

Graduation at Hope Gospel Mission

Graduation is a time of celebration at Hope Gospel Mission. On June 22nd, Kevin O'Brien graduated from the two year Renewed Hope Program. It marked the completion of a holistic program designed to rebuild his life with the necessary support and skills to be a productive member of society.

Kevin has had the privilege of attending many classes offered by Hope Gospel Mission that provide practical training in life skills and work related areas. During his two years he has worked in the Bargain Center, Building Hope, as a machinist in Altoona and, most recently, at Indianhead Foodservice Distributors.

Before graduation each resident completes a hobby project. Kevin purchased and installed a kit to motorize his bicycle. He has logged over 2,600 miles on his bike (mainly driving to work) which gets 60 mpg. At his graduation he received the keys to a Toyota Camry from the Hope Gospel Mission Auto Program. Each graduate receives a good, used auto when they graduate so they can have reliable transportation.

Each resident at the Ruth House and Men's Shelter attends a local church for spiritual instruction and positive socialization. Kevin has been an active member of



Kevin's Hobby Project



Kevin and his new Camry

Kevin with his Mentor and Pastor



Mark, Terry and Steve



Crossroads Church of Chippewa Falls. Dave Word of Crossroads Church is Kevin's mentor. Mentors have an important role in providing friendship, activities outside of the Mission, guidance, and accountability.

During the same graduation ceremony, three men from Hope Gospel Mission's Men's Shelter were promoted to the next phase in the Renewed Hope Program. Terry Glenzinski was promoted to phase two, Mark Jacobson to phase three, and Steve Gergen to phase four. All three men received certificates and awards for their accomplishments. Family, staff, fellow residents, volunteers, and pastors made up the 80 people who attended this special event.

Steve Gergen says he came to the Mission at age 55 with a background of addictions and thought his life was over. He said the Renewed Hope Program provided needed structure and challenged him to develop himself. When he entered the program he had no computer skills and feared technology, but learned to use a computer and developed his writing skills. The faith components of the programs and his local church have been key factors in turning his life around. Steve has been working for six months at a local assisted living home for alzheimer residents and plans to stay in Eau Claire after he finishes the Renewed Hope Program.

From the President and Founder: Mark Donnelly



Mark Donnelly

It is a real blessing for me to see how God has unfolded the work of rescue at HGM over the past 12 years. When we first started working with homeless men in the spring of 1999 it was on a very temporary basis. We provided them food, clothing and temporary housing in hotels and a local church. We had weekly Gospel services in which they could hear about God's plan of salvation. Then in the fall of 2000 we opened our Men's shelter and extended our ability to help residents from 30 to 60 days. Realizing that many of our residents needed jobs, we started running a temporary employment service for them in the summer of 2001. We were able to place most of our residents with jobs within a few days.

Seeing a need to teach residents in basic life skills such as hygiene, work habits and finances we added our life skills program in the fall of 2001 which ran up to six months. In 2002 we started offering temporary services to homeless single women by housing them in local hotels. In the fall of 2003 we opened the Bargain Center and Auto sales to provide a funding source and jobs for the residents. Realizing that our residents needed more long-term help, in 2003 we extended our life skills program from 6 to 12 months. In 2004 we extended it to 12 to 18 months and added work therapy at the Bargain Center to assist residents in job training. In 2005 we

opened the education center to help the residents educational needs associated with obtaining employment. The Ruth House also opened to serve the needs of homeless single women.

In 2006 we opened Building Hope, our building material re-use center to provide paid internship jobs for residents prior to their outside employment. In 2007 we upgraded our life skills program to a comprehensive two year, four phase program called the Renewed Hope Program. In the past year we have been blessed with five graduates from that program and expect to have many more! Now we are in the process of starting Solomon Learning Center which will open by fall of 2010. It will allow us to offer more educational content to our residents and offer related classes to the public. That's a short history of what God has been doing at HGM for the past 12+ years!

Since many of the causes of homelessness are long-term problems, developed over years or generations, they require long-term solutions. We have learned that longer is better than shorter and have tried to develop programs and solutions that meet those needs. We have also learned that in order for those programs and solutions to work, the individual must really want the right kind of help in order to change. Otherwise we can end up enabling them and perpetuating the cycle of homelessness. We pray that, by using God's methods, we can continue to be part of the solution to homelessness rather than part of the problem.

Meet the Staff: Justin Vajko

Justin is the new Volunteer Coordinator for Hope Gospel Mission. His primary duties include finding people that will help out at the Mission, and making sure HGM volunteers are enjoying their experience. He is also the Stewardship Assistant and plans events such as the Annual Banquet coming this September.

Justin spent the first 12 years of his life growing up near Paris, France as the son of missionaries. As a result, he speaks French fluently and gets easily excited about geography, history, and traveling. He recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire with a B.A. in Graphic Design and minors in French and Web Design. Throughout his college career he has worked and volunteered with non-profits, including Hope Gospel Mission. His experience doing volunteer projects for Hope Gospel Mission led to his being hired in March.

While Justin may easily talk about the Civil War or the effects of globalization, what truly moves him is seeing God at work in people's lives. He praises God every day for the change he has seen in his own life through his trust in Jesus Christ, for his family and for the work of rescue he's able to be a part of at Hope Gospel Mission.



Justin with his wife Miriam and daughter Brienna.

A Legacy of Care

As the new Volunteer Coordinator for Hope Gospel Mission I'd like to share one of my passions: how God's hand has moved mankind throughout history. As you've read a bit of my background in "Meet the Staff," I thought it would be appropriate to also give you a very brief history of volunteerism in the United States, and how it has evolved into what we now find at Hope Gospel Mission.

Since the 1600's, Americans have been helping Americans. Whether it's been Native Americans teaching the Pilgrim settlers how to plant corn or today's parents adopting an orphan, we have always been a people who care for one another. In the early 19th Century, the famous French chronicler Alexis de Tocqueville commented that Americans feel "compassion for the suffering of one another, when they are brought together by easy and frequent [interaction]" (Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*). But even as Tocqueville was making this observation, society was changing: the Industrial Revolution had just emerged. The bustling city was growing into an exciting place to work and live, drawing people away from rural towns and villages. As urban populations grew, people themselves grew apart and the poor, once known and cared for by everyone in the once-small community, were becoming unfamiliar faces. The personal model of caring that widows, orphans and the disabled depended on was slowly disappearing.

Even with this change, however, Americans found a way to extend that personal lifeline to the needy. Aid societies and organizations were founded to come alongside the disadvantaged. Through these groups, men and women again found a way to meet the needs of the poor and homeless and provide them with the appropriate support. Reaching out with kindness, these individuals gave their time, energy, and love to people that could

have easily remained strangers. In their sacrifice, they laid an example of love for future generations to follow.

This legacy of caring still remains in those who volunteer at shelters and missions around the United States. Here at Hope Gospel Mission, we see them diligently working alongside us, each with a different reason for being here. Whether it's because they want to give back to society or extend the love of Christ Jesus to the needy, our volunteers truly help to make a difference in the lives of every person that comes through our doors. Their compassion is personal and their passion is productive: sorting donations, repairing vehicles or cooking hot meals are just some of the ways that they have been a blessing to the Mission and the people we serve.



Josephine & Lu cooking at the Men's Shelter.

Please consider joining us in helping the homeless and those in need in Western Wisconsin. We're sure you will get much from your experience, and perhaps learn and grow through your service with us.

Please see below for a current opportunity. For more information on volunteering call me at **715-552-5566 extension 103** or email me at justin@hopegospelmision.org.

Volunteer Staff Opportunity

An attentive, reliable person is needed to help Hope with its mission to rescue and renew lives. As a Volunteer Staff Member you can help sort and merchandize clothing at the Bargain Center. **For more info, call 715-552-5566 ext. 103.**

Needed Items

The following items are needed for our shelters. If you have any items to donate, you may bring them to the Men's Shelter at 8 South Farwell between the hours of 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday.

Kitchen: Four heavy-bottomed 10 quart stock pots, Two toasters (four-slice), Fresh fruit and vegetables, Meat (poultry, beef, pork, or venison).

Solomon Learning Center: Newer File Server.

Men's Shelter: Bar soap, Razors (dual blade or electric), Shampoo, Deodorant, Phone cards.

Ruth House: Pocket folders, Writing materials, Notebooks, Bibles, Bar soap, Stop smoking patches, Underwear (various sizes).



Work has been progressing on our new Solomon Learning Center. The location is just two blocks from our men's shelter and one block from the city bus station. This will make it convenient for both our residents and people in the community to attend classes in our new, expanded facility.

The deconstruction phase of the remodeling is completed and we have installed sheet rock, painted walls, and laid new carpet in preparation for the planned opening in August. Our sign is now on the outside of the building with a "Coming Soon" banner on it.

We thank Spectrum Furniture for their generous gift of classroom furniture to the Solomon Learning Center project. Because of their commitment to helping those in need, we will be able to use the money we would have spent on this furniture to provide financial aid to those who need assistance to participate in the work readi-

ness program. We are blessed to have Spectrum as a partner and are thankful for their investment in the Solomon Learning Center and the Chippewa Valley.

Here are some of the new classes we plan to add and offer in our expanded center:

- **Critical Thinking**
- **Microsoft Office**
- **Keyboarding**
- **Small Business Management**
- **Business Etiquette**
- **Intro to HR**
- **Business Communication**
- **Intro to Accounting**
- **Intro to Marketing**
- **Leadership**
- **Time Management**
- **Health/Fitness**
- **Managing People**

If you would like more information, would like to schedule a tour to see the new facility, are interested in teaching a course (or two), or would like to donate to the general fund or scholarship fund, contact



New location on Farwell Street



Deconstruction of the rooms in May.



New Carpeting, sheetrock and painting in June.

Chris Hedlund our Director of Education at chris@hopegospelmission.org or phone 715-225-0682.

Hope Gospel Mission's Annual Banquet

You are invited to join us!

WHEN: Tuesday September 28 at 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: The Florian Gardens.

There is no charge, but RSVP early by phoning 715-552-5566.

General Office
PO Box 1127
Eau Claire, WI 54702
(715) 552-5566

Men's Shelter
8 South Farwell Street
Eau Claire, WI 54702
(715) 552-5566

Ruth House
2517 Moholt Drive
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(715) 834-4000

Bargain Center
2511 Moholt Drive
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(715) 839-9498

Auto Sales
2615 Moholt Drive
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(715) 830-0155

Building Hope
2108 Western Avenue
Eau Claire, WI
(715) 838-2084



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