

MY STORY

The day I stopped RUNNING

EDITOR'S NOTE: Greg spent years running away from God — and searching for peace. When he slowed down long enough, he found both. Here, in Greg's own words, is how it happened ...

By Greg B.

I had been an alcoholic pretty much my entire life. And all that time, God has been chasing me. Scripture would come into my mind, or I could sense it in my heart. But when you don't understand it, it can be scary. Then my brother was murdered by a bank robber, and I fell back into drugs and alcohol. The funny thing was that alcohol was the only thing that kept me going and I knew it was killing me. Life had no meaning any more. My job, my relationship with women ... I couldn't feel anymore. I came here to the

I now know God has great plans for me or He wouldn't have chased me down the way He did.

Mission after a friend from the old days said, "This place is making a real difference in my life." He said he found more than sobriety here and I knew exactly what he was talking about.

That's when I stopped running. I just gave up. And when I gave up, I found serenity. Peace of mind.

I now know God has great plans for me or He wouldn't have chased me down the way He did.

Dandelions?

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snowed. And he strung up a tarp that protected him against the wind.

It was the loneliness — and his inability to stop drinking — that finally drove him to get help.

The day he came to the Mission, he walked for miles in a heavy snowstorm. "Whatever you do, get to the Mission before dark," he kept telling himself.

As he walked through the front doors of the Mission, he stammered, "Please help me!" He got a bag lunch and a warm bed for the evening, and that night he

"Thank you, God, for getting me here. I'm wet, but at least I'm sober."

remembers praying, "Thank you, God, for getting me here. I'm wet, but at least I'm sober."

Many of those who will come to the Mission this holiday season are just like Don — they're hungry, not just for food, but for a new life.

This Thanksgiving, your gift will offer them both. And with each meal costing only \$1.92, your gift will probably go further than you ever thought possible.

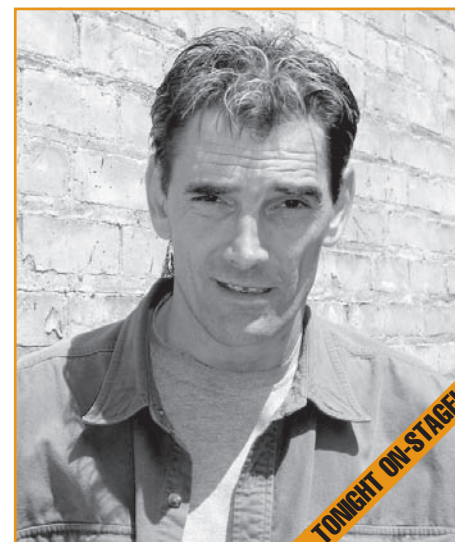
Please be as generous as you possibly can — and rush your gift to Union Gospel Mission today in time for the big Thanksgiving feast that we have planned.

Thank you, and God bless you!



Tears of a clown

Jokes only masked Rob's serious drinking and drug problems that almost killed him



Rob still does stand-up comedy — but now it's not the most important thing in his life.

Rob was addicted — to comedy. For 20 years, he made a career out of making people laugh, rubbing elbows with stars like Henny Youngman and even Red Skelton.

Everyone thought Rob was a funny guy. But there was nothing funny about Rob's drug and alcohol problems. His addictions almost cost him his career — and his life.

"I used to tell others it was all part of the business," he recalls. But when Rob almost died from a heroin overdose, that was the beginning of the road that eventually led to the Mission.

At first, Rob thought, "I'm not going to the Mission ... I'm not a bum!" Then he took a good, hard look in the mirror. "You're homeless, you can't stop drinking ... where don't you qualify?"

The Mission has helped Rob find lasting sobriety. Even helped him get a job at a neighborhood furniture store

in between comedy gigs. But most important, it helped him reconnect with God.

"The answers to life are in the Bible," he says. "At the Mission, they preach it. Do it. Live it. Share it. I look

around here and see people succeeding. How can I refute that?"

It is your gift to Union Gospel Mission that is helping Rob — and others — succeed. Thank you for giving to see lives changed.

"The answers to life are in the Bible. At the Mission, they preach it. Do it. Live it. Share it."

INSIDE: You have given the needy a reason to celebrate

SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE

Twin Cities MESSENGER

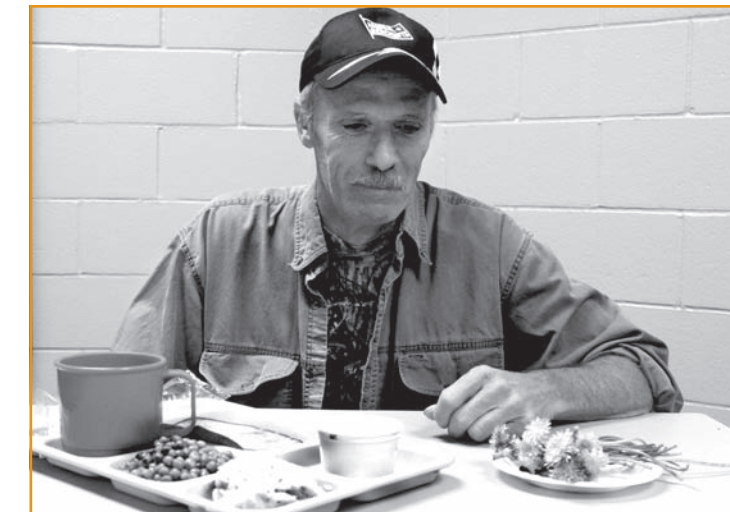


OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES!

NOVEMBER 2009 | Vol. 7 No. 8

Dandelions? For Thanksgiving dinner?

For Don, who's used to living off the land, a holiday meal will be different, that's for sure!



Since Don came to Mission, a plate full of dandelions isn't nearly as appealing as a hot, nutritious meal.

You have to wonder what Don will think of the Mission's Thanksgiving dinner this year.

Don spent two years living in the woods, where he survived on a diet that included dandelions (both flowers and leaves are edible, he insists) and the inside of tree bark, which he says peels off like string cheese.

But not this year! Not since coming to live at the Union Gospel Mission.

This year, Don and hundreds of other homeless and hungry people

will enjoy a sit-down dinner featuring roasted turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, vegetables, pumpkin pie, and coffee. But it's so much more than a meal, he says.

"The Mission has given me a sense of being somebody," he says. "I used to feel so hopeless about everything, it didn't matter what I was doing. Now I've got hope, understanding, and the Bible."

Don never minded living out in the woods, he says. Even in wintertime, he survived by moving his tent under a tree that acted like a canopy when it

"I used to feel so hopeless about everything, it didn't matter what I was doing. Now I've got hope ..."

INSIDE



Hooray for the "heavenly realists"



Where are they now?



Tears of a clown



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

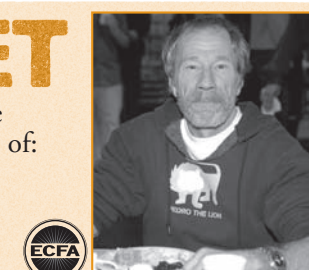
Complete Holiday Meal Just \$1.92!

HOLIDAY MEAL TICKET

YES, KEN! Use my gift to feed and care for hungry men, women, and children in the Twin Cities during the holiday season ... and every day of the year. Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$25 to help provide meals and other life-saving care.
- \$50 to help provide meals and life-saving care.
- \$100 to help provide meals and life-saving care.
- \$_____ to provide as much life-saving care as possible.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



THANK YOU! Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Union Gospel Mission. Mail it with this meal ticket in the enclosed envelope to P.O. Box 64389, St. Paul, MN 55164-0389. Questions? Call us at 651-228-1800. www.ugmtc.org

MY E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
 Home Office

Turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, yams — all for just \$1.92!

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THE *Heart* OF THE MATTER

A MESSAGE FROM KEN PETERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Hooray for the 'heavenly realists' — and not just because I'm one

Some people say I'm an optimist. For me, the glass is always half-full. I prefer to call myself a "heavenly realist." I see what God can do. And I know no obstacle is too big for God to do His redeeming work.

Remember Moses standing at the edge of the Red Sea with the Egyptian army in hot pursuit? Some thought that was the end of Moses and the Israelites. But Moses knew God could take the most hopeless situation and turn it into something positive.

The Lord did it then. And he's doing it today. Right here at the Union Gospel Mission.

As we enter our busiest time of year, it's easy for some people to be overwhelmed by so many folks asking for help. But "heavenly realists" see it differently.

No obstacle is too big for God to do His redeeming work.

We believe this is an opportunity for hurting people to discover God's grace. Experience His unfailing love. And watch as this community joins hands once again to give hope to people who thought all was lost.

If you are one of those "heavenly realists" like me, thank you for helping to feed and care for our hungry neighbors this holiday season. If you're not, I invite you to join us and see how God can use you to be a blessing to others.

God is amazing. So are all of you. Thanks for supporting the Mission!

This holiday, you have given the needy a reason to celebrate

Thank you for providing meals, warm clothing — and hope! — for so many in need

Struggling families find hope when you give during the holidays.



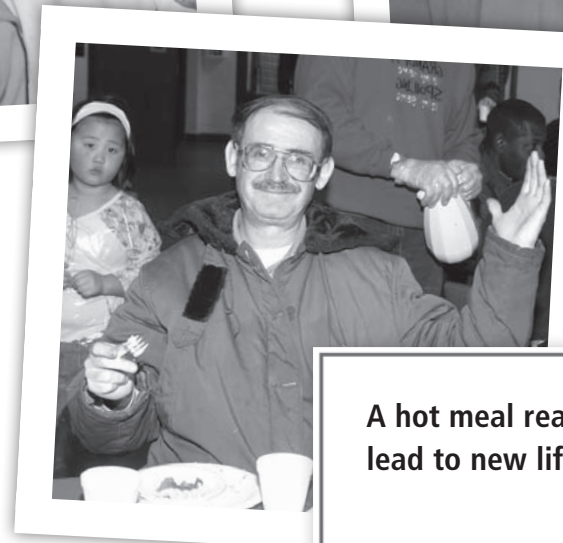
Thanks to you, there will be enough Thanksgiving turkey for everyone.



Volunteering is a great way to give back.



A hot meal really can lead to new life!



Your kindness puts food on their plates and hope in their hearts!



Where are they now?

Todd went from being the CEO of his own software firm to sleeping on the floor of a crackhouse — not because of an economic downturn, but because of his addiction to drugs. "I had one foot in the country club, and another in the 'hood," he says. But all that changed when he came to Union Gospel Mission. There's a chance he might still go to prison for the crimes he committed. But he says because of the Mission, "If I go, I'll have God in my heart and I'll be sober."



EXTRA EXTRA

Discount tickets to Holiday Lights available online

Union Gospel Mission will once again be one of the featured charities benefiting from the upcoming Holiday Lights in the Park.

If you're planning to visit December 11-13, you can also get a discount on tickets by going to the Mission's Web site, www.ugmtc.org.

Last year, the Mission — and three other local charities — shared \$50,000 in what Mayor Chris Coleman proclaimed "a new holiday tradition in St. Paul."

This year, visitors will once again be treated to a spectacular array of holiday lights and animated displays as part of a half-mile drive through Phalen Park, along Lake Phalen.

The event runs a total of six weeks, from November 24 to December 31.



Visit our Web site

For more stories like these, or specific information about our many programs, go to 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.