



UNION GOSPEL MISSION

LIFECHANGE LETTER

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

OCTOBER 2019

Sandra's Story:

People need to know that we are here!

Sandra, 76 years old, bright, funny and warm... a joy to be around. She laughs and playfully teases as our Union Gospel Mission's Search + Rescue daytime outreach buys her a replacement walker at a local medical supply store. Her previous walker's wheels are worn out and broken from overuse. As Sandra talks with us, she sits in a 20-year-old Volvo station wagon, the car is well kept, but full of her belongings. Sandra has been living in her car for over a year.

She explains that she worked at an adult care facility, but after time her own disabilities prevented her from performing her job. Sandra also

rented a room at the facility where she worked, so when she lost her job, she also lost her home. Her resources were drained, she soon resorted to sleeping in her car.

Mekeda, UGM's Search + Rescue coordinator has been making regular visits to help Sandra with her everyday needs. Today she is helping her get a new walker and wash a load of laundry. At 76 years old, Sandra has a long list of ailments. She's legally disabled so even the most mundane tasks can cause severe pain or discomfort.

Continued inside



INSIDE

**The Children's
Extended
Ministry**

**Volunteer
Spotlight:
Cheryl's Impact**

**Help Us Love Our
Neighbors this
Thanksgiving**

Sandra's Story:

People need to know that we are here!

Continued from cover

Unfortunately, Sandra's story is not an uncommon one here in Portland. We see the tents on the streets and in the fields, but there are many we don't see. The homeless like Sandra that live in cars or in green spaces or even couch surfing, these are the people that Search + Rescue tries to reach. I ask Sandra if there is something she wants to tell people. She wept as she said, "People need to know that we are here!"

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count for Multnomah County From 2017 to 2019 there has been a 70% increase in homelessness in people age 70 and above. Higher medical, housing and food costs are driving some of our most vulnerable neighbors into homelessness.

Union Gospel Mission provides more than 250,000 meals a year to people in need. In addition to meals, the Mission provides food boxes, a day room with coffee and snacks, clothing, hygiene items, referral services and emergency cold weather shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

Union Gospel Mission is also home to the LifeChange program, a Christ-centered recovery community. Its purpose is to transform lives and break people free from addiction and destructive life patterns.

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

Thanks to your continued prayer and support, our homeless neighbors like Sandra are finding LifeChange and the resources they need to survive everyday.



UGM BY THE NUMBERS: OCTOBER 2018 – AUGUST 2019



TOTAL MEALS
216,990



SEARCH+RESCUE KITS
24,409



EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES
1,068



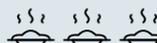
VOLUNTEER HOURS
14,839



CHAPEL ATTENDANCE/DINNERS
18,236



SACK LUNCHES
9,346



HOT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
92,264

Love and Support with the Children's Extended Ministry

The Union Gospel Mission's LifeChange for Women and Their Children in Beaverton provides ministry to children beyond a mother's stay at our residential recovery home.

After graduation and moving out of the LifeChange Center, the Children's Ministry has created an "Extended Ministry" to continue its relationship with the children. Bob Thompson, UGM coordinator of the Extended Ministry says, "The longer we can stay in relationship with our kids, the higher probability of their long-term success and emotional health."

Bob has been taking four sisters out for a movie and lunch twice a month for the last three years. The sister's range in age from 4 to 19 and first came to the Children's Center in 2015. Bob says, "The high school girls are getting straight A's and have high hopes for attending a major college, while the oldest has already completed a year in college." The children are given hope for their future and the support of many people in their healing process.

You can help support the Extended Ministry with tickets or access to live events or movies. If you want to help the Children's Extended Ministry contact Union Gospel Mission's LifeChange for Women and Their Children at 503-802-2271



Cheryl's Impact: Safe, Respected and Loved

Cheryl first started volunteering at LifeChange for Women and Their Children in the child care center two and half years ago. "I really felt God led me to volunteer here," said Cheryl. "I really feel like I get to make an impact in the children's lives . . . even though I'm only here for a short time each week."

Cheryl faithfully volunteers around three hours a week to give the child care staff a respite so they can attend staff meetings. "Everyone is so appreciative here," says Cheryl. "You get back way more than you give."

"Every child deserves a place where they feel safe, respected and loved. The staff do an amazing job of creating that type of environment for the children in LifeChange!" explains Cheryl. "I am humbled to be a tiny part of that work each week."

"I would definitely encourage others to check out the volunteer encounter to better understand the work of the mission," says Cheryl. "Pray about what role you might play, then follow the lead of God's Spirit. I find my time at the Child Care Center fun, sometimes challenging and always fulfilling."

Is God nudging you to give back? Please call 503-274-4483 or visit us online at ugmportland.org/volunteer to get involved.

"The sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do." Deuteronomy 14:29

OCTOBER 2019

BILLBOARD

A Message from Union Gospel Mission
Director Bill Russell



We see them.

We all tend to see the most troubled homeless people. It is annoying, even dangerous, living in a place where used syringes and human waste threaten our health and well-being. UGM's Search + Rescue program aims at those places and works to get people out of that misery.

The vast majority of people experiencing homelessness are NOT visible to us!

We have met hundreds of mothers with children who are actually in hidden and dangerous situations. They may be living in someone's garage, or moving from place to place in their vehicle. They may feel obliged to stay with an abuser, or be living in a tent in the woods.

That is not okay with us. Union Gospel Mission is doing everything we can to get the children and woman OUT of that unsafe and terrifying life, and into a safe, healing home.

Help us help them to live a happy, hopeful, and God-honoring life. I often can point to the choice that put a woman in harm's way. But I have yet to say that about one of our children in the LifeChange Center for Women and Their Children. The women need a fresh start, and the kids deserve a chance!

Bill Russell
Executive Director

You can help us love our neighbors this Thanksgiving

A lot of planning goes into our huge Thanksgiving Love Your Neighbor Day event. It's Thanksgiving for hundreds of people in Portland. Much of the behind the scenes work of the event is done by our LifeChange residents. A team of men work closely with the volunteers to coordinate the logistics for the day of the event.

LifeChange residents serving in the kitchen work for weeks in advance preparing and planning for the meal. In LifeChange, part of recovery is learning to give back. We are so thankful for the LifeChange residents who are so dedicated to making our "Love Your Neighbor Day" event a special day for everyone who comes.

Cold weather gear needed

If you're interested in getting involved, consider donating cold weather gear like hats, scarves, and gloves that will keep people living on the streets warm throughout the cold winter months.

To donate food for Thanksgiving, please contact Lori, our food service coordinator, at loriq@ugmportland.org or call 503-274-4483.



LIFECCHANGE LETTER

is a publication of Union Gospel Mission

3 NW Third Avenue | Portland, Oregon 97209 | 503-274-4483 | www.ugmportland.org

