



Roseburg Rescue Mission

Men's Shelter • Samaritan Inn • Thrift Stores

A Beacon of Hope for the Homeless

OCTOBER 2021

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A Personal Revival

A few years ago, Colby's life took a dramatic turn. It began with losing a job as a restaurant assistant manager. That situation was an indication of, and a contributing stress factor to, a major medical event about to happen. Prior to his crisis, he went to the Mission, because he could no longer pay rent at his place. Jobs were much harder to find in those days. A month after arriving here, he was walking from one restaurant to another looking for work, when he collapsed on a downtown Roseburg sidewalk. Colby had a heart attack and died. Paramedics worked for an unusually long time reviving him in the ambulance. At the hospital, he was placed in an ice bath to lower his body temperature, and he received a pacemaker to regulate his heart beat. The problem was a heart defect.

Colby had to reinvent himself, understand his limitations, even make some mistakes, as he worked through his recovery process. Memory loss and trouble concentrating have been a problem, but they are improving. He was in the hospital for a month, his family paid for a month in a motel, then he returned to the Mission. Much too soon, he took a job in a call center, where he discovered the limitations to his memory and physical stamina. After losing that job, he tried classes at UCC. It was too frustrating, so he dropped out, owing money to the school. He tried another call center, then a gas station. Accountability is difficult to measure, especially when one has a condition that affects concentrating, even reasoning. He took money from the gas station to pay his school loan with the intent to repay it before anyone would know. His medical condition was an extenuating

circumstance, yet justice had to be done. Because he paid restitution and had no priors, he was only held a short time and received reduced charges. He owned the wrong, and there was mercy. He tried another job, but quit out of discouragement. While working, he moved out of the Mission, then returned when unemployed. He needed a new approach to succeeding.

Colby then joined the Mission Program. He said, "I am going to do it right. The Program helped me focus more on God and realize that the Lord has given me the free gift of salvation. I was wasting it. I put my relationship with the Lord in jeopardy by my lifestyle, haphazardly trying to rely on myself more than putting my life into His hands. That was huge." That was a personal revival of his faith, much greater than his physical revival. He credits both the Mission and his church for working with him during this difficult time.

After completing our Program, we trusted Colby in hiring him to a Mission staff position, first as a cook then a store clerk. That was four years ago. He said, "I had to re-evaluate my work ethic along with my limitations because of my heart attack, and learn to ask for help when needed. It helped me fulfill my commitment to re-establish good work habits and not take employment for granted. It helped me get this new job, because it showed work stability and commitment to improve myself." Indeed, he has a new job outside the Mission, yet he will continue to rent his room here for a while. Colby said, "Thank you to the Mission. I could never repay you."

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Dispersing Campers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an "Interim Guidance on People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness" in 2020. There was a concern that clearing encampments could cause people to disperse throughout the community and increase the potential for infectious disease spread. So remaining in camps and providing for their needs in place was encouraged. Encampments of counterculture people grew significantly.

Oregon lifted COVID-19 related restrictions on June 30, 2021, once 70% of adults in the state were vaccinated with at least the first dose. Since then, local law enforcement has been able to disperse campers with certain limitations to that action from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on loitering and camping on public property. Priority is given to correcting unsafe, unsanitary, and illegal behaviors. Problems included fires, assaults with weapons, dog attacks, bicycle chop shops, sex trafficking, neighborhood crimes, contaminating waterways, littering – that is hoarding junk and building shanties.

None of them have chosen to enter the Mission.

The moratorium on dispersing campers may have had its desired effect of not spreading the virus, but it caused them to sink deeper into addictions. A couple of weeks before dispersing campers, a mental health caseworker counseled each person about housing and social service options. As of this writing, several dozen people have refused help. None of them have chosen to enter the Mission. Our Men's Shelter and Samaritan Inn have more beds available for men, women, and children now than before the pandemic. Campers are not homeless, in that, they do not want a home or employment. They are people with addiction and mental health issues, often both, one brought on by the other. Camping is an addiction problem, not a housing problem. Placing an addict in a free apartment does not address the core issue, removes the incentive to recover, and causes eviction issues. Housing First can work in a large city where truly homeless people are employed, but cannot find or afford housing. It works if it means housing in a homeless shelter with accountability to not be under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Recovery requires a genuine, personal desire to be free of addiction.

there is so much misinformation circulating

By July 1, 2022, a new "Navigation Center," otherwise known as a "low barrier shelter," is to open in Roseburg, or the operator may have to return the government grant. "Sobriety rules" and "chapel messages" in homeless shelters have been judged by the federal circuit court of appeals as "barriers" to entry, that deny individual's rights. They want local law enforcement to be able to tell a person improperly loitering on a public sidewalk or camping on public property to go to a low barrier shelter or be cited or arrested. We declined the offer to operate the low barrier shelter as something inconsistent with our purpose. The intent of the new Navigation Center is to "navigate" men and women into housing and other social services with a higher level of success than dispersing campers has had. However, their mandate is to continue to provide food, clothing, and supplies, enabling the camping problem. That new shelter will hold no value in chapel and will allow people to enter under the influence of drugs and alcohol every day for the rest of their lives. We do not want to engage an operation that enables the destructive camping culture. At the same time, there is so much misinformation circulating through unhoused people about conditions at the Mission and the status of individuals being able to enter or return here, that staffing a table in a new Navigation Center would be a point of needed accountability. Their shelter will cause some people at the Mission to relapse and go there, just like the warming centers do now. Our hope is to encourage some of the people there to get the help needed here. They do not intend to duplicate any existing Mission programs. There is even a sense of cooperation.

Thank you, Lynn Antis, Executive Director



items needed

Egg Noodles
Tomato Sauce
Diced Tomatoes
Mushroom Soup
Refried Beans
Gravy Mix
Spices, Salt, Mayo
Canned Fruit & Veggies
Diapers & Wipes
Disinfectant Spray
Disinfectant Wipes
Bottles of Water
Bath Towels
Wash Cloths
Strollers

used bikes & parts

are for sale in our
Furniture Store.

We accept donations
of used bikes
and parts.

vehicle donations

are accepted here.
Receipt for tax
deductions provided.

thrift stores

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

job opening

Christian Ministry
Operations Manager
Position is for a man to
manage staff, programs,
& facilities.
He will provide a weekly
chapel message.
Full-time, salary &
medical.
Send resume to:
rsbgmission@aol.com