

Home (not so) sweet home

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committed suicide. He eventually ended up living in a portable ice fishing house at Sunny Acres Park in Anoka and eating out of dumpsters.

Dave's path eventually led him to downtown St. Paul. It was here that he was befriended by a "big biker dude" who brought him to the Mission — and would eventually become his sponsor and his best friend. The next day,

Dave joined our Christ Recovery Center, one of the best moves he says he ever made.

"This place has given me the opportunity to be in a positive,

Christ-centered environment," he says. "All my needs are met so I can concentrate on my recovery."

He credits the Mission, and his new relationship with God, for his sobriety, adding "I think this is the best place on earth for someone like me."

Dave says he became addicted the first time he took a drink



The hair is different, but the eyes are strikingly similar in this self-portrait that Dave drew for one of his classes at the Union Gospel Mission.

Gifts from friends like you made it possible for Dave to get the help he needed. Now he's leading

a brand new life filled with promise and lasting hope. Thank you for doing the most good with your giving.

Call to Action

Summer Camp Needs!

- New or gently used craft supplies — beads, yarn, glue, paint, popsicle sticks, etc.
- Frisbee golf discs
- Basketballs, footballs, soccer balls, volleyballs
- New items for camp store — board games, small toys, stuffed animals, etc.
- New children's swimsuits — grades K-6



\$1.88
for hot meal

Hope starts with you! Just use the enclosed response card to help feed and care for hungry and homeless people all across the Twin Cities.

\$1.88 My gift to ease hunger in the Twin Cities

YES, KEN! I want to help fight hunger and homelessness in the Twin Cities. Please use my gift to provide food, shelter, and other care to help those in desperate need. I'm enclosing:

_____ to feed and care for as many hungry people as possible.

THANK YOU! Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Union Gospel Mission. Mail it with this card to: UGMC, 123 Main Street, St. Paul, MN 55102-1800. Questions? Call us at 651-228-1800. www.ugmc.org

Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Q. Example
123 Main Street
Anytown, USA 45678-9012

MY E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Home Office

When all it takes is **\$1.88** to feed someone who is hungry and hurting, your gift can go a long way to helping a desperately needy man, woman, or child make a fresh start.

TOP 10: How your gifts bring lasting hope to the Twin Cities

- 10** Hungry people's hearts are lifted as they realize they have worth in God's eyes, and the eyes of the community.
- 9** The homeless are finally able to start dealing with the root causes of their problems.
- 8** Battered women have an alternative to staying in an abusive relationship.
- 7** Desperate families learn there is life beyond welfare.
- 6** At-risk kids have a chance to escape poverty that often traps their parents.
- 5** Fewer babies suffer from serious medical problems at birth because Mom stops drinking or taking drugs while pregnant.
- 4** Fewer taxpayer dollars go to hospitalize, prosecute and jail drug addicts and alcoholics.
- 3** The community sees the power of Christ's love at work in the world today.
- 2** People of faith receive God's blessing for their obedience to "love your neighbor as yourself."
- 1** You have the joy of knowing that you've helped change someone's life forever!

OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES



Twin Cities

Spring Issue

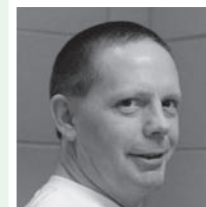
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M E S S E N G E R

INSIDE



2 Blessings of sacrificial giving



2 Been there, done that!



3 "We're never coming back!"



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Ken Peterson,
Executive Director

For more information,
visit us online at:
www.ugmtc.org.

"There was never anything to eat"

So Ron stole to feed his 12 hungry brothers and sisters

Ron grew up a thief. But not your typical, garden-variety, everyday crook.

When he was younger, he stole food to help feed 12 hungry brothers and sisters because "there was never anything to eat."

"My mom knew about it," he says. "She condoned it."

As Ron grew older, his stealing became more a matter of fitting in with the crowd.

Then he'd turn around and sell the stolen items, using the proceeds to help others.

"I wouldn't keep the money myself," he

recalls, having grown up this was a place for people in church. "I thought God to sponge off society."

"I wouldn't keep the money myself. I thought God would punish me."

would punish me."

When he hit rock-bottom with his drinking, he came to the Union Gospel Mission.

"No other treatment program preaches God like this one does," Ron says. "I used to think

to sponge off society."

And now that the Mission has changed his life?

"I think this is one of the greatest places in St. Paul," he says unashamedly.

"I used to think to sponge off society."



People do desperate things when they are hungry. Some hold cardboard signs, hoping for donations. Other people steal.

INSIDE:
What you can do to help...

10% of Minnesotans will go to bed hungry at least once this month

THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Sacrificial giving brings special blessing

Jack isn't the largest donor the Mission has, but he is one of the most generous. "I was on the streets of St. Paul myself," he told me. "The Mission fed me many times. Now I want to give back." His thoughtfulness is amazing, but even more incredible is the sacrifice he is willing to make.

"I am a disabled veteran living in a converted garage in Northern Minnesota," he continued. "I heat with wood to save on energy costs. My budget is limited, but God wants me to sacrifice and help my brothers who are still on the streets."

"My budget is limited, but God wants me to sacrifice and help my brothers who are still on the streets."

She never went hungry again!

My prayer is that you, too, will be abundantly blessed for following the Lord's leading.

Thank you for giving from your heart — and touching the hearts of others in such desperate need.

Gratefully,

Ken Peterson

Been there, done that!

Why Tony never wants to go back

Some people need the Serenity Prayer to help keep them sober. Others need a sobriety coin in their pocket.

All Tony needs is to show up for work each morning.

"It helps keep me sober, seeing what I used to be like."

Tony works in a shelter for chronic alcoholics — men who are homeless, destitute, and want nothing more than to get drunk.

"It helps keep me sober, seeing what I used to be like and how my life could have turned out," he explains.

Tony found sobriety, and a way to stay strong with God's help, at the



Thanks to your gifts, Tony is now giving back to his community, working in a shelter for chronic alcoholics.

Union Gospel Mission. Now he's dedicated his life to helping others.

"If there's some little thing I can do to relieve hardship, that makes me feel the best," he says.

"Sometimes, just getting a guy to take a shower is a miracle."

Thank you for giving, and making it possible for people like Tony to turn their lives around.

Home (not so) sweet home

Dave grew up in an alcoholic household. His grandfather was an alcoholic. So were his mom and dad.

So it's no surprise that Dave says he became addicted "the first time I took a drink."

But alcohol never offered Dave anything but misery and pain. His dad was abusive. His mother



When Dave was battling alcoholism, he was befriended by a "big biker dude". Today he is Dave's sponsor, and one of his best friends.

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In My Own Words

"Grab your things, kids. We're never coming back!"

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sandy and her husband went to work and went to church. People thought they were doing all right, but they weren't. Here, in Sandy's own words, is how her life unraveled. And how your gifts have given her and her kids a new lease on life.

By Sandy

My husband drove a truck. He was home maybe two, three times a month for a day or two at a time.

One day I came home early and my husband's car was in the driveway. I went into the house, opened our bedroom door and found my husband with my best friend. I said, "Grab your things, kids. We're never coming back!"

We didn't have a car or any money. We had nowhere to go. That's how we ended up at the Union Gospel Mission.

At first, I didn't do well. I went from making my own decisions to a very structured

"We'll make it through this. This is just temporary."

environment. It was both tough and humbling. But the people here were so loving. We realized that people cared and God cared.

"We'll make it through this," I kept telling the kids. "This is just temporary."

Today, we live in east St. Paul, just two blocks from my

old house. I'm the Human Resources Assistant at the Mission, and I'm going to school to get my degree.

I have a happy life by the grace of God. I'm working hard and I'm determined to be a good example for my kids. My oldest is even talking about going into ministry someday. How about that!



The homes are just two blocks apart, but there is a world of difference between the house where Sandy's marriage fell apart and where she lives now. Where she works hard to be a good example for her kids.

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