

# Cold hands, cold heart

(continued from page 1)

began swallowing them when something stopped him ... something that can only be described as "divine intervention."

A work light he was using to keep warm began flickering off and on, even though the light bulbs had just been replaced. He figured it was either God — or his recently departed grandmother — trying to tell him something.

"After that, I just couldn't do it," he says.

Instead, he called a

friend who drove out in the storm to pick him up. This friend offered him a sofa for a couple nights, then another buddy gave him a few bucks. Eventually, the trail led to Union Gospel Mission, where

Jay is currently enrolled in our Christ Recovery Center.

As Jay recounted his story, the first snowfall of 2007 fell outside his window.

"I wouldn't want to be outside for anything," he said. "I don't like the cold weather."

"I'm glad I'm not on the streets," he continued. "And

*"I'm pretty thin, so me and cold weather don't get along so well."*



When winter hits and temperatures plummet, many homeless people seek whatever shelter they can find — even if it's in their cars!

I'm glad I don't live in a storage locker anymore. I'm grateful for everything."

*Unforeseen circumstances and poor life choices force hundreds of men and women onto Twin Cities' streets each winter. But your gifts to the Union Gospel Mission can bring them in from the cold.*

*Your kindness means hot meals, a warm bed — and for hurting people like Jay, the chance to make a fresh start.*

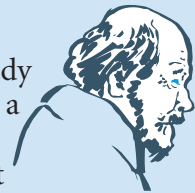
*Thank you for rescuing so many from a terrible fate this winter. Because no matter how chilly it is — or isn't! — it's still too cold to be living outside.*

## 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT A MINNESOTA WINTER

When temperatures begin to approach freezing, the homeless go into survival mode.

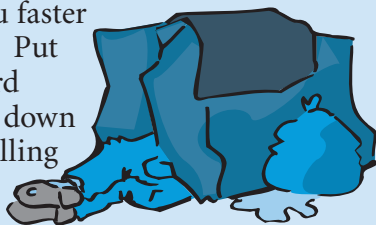
Here are 10 things they've learned about staying alive during a bitter Minnesota winter ...

**10.** If you're already suffering from a serious illness, cold temperatures aren't just uncomfortable, they can be deadly.



**9.** Come to the Mission for a meal because your body needs energy to generate heat.

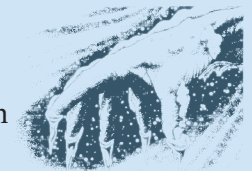
**8.** Do not sleep directly on the ground. The frozen ground cools you faster than air. Put cardboard or a mat down before falling asleep.



**7.** Wear loose-fitting clothes. The air pockets between layers will help retain body heat and prevent excessive sweating.



**6.** If your clothes are not warm enough, add insulation. Newspaper is a great windbreaker and insulator, and works in everything from your shoes to your shirt.

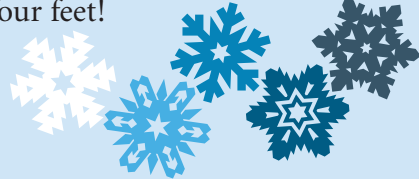


**5.** Never rub a frostbitten area. It can cause trauma to the skin and muscle tissue, resulting in permanent damage to nerve endings.

**4.** Alcohol slows the heart rate and dehydrates the body, increasing the chance of hypothermia and frostbite.

**3.** In cases of frostbite or hypothermia, warm the torso area first. Stimulation of arms and legs can drive cold blood toward the heart, risking heart failure.

**2.** Total snowfall each winter averages 45" — almost four feet!



**1.** The best way to help homeless people in the Twin Cities survive another bitterly cold winter? Give to Union Gospel Mission.



OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES



# Twin Cities

Winter Issue

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M E S S E N G E R

INSIDE



**2** Warmth is where you find it



**3** "Nobody gives you a chance to get yourself together"



**4** Surviving a Minnesota winter



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visit us online at:  
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## Cold hands, warm heart

What could be worse than living in a storage locker? Jay can tell you!

Last December was the warmest in Minnesota's history. But don't tell that to Jay.

Jay spent most of last December living in a storage locker on the east side of St. Paul.

"There were times when there was three feet of snow on the ground and it felt like it was below zero," he says, still shivering at the thought. "I couldn't even get anybody to deliver me a pizza!"

Nighttime was just awful.

Some evenings, he slept in an undershirt, two t-shirts,



Sleeping in a storage locker is better than sleeping on the ground when there's three feet of snow — but not much better.

thermals, two sweatshirts, and a coat — and still needed a blanket to stay warm. "I'm pretty thin, so me and cold weather don't get along so well," he says.

*Jay emptied a bottle of pain pills into his hand and began swallowing them ...*

paled to the fact he felt so emotionally numb.

"My 'ex' was having my second child and I knew I wouldn't get to see the baby," he remembers. "I was so depressed, so alone, that I even thought about suicide."

More than thought. Jay emptied a bottle of pain pills into his hand and

But the chill outside

(continued on back)

Hypothermia can set in, even above 40°, if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat ...

Don't let the homeless die from exposure!

# THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Four amazing truths I've learned my first year

The other day, I attended a prayer meeting with the men from Gateway, our discipleship program for convicted felons.

While there, I met Charles, a recent graduate. He's now working in the construction trade. How different from the first day he came to the Mission, when he says he felt like an outcast because of his prison record.

On this day, however, Charles said he felt like he was surrounded by family — maybe because he knew he was among people who could offer him encouragement and support.

*Grace and care are able to open the door to change like nothing else can.*

That's one of the amazing truths I've learned in my first year here — that *grace and care are able to open the door to change like nothing else can.* Here are three other incredible

discoveries that give me hope every day:

- There is an overwhelming sense of God's presence among our staff and clients.
- Love is shared and caught by everyone who comes through here.
- Friends like you support this ministry so faithfully with your prayers and gifts.

You are such an important part of this ministry. Without generous people like you, the homeless have no hope. And men like Charles have no chance to make a new start.

Your kindness has allowed him to put his past behind him, a testimony to all those who will come after him.

Thank you for using your kindness to help change lives!

Gratefully,

*Ken Peterson*

# When you're homeless, it's no winter wonderland!

*As temperatures sink, the anxiety goes up*

## Mike didn't want his kids to see him die drunk

When a man is living in his car in the dead of winter, he gets a lot of time to think.

And all Mike could think about was what a mess he had made of his life!

How booze had ruined his 11-year marriage. How much he missed his four children. How stupid he was for wasting all those

*He sought treatment 12 times — and each time went back to alcohol.*

chances his wife had given him to patch things up.

Now, as he sat in the front seat bundled up in a blanket with the heater running full blast, Mike made a life-turning decision.

"I decided I didn't want to die drunk," he recalls. "I didn't want that to be the last memory my kids had of me."

But where could Mike go for help? He had already checked himself



Twelve times Mike sought help for his drinking problem. And 12 times he failed. Union Gospel Mission was his 13th — and perhaps his last — chance to get sober.

into treatment on 12 different occasions. And each time he went back to the alcohol that had a stranglehold on his life.

For the first time he can ever

remember, Mike was desperate — desperate enough to put away his pride and come to the only place he hadn't tried yet — the Union Gospel Mission.

## Warmth is where you find it: in a hospital waiting room, or a jail cell

When you're homeless in the dead of winter, you'll do just about anything to survive.

Leonard used to hang out in the waiting room at United Hospital, watching TV and drinking free coffee. Later, it was the Galleria next door to St. Joseph's Hospital, where he'd find a bench and take a quick nap.

When he got booted from both those places, Leonard turned to crime. It started out stealing candy bars and beef sticks from Super America. Pretty soon, he became

*"I knew one day my past would catch up with me."*

more daring and began robbing pedestrians in downtown St. Paul. The money went for drugs, and occasionally a burger.

"I knew one day my past would catch up with me," he says. Sure enough, his next "victim" turned out to be an undercover police officer and Leonard got hauled off to jail.

"I really felt rotten, but I put myself in that predicament when I chose to use drugs," he says. "Now, I've got a clean head and a better perspective on life."



Leonard used to warm himself in the waiting room at United Hospital — until security caught on and booted him out.

## "Nobody gives you a chance to get yourself together"

Before the winter of 2005, Clyde had never been homeless a day in his life.

But he learned. F-A-S-T! He learned "you buy items off the dollar menu because you don't know when you're going to have money again to eat."

*"I try not to be upset, but you get tired of it."* He learned that the woods are a place for animals to live, not people, "even if it was safe."

And he learned "you gotta keep moving if you don't want to draw attention to yourself."

But whether it was sitting the light rail, the reception area at Labor Ready, or the Mall of America, Clyde no longer takes everyday things for granted — like a bathroom or a hot shower.

"I try not to be upset ... to look at the other side, but you



Riding the light rail late at night is a good way to stay warm without drawing attention to the fact that you're homeless.

get tired of it," he admitted. "Nobody gives you a chance to get yourself together."

*You helped rewrite the life story of these three men when you made it possible for them to come to the Mission. Thank you!*

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