

Volunteer Helps Residents to Success

"Fifteen years ago, if anyone had told me I would be tutoring residents at Hope Gospel Mission, I would have told them they were certifiable!" But in 2007, an elder at Bruce Acomb's church introduced him to the Mission's president. As Bruce puts it, "Next thing I knew, I was at Hope Gospel Mission." And he's still here today, with no plans to quit anytime soon!

What keeps Bruce going? "I enjoy what I'm doing," he says simply. Two days a week, Bruce works with men and women in our Solomon Learning Center, helping them grasp the basics of reading, writing, grammar, math and Bible curriculum. "The fact that someone is here to work with them and help them over the rough spots is important," Bruce says. "They've never had that. Their teachers didn't take the time to work with them individually."

Though many never completed high school, Bruce says they are intelligent and "hungry to learn and improve." With a little help from Bruce, they get to the point where they can read and write effectively. Some go on to earn their GEDs.

Even more rewarding than seeing a resident succeed academically is seeing them accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior. "When that happens," Bruce says, "it changes the whole trajectory of their life."



Right now, Bruce is the only tutor at Hope Gospel Mission, which means there's room for more. If God has laid the desire on your heart to come alongside men and women and help them learn to read and write, Bruce says, "Give it a try! The residents are fun to work with. You get to know them. I wouldn't give up what I'm doing for anything."

For more information on volunteering or working at Hope Gospel Mission, please contact Linda Velie at 552-5566 ext. 1302 or lindav@hopegospelmission.org

Celebrating Our Residents

Every month, we throw a Celebration Dinner in honor of our residents' accomplishments and the transforming power of Jesus.

Those who turn to Hope Gospel Mission in their time of need deserve love and respect. Our residents work hard to reach their goals and find a fresh start. We believe each and every accomplishment, big or small, is worth celebrating. Phase promotions, curriculum completions, program completions, baptisms, salvations, new jobs, birthdays ... we praise Jesus for them all.

This exciting and joyful time is perfect for reminding our residents to persevere and that hard work is worth it. This time of celebration is proof that all the time, money and prayers you give to those in need is well worth it. You are making a way for true transformation and life-change in our community.



Lives are being transformed here, through Jesus. What a blessing!

"Here, I'm lifted up."

After a long, brutal winter, spring in Wisconsin is always a time for hope, renewal and joy. Nothing embodies that better than a newborn baby, and Hope Gospel Mission is blessed to be housing one right now.

Kara came to the Mission last November when she was seven months pregnant. A single mom, she already had two older children living in Kansas and had recently given her two-year-old daughter up for an open adoption. "I see her almost every weekend." The child she was carrying when she arrived, she told us, was her chance to be "the best mom I need to be."

In coming to the Mission, Kara hoped for "a fresh start in a good place." She also wanted to make sure her baby had a chance to grow up with more stability than she had experienced. Shuttled between her parents when they divorced, Kara began acting out and was thrust into the foster care system at 14. "I felt abandoned, like I didn't fit in anywhere," she says. At 18, Kara aged out of foster care and found herself adrift: nowhere to go, and no faith or hope to hold onto. She ended up on the streets and fell prey to addiction.

"Coming to Hope Gospel Mission really opened my eyes," Kara says. "If I were still on the street, doing what I was doing, I would have continued being dragged down. Here, I'm lifted up. I'm not judged or treated badly. And my faith is starting to come back."

Kara admits that it takes "a lot of determination and willpower" to get through the program, but she is determined to make it work for her and her little boy. "I'm here for the long haul. If it takes two years, it takes two years. I don't want to be in the same mess I was in before. I couldn't deal with the heartbreak of losing another kid."

With your help, the future looks bright for Kara and her son, Austin.

"I've been clean and sober since I came to the Mission. I'm glad I got a second chance at life, and to be able to give my baby a good life with me."



Many Gifts Have Been Given In Honor of or In Memory of Loved Ones
You can see a list of these special gift recognitions by viewing the online newsletter at HopeGospelMission.org

the hope

HOPE
GOSPEL MISSION
Lives Rescued. Rebuilt. Renewed.

Spring 2021

*New Life
Everywhere
this
Spring*

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A "Brand-New" Life for Carol • Leading Residents to Success • You Lifted Up a New Mom



Sandi Polzin
Executive Director

**Blessed be the God
and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ!
According to His
great mercy,
He has caused us
to be born again
to a living hope
through the
resurrection of
Jesus Christ
from the dead.**

~ 1 Peter 1:3, ESV

A SEASON FOR

New Life

Dear Friend,

A group of men here were asked where they would be if not for Hope Gospel Mission. One man said, “Dead or in prison.” Others sitting there agreed.

Life is miserable, dangerous and often short for our homeless neighbors or those trapped in addiction. But God breaks habits that bind people when they believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, presented here at Hope Gospel Mission.

Those who receive God’s gift of forgiveness change for the better. Their family knows it — their neighborhood knows it — and sometimes their whole community knows it. That’s why all of our staff rejoices every time someone turns to Jesus. We know more and more good things are coming.

I am reminded of God’s goodness often during the springtime, when He renews the world around us and restores everything to life. Through your generosity, He also renews lives here at the Mission, every day of the year.

I hope you enjoy knowing you are part of changing lives forever. God uses you and the Mission to save people, and it is a joy to see.

Sincerely,

Sandi Polzin
Executive Director
Hope Gospel Mission

YOU HELPED CAROL FEEL

“Totally Brand-New”

After surviving an abusive childhood, Carol was determined that her five children would never suffer the trauma she experienced. However, she was unable to deal with her past and turned to alcohol to “put the pain away.” By the time her children were grown, Carol’s drinking had gotten out of control. Her marriage was over and she had lost her job of 13 years. She had no car and no place to stay. Even worse, she says, “My kids told me I couldn’t see my grandkids unless I stopped drinking.”

Carol’s daughter tempered the ultimatum with a solution: go to Hope Gospel Mission for help. “When I walked in the door, I started crying,” Carol recalls. “I saw my daughter trying not to cry, and I knew it was just as hard on her as it was on me.”

Soon, Carol found that Hope Gospel Mission was exactly what she needed. “No one was here to judge me. They treated me like a real person with a heart and soul, not just an alcoholic. They were very caring.” Nine months into the program, Carol says, “I’ve never felt so good in all my life! Before I came here, I didn’t know who I was anymore. Now I feel totally brand-new.”

Working with all the Hope Gospel Mission staff and volunteers, including her Renewal Counselor, Becky, Carol came to terms with her past and discovered the healing power of forgiveness. “I look back at my

mom and I think her parents probably weren’t good to her. She didn’t know any better, and I don’t blame her anymore.”

Forgiveness opened the door to faith. “I believed in God, but I had never turned to Him in prayer before. Now if I’m having difficulties, I can go to Him, and He gets me through them.” Carol attends a local church every Sunday and recently connected with a mentor there.

Carol’s children have been very supportive through her recovery. “They call me all the time. They’re very proud of me. I told one of my sons how guilty I felt for what I’d put them all through, and he said to me, ‘No matter what you think, you’ve always been a good mom.’” She also tells us her 12 grandchildren love her “with all their hearts.”

Carol is confident she will complete the program with Becky’s help and her family’s love. She keeps busy making blankets, headbands and wrist warmers, which she plans to sell at craft fairs when she leaves the Mission.

**“When I came to
Hope Gospel Mission,
I was broken,” Carol says.
“Now I have confidence.
I can’t emphasize enough
how good I feel.”**



Becky’s Heart for Those in Need



Becky Schalinske joined Hope Gospel Mission as a Renewal Counselor right about the time Carol came to us, and Carol became one of the first women to join Becky’s caseload. The relationships developed through HGM feel more like family and friends. “All the people here listen to you and help you,” Carol says, “but I love Becky. She’s been so good with me!”

Working as a mental health and addiction counselor since 2009, Becky had followed Hope Gospel Mission on Facebook. When she saw a job posting for a Renewal Counselor, she “felt a nudge,” and with the support of her family, applied. The job was everything she had hoped it would be. Although she deals primarily with issues of alcohol and drug abuse, she works with her clients on renewal plans that include elements of education, vocational training, work readiness, nutrition and fitness, mental health and spirituality. She also helps plan resident activities that range from beauty nights for the women to movies and even kickboxing.

“I’ve always had a heart for people who are struggling and hurting,” Becky says. “The coolest part of my job is to give someone love and support, to watch them heal and see them connect with their family, secure employment and have a sense of pride and purpose again.”

Working at Hope Gospel Mission, Becky tells us, “transformed my views on how much healing is possible in the right environment, backed by faith, with people who love and don’t judge our residents. It humbles me and makes me fall more in love with Jesus.”