



Roseburg Rescue Mission

Men's Shelter • Samaritan Inn • Thrift Stores

A Beacon of Hope for the Homeless

JANUARY 2020

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A Stable Home Environment

Naomi and her three daughters, Mele (12), Angelica (8), and Susana-Guadalupe (6), needed a stable home environment. And at that time, school was about to start. They were living with a friend of Naomi's, who was ok, but she said his bachelor roommates just drank and partied all the time. That was home, because their previous place was less tolerable, living in a failed relationship with the father of her two youngest children. For about a year, she was actually having to bounce her family between places as so-called guests just short enough to not break the two-week guest tenant law. Home had no sense of permanency or healthy living conditions for them. Naomi was the family security and provider. She has worked at a telephone call center and in fast food. Currently, she is a supervisor at a local farm.

The Mission's Samaritan Inn is providing their family with a stable home environment. Naomi likes our structure and rules, especially the time schedule, for her children, because it is very close to the way she runs her own home. She works during the day when the kids are in school. On weekends, she works and stays on the farm, and the kids stay with their dad. When they move from Samaritan Inn, the oldest daughter will baby-sit the younger ones. As of this interview, they have been here two-and a half months, and they just received notice that they are to get the next open low income housing, two bedroom apartment.

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Here is a family in crisis, lacking a stable home, but they were also needing a firm foundation in their lives. Naomi knew that. A couple of months before calling Samaritan Inn home, she began to attend the local church she went to as a child. Naomi testified, "I believe (Samaritan Inn) chapel helped a lot. When I'm sitting in church and I am crying because of what they are saying, and I come here and they are saying the same thing, its like a slap in the face, in a good way, like wake up. Look at what you are doing. What are your kids learning from you? A guest speaker at church gave his background, what path he decided to take, and what he put his kids through. His message about what a home is hit hard. Then there were people up front, if you wanted to receive Christ or prayer. I thought, 'I'm not going up there in front of all these people.' But tears kept coming, and I couldn't control them. My heart felt like weight. I went forward and fell on my knees." Naomi rededicated her life to the Lord about three weeks after arriving here. She said, "In Chapel here, I kept saying, 'Nope, its not about me.' Finally, I said, 'Ok, whatever You want.'"

Our Humble Beginnings

Roseburg Rescue Mission began as a street ministry to transient men near the train station (now a restaurant) and rail yard (now north of town). It was a place to get day labor and for migrant workers to hop a freight car. It was a field white onto harvest. Men were hungry for food and spiritual direction.

Norman Williams was a combat veteran of WWII, returning hardened and an alcoholic. Then in the early 1960's, he had a dramatic conversion, accepting the Lord in an evangelistic crusade at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. He was baptized in the South Umpqua River. He combined his new passion to reach homeless men with his shoe repair business, moving his livelihood to their hangout. He rented a space in the building on the corner of SE Sheridan St. and SE Lane Av. He shared his faith, food, clothing, business, shelter. The cobbler shop became a mission. These are our humble beginnings.

cobbler shop became a mission

Norman had the prayer, financial, and volunteering support of his parents and two sisters. From the start in 1964, it was mostly a family run operation. In 1975, he purchased the building that included his shop, as well as, two other shops and a 19 room hotel on the second floor. Later, he sold that building to the organization that he started and named, "Lighthouse of God Mission." That is still our formal name, however in 1980, we began doing business as "Roseburg Rescue Mission" to dispel any confusion over being associated with other organizations of a similar name. We remain independent, having our own local board of directors, since our incorporation in 1977. Today, there are 125 beds for men downtown (that includes the original building), and 110 beds for women and children on W Umpqua St.

Homeless In Winter Weather

John limped into the Mission dayroom one winter morning. He was cold, wet, hungry and needing medical attention. He was suffering from hypothermia because of exposure to cold weather and having wet clothing and shoes. John took a hot shower and got dry clothes. Then, he saw that one of his feet was black and blue from having deep frostbite. We transported him to the emergency room for treatment. The damage to his foot caused him to lose a lot of skin but no toes. For weeks he hobbled around that winter, still feeling the pain, wearing loose slippers, and unable to work.



Living outdoors in rain and freezing temperatures is a very unhealthy lifestyle. It can cause hypothermia, frostbite, pneumonia, influenza. There is no accountability for addictions nor support for mental illness, and it only aggravates those conditions. Its lonely, depressing, aimless. There are dangers of being beaten up, raped, robbed. Some will die on their way down to reaching bottom, because no one can know that point of no return. Some give up and become suicidal. Given the choice between sleeping in a nice, warm bed in a safe place or spending the night in a sleeping bag on the ground outdoors, some purposefully choose camping even in wet and freezing conditions. Addictions and poor mental health are that powerful; they defy the basic instinct of survival.

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The Mission's cold weather policy is like our general policies, there is a relatively low barrier for entry without removing the natural consequences of making poor choices. We remain a clean and sober living environment, so no one is triggered to relapse by another person's behavior. Yet neither a breathalyzer nor urinalysis is done here for entry into nonprogram areas. There can be no obvious use of drugs or alcohol at any time.

When the temperature drops into cold weather, our concern for homeless men and women shifts from accountability to safety. Some homeless campers increase their usage of drugs and alcohol to combat the cold weather. Alcohol can give a false sense of warmth in the body, because it dilates blood vessels, increasing blood flow to the limbs. However it increases heat loss, lowering core body temperature. A person can feel warm and not dress appropriately for the cold. Alcoholics can pass out in frigid water or snow. Alcohol suppresses appetite, depleting nutrition that generates energy for warmth.

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Our mens and womens' dayrooms are warming centers all day all year for people that expect and need a sober place. When the forecast is for 36 degrees or less including windchill, people on a timeout of the Mission can receive all services, including spending the night here, as long as, they have no obvious use of intoxicants or rowdy behavior. This is the balance between justice and compassion. We are here to support health and life, not to enable self-destructive behavior.

36 degrees or less, including windchill

The Mission has empty beds in both our mens and womens' shelters. John did not have to sleep outside and get deep frostbite. He was fortunate that the consequence was not more severe. Some do not survive the night. We provide a warm, dry, safe place with needed accountability for real hope.

Thank you, Lynn Antis, Executive Director



Rescue

Incline Thine ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be Thou to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to save me.
Psalm 31:2

job opening

Employee to manage Mission Thrift Store, Furniture Store, and Warehouse. 30 hours per week. Send resume to: rsbgmission@aol.com

items needed

Spaghetti, Macaroni
Tomato Sauce
Diced Tomatoes
Mushroom Soup
Refried Beans, Salt
Oatmeal, Pepper
Cooking Oil, Mayo
Canned Fruit
Baby Diapers #5 & #6
Baby Wipes
Disposable Razors
Deodorant
Socks, Hats
Strollers 1 & 2 Seats

thrift stores

shop our stores to help homeless men, women and children.

estate planning

leave a legacy of hope at Roseburg Rescue Mission.

vehicle donations

are accepted here. Receipt for tax deductions provided.