

## Call to Action

### Men's Christmas Gift Bags

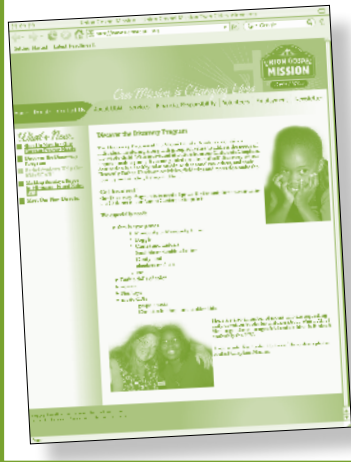
- Double-edge razors
- Shaving cream/gel
- Deodorant
- Deodorant soap
- Combs
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Nail clippers
- White socks
- Winter hats
- Winter gloves
- Wrapped candy

For more information, call our Men's Campus at 651.292.1721

### Visit our Web site

For more stories like these, or specific information about our many programs, go to [www.ugmtc.org](http://www.ugmtc.org). You can also use our Web site to:

- Learn about volunteer opportunities.
- Find out about upcoming events.
- Give a cash gift through our secure donation site.



## "Totally incredible!"

Homeless filled with humility, gratitude for holiday meals

**T**o men coming off the street, a meal at the Union Gospel Mission is more than just satisfying.

It's "amazing!" "When you're a homeless drunk, you don't get that many meals," says Dennis. "So you come here and get three meals a day. They don't rely on government money, just the goodness in people's

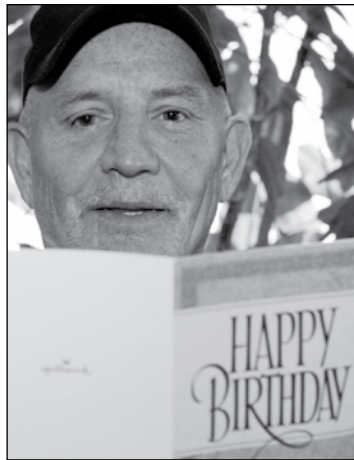
hearts ... I find that totally incredible!"

Dennis also finds it totally humbling.

"Do I deserve this kindness? No!" he says. "And the Mission is not asking for anything in return. That's an idea that is foreign to me."

"They're saving my life and I'm eternally grateful," he says.

People who come to the Mission after years on the street aren't used to being treated with such dignity and respect. Many don't know how to react. All they



Dennis finds it "amazing" the way he's been treated at the Mission.

know is they're grateful to finally feel love. God's love.

Your gift to the Union Gospel Mission this holiday season is offering renewed hope, and the chance for a better life.

Thank you for your kindness to others.

## 5 SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**S**ending a gift to the Union Gospel Mission is one way you can help ease hunger and homelessness in the Twin Cities this holiday season.

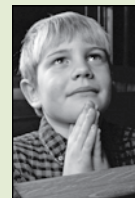
Here are five other good ways to help.

### 1. SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Tell your kids or grandkids why you give to help the poor, and create a new generation of compassion.



**2. PRAY** — Real hope begins with His mercy. Ask God for guidance.



**3. DIG INTO YOUR BIBLE** — When you see how much God talks about helping the poor, you'll see giving in a whole new light.



**4. SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH A FRIEND** — If this inspires you to give, maybe it will inspire them, too.

**5. LEARN MORE ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN THE TWIN CITIES** — Understanding where the need is greatest can help you make the biggest impact.

Thank you for honoring God with your giving. This holiday season, you're making our community a better place — for all of us.

## 'Twas the night(mare) before Christmas ...

(continued from page 1)

He put all his energy into completing our LifeNet, WorkNet, and SuccessNet programs. After graduation, he plans to attend college where he wants to study

nursing.

"Without the Mission, I don't think I could do it," he says.

There's nothing worse than being homeless

during the holidays.

What a relief to be able to get out of those wet shoes and socks!

With freezing weather, nagging hunger, and little sleep, hope seems distant and unattainable.

But your gifts are giving dozens of men and women the chance for a new life. Could there be a more perfect gift this holiday season? Thank you for sharing the true joy of the season with those who have so little.

OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES



# Twin Cities

Holiday Issue

November 2007 Vol. 6 No. 8

M E S S E N G E R

## 'Twas the night(mare) before Christmas...

Robert could have easily frozen to death — but your kindness saved him

Robert dreaded the thought of being homeless at Christmastime.

"I was afraid they'd find me on the streets, frozen to death, and then I'd end up on the 6 o'clock news," he remembers.

He spent a wretched month trudging through slushy sidewalks in wet socks and shoes — the misery made worse every time he thought about happier Christmases when he was growing up.

"We used to wake up early and open presents, sit down to a big meal at noontime, and then plop down in front of the

*"I was afraid they'd find me frozen to death, and I'd end up on the 6 o'clock news!"*

pretty depressed."

But thanks to your kindness, we were able to get him into the Mission right before



Drying your wet socks on the bed railing seems like such a little thing. But to Robert, it means sweet relief!

TV to watch the parade," he recalled. "Thinking about that made me

the Mission right before Christmas.

What a relief, he says, to be able to get out of those wet socks and warm his feet. "That was the most important thing to me at the time."

Once Robert enrolled in our Discipleship Program, his priorities changed.

(continued on back)

### INSIDE



**2** All hearts come home for the holidays



**3** "Am I in heaven, or what?"



**4** Homeless filled with humility, gratitude



77 Ninth Street East  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101  
651-228-1800  
Ken Peterson,  
Executive Director

For more information, visit us online at: [www.ugmtc.org](http://www.ugmtc.org).

**5 simple ways you can make a difference** page 4

# THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**All hearts  
come home  
for the holidays**

The holidays are all about coming home. Coming home to Mom's cooking. Seeing relatives again. Celebrating with those who we know care about us.

So many homeless and hungry people in the Twin Cities are wandering the streets, clinging to those memories of family. It's what their hearts yearn for. Yet because of addictions, economic hardship, or bad choices, they've lost that connection to family, that sense of belonging.

That's why hurting people ultimately come to our Mission during the holidays.

Sure, there's lots of good food. Roast turkey with gravy. Cranberry sauce. Sweet potatoes. Pumpkin pie. Who could resist that? (Especially if it's been days since you've had a decent meal.)

*So many homeless people cling to memories of family. It's what their hearts yearn for.*

But food is secondary to the feeling of family. This is the one time of year everyone — even the homeless! — can

celebrate and be thankful, if not with their real family, then with their "second family" here at the Mission.

In return, they experience the goodness of God through the generosity of friends like you.

What we do here at the Mission, especially during the holidays, is so important. And it's only possible because of your faithful prayers and ongoing financial support.

Thank you for giving them food for their bodies and spirits this holiday season. Truly, you have filled their hearts with incomparable joy and given them the priceless gift of hope.

Gratefully,

*Ken Peterson*

## In My Own Words

# "Am I in heaven, or what?"

*A bountiful Christmas foretold of good things to come*

(Second in a three-part series)

By Lateneisha

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *After an abusive boyfriend beat her up and almost killed her — in front of her kids! — Lateneisha couldn't take any more. "What kind of mom do I want to be?" she asked herself. Believing the answer started with God, she and her kids came to the Naomi Family Residence in September 2006 and settled in by Christmas. That, she says, was some holiday!*

Last Christmas was really good. My kids participated in a program where they were paid with play money for Christmas cards they wrote for residents of a local retirement home.

The kids then did their own shopping for Christmas. Plus, our family participated in the Adopt-a-Family program. I got so much stuff!

I thought, "Am I in heaven,

or what?"

For me, being here has been all about communication. I never had anyone to talk to before I came here. I now have the staff here who really listen to me. They helped me get the help I needed.

As for my relationship with God, I'm really getting it. I'm still crawling, but I'm making it. Since coming here, I see more and more of God.

I want to be a good mom. A level-headed mom. A smart mom. If I do that, my kids will be okay.

*"I want to be a good mom. I'll leave the rest up to God."*

I'll leave the rest up to God. I just want to make them feel loved and secure.

I used to feel like circumstances were dictating how I lived. Now I feel better. I don't feel weak; I feel strong. That's so different from the family I grew up in.

What do I hope for my kids? I want them to be like me *now*, not like I used to be.

### NEXT MONTH:

*When a broken life is healed, it enables you to dream again. And Lateneisha has plenty of dreams for herself and her kids.*



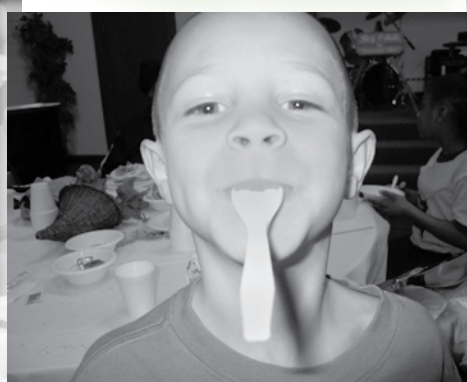
Lateneisha used to be frustrated because she felt like her circumstances were dictating how she lived. Since coming here, she says, "I don't feel weak anymore. I feel strong."

# It's the most wonderful time of the year!

*Even the homeless have a reason to smile when the holidays arrive*



Christmas dinner makes a wonderful start to the holidays.



Some food is so good you've gotta get every last bite.



Volunteering can be tiring, but it's a "happy" tired!



Our community is generous when it comes to helping the poor.



When you're homeless, a hot Christmas dinner means so much!



The food line is the most popular line this time of year.



Are you thinking what they're thinking? "Holiday dinner. Ya hoo!"



Our hungry neighbors are in for a real treat this Christmas.



A few kind words from a caring volunteer can dramatically change someone's holiday.

