:

<https://a.co/3UxbMMD>

*Thank you for your enduring partnership
and generosity now and in the New Year.*

LIFECHANGE LETTER

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