

THE BEACON

Stories of light and transformation
from the Las Vegas Rescue Mission

CHRISTMAS
EDITION

“My Life Was Out of Control”

But your support helped him conquer his addictions

Mike was a terrific poker player, going back and forth between his California home and Las Vegas for tournaments. He often earned more than six figures per year.

“I was in such a bad state of mind.”

But when online betting on poker became legal several years ago, Mike got in too deep and lost a lot of money. As his gambling spun out of control, so did his drinking. It wasn't long before he was broke, homeless and wrestling with two addictions.

“My life just spiraled out of control with the gambling and drinking,” says Mike, 41. “I was caught up in my addictions, and I felt pretty hopeless.”

He would get up every morning, head down to the Strip, and try his luck at the casinos. But his luck had run out. “I was in such a bad state of mind, that any time I'd save even a little bit of money, I'd gamble and drink it away. It was an endless cycle.”

A New Beginning

Somebody told Mike that the Las Vegas Rescue Mission had a recovery program that could help him



Thanks to the Genesis recovery program, Mike has turned his life around!

overcome his addictions. He decided to check it out.

Today, he says it's the best decision he's ever made.

“It was such a serendipitous thing,” he says. “It's had a huge impact on my life.”

Genesis — the Mission's recovery program — had what Mike needed, particularly structure and accountability.

“Poker tables are open 24/7, so I would come and go as I pleased,” he says. “But at the Mission, there's a lot of structure — good, honest, hard work. Now I'm doing things the right way, instead of constantly

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**Share Joy with Neighbors in Need
this Christmas! See page 4 for details.**





A NOTE FROM THE CEO

Much to Celebrate!

“... and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”

— Luke 2:7

The young couple was essentially homeless, with nowhere to turn. They went door to door, seeking shelter, but there was no guest room available for them.

Joseph and Mary essentially spent that night on the streets, like many homeless people do right here in our own community. Christmas night, in the dirt and the filth. Can you imagine?

At the Las Vegas Rescue Mission, we will always have room for our vulnerable neighbors. Come, all you who are weary and need rest. Our doors are open.

While we celebrate the Christmas season, we also continue to celebrate our 50th anniversary. Thank you for your support through the years!

Sincerely,

Heather Engle

Heather Engle
CEO



**Kristy is grateful
for your support of
the Mission.**

Taking Time to Breathe

Kristy is really feeling the love, thanks to your compassion.

For the first time in her life, Kristy is learning how to relax. She grew up in a performance-driven family, where she felt like she always had to prove herself.

“There was no sitting down,” she says now. “It was always just do, do, do.”

Last year, a series of unfortunate circumstances left Kristy homeless, living in her car. When a bout with pneumonia put her in the hospital for a few days, she got out to find that her car had been towed. She couldn’t afford to get it back, and had nowhere else to turn.

So she came to the Mission.

“Immediately, I could feel the love, right when I walked through the doors,” Kristy says. “And quickly, I realized I was on the right path.”

She also realized she wasn’t being judged by her accomplishments and that she could just be herself.

“It’s the first time in years I’ve taken time to breathe,” she says. “I’m meditating, I’m learning about me. I’m being fed, I’m being sheltered, I’m being helped in so many ways. And I’m growing closer to God.

“I’m so thankful for the Mission in countless ways. It couldn’t be more perfect.”

Thank YOU for giving hope to women like Kristy! †

Pastoring During a Pandemic

COVID-19 has opened hearts to talk about spiritual matters.

The Christmas holidays might look a little different at the Mission this year, depending on where things stand with COVID-19. But one thing won't change.

"We're definitely going to celebrate Christ," says Fernando Anguiano, the Mission's Campus Pastor. "Even if we still have the pandemic precautions in place."

Christmas can be a difficult season for people who have burned bridges, particularly when it comes to relationships with family, he says. "But we'll love them and allow them to see that even though they're not with their families, they're with us. We become their family during those hard moments."

Pastor Fernando says 2020 has been an interesting year from a ministry perspective, due to the special challenges of the pandemic. Chapel services and devotions were shut down for a while during the height of COVID-19, but guests were asking a lot of questions about spirituality and even the afterlife.

"People have felt unsettled during the pandemic," he says. "But it opened the door for more people to come and talk to me than before. I think God has used this to help people redirect their priorities and to know what to look for first in their lives. A lot of people are opening their hearts to God for the first time."



Pastor Fernando says people have felt "unsettled" during the pandemic.



Fernando and his wife, Yolanda, were living in San Diego when, in 2014, he says God called them to Las Vegas to start a new church. It started in their living room with a few neighbors, and has grown into the New Journey Church on the east side of town. Fernando splits his time between the Mission and pastoring the church.

He says he wants to help struggling people because his siblings were heavy drug users. "God placed a burden on my heart at a young age to help people who were going through struggles. Jesus has love and compassion for people like that."

Pastor Fernando is grateful that you also have love and compassion for struggling neighbors. Thank you for your support! †

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"My Life Was Out of Control"

worrying about the consequences of my choices.

"I'm being held accountable, and I have responsibilities I'd never had before. Those things have helped me grow to the point where I'm looking forward to getting a normal job and a normal life, rather than the fast-lane life I was living before."

Mike says the program has also helped him to address some underlying issues that likely contributed to his addictions. He says he grew up in a "very controlling" environment, where expectations were extremely high.

"I had this need for perfection, to excel in everything," he says. "I ended up with this radical self-

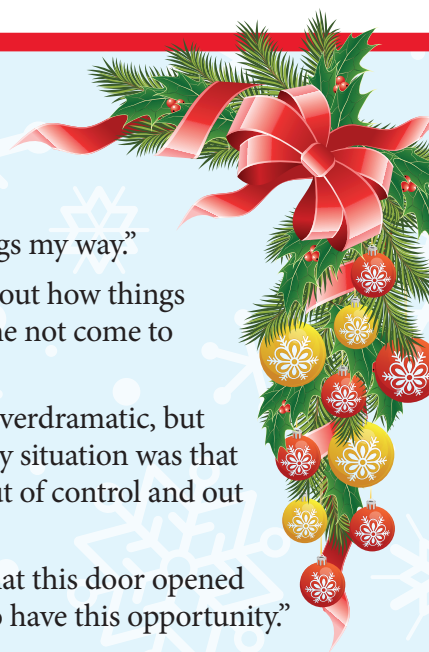
reliance, this need to do things my way."

Mike pauses to think about how things might have turned out, had he not come to the Mission.

"I don't want to sound overdramatic, but I might be dead," he says. "My situation was that dire, and I was completely out of control and out of options."

"So I feel very blessed that this door opened up, and I'm so grateful just to have this opportunity."

Thank YOU for giving people like Mike the opportunity to turn their lives around. †





**Our Toy Giveaway,
to be held Dec. 19,
is a highlight for
local families!**

How You Can Deliver Christmas Joy

The holidays are a challenging time for our homeless neighbors and for families struggling to get by. But YOU can help bring tidings of comfort AND joy for your neighbors in need.

Our annual Toy Giveaway, scheduled for Saturday, December 19, is one of our biggest outreach events of the year. You can help by donating toys from November 30 through December 18. Gifts for children ages 11+ are needed most.

We also need volunteers to help wrap toys for the big event!

We will also hold our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, whether guests are to be seated in the dining hall or picking up a to-go box. With COVID-19, we cannot say for sure, but our guests and community will certainly get a hot and traditional



festive meal.

To learn more about volunteering, please call 702-382-1766 or visit vegasrescue.org/volunteer. Thank you! †

▼ Please cut off the reply form below, and return it with your gift. ▼

I want to provide meals and more this holiday season!



480 West Bonanza Rd. • Las Vegas, NV 89106-3227

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Yes! I want to help provide warm meals, shelter and care this holiday season!

Enclosed is my gift of:

- ☐ \$17.36 to provide 8 meals and care this holiday season.
- ☐ \$28.21 to provide 13 meals and care this holiday season.
- ☐ \$56.42 to provide 26 meals and care this holiday season.
- ☐ \$_____ to provide as much as possible.

☐ I'd like to give monthly. My first gift of \$_____ is enclosed.

Please make your check payable to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. To give online, visit vegasrescue.org
Thank you!