



THE BEACON

Stories of Light and Transformation from the Las Vegas Rescue Mission | CHRISTMAS EDITION

Thanks to you, Jennifer and her kids, Timothy and Leena, have landed on their feet.



Sleeping With the Mole People

Jennifer slept in the Vegas tunnels with her pets, waiting for help. Then you stepped in.

Jennifer had long heard about the “Mole People” — the estimated 1,500 people experiencing homelessness who live in the tunnels beneath the Las Vegas Strip.

But she never thought she’d actually be one of them ... even if just for a few days.

She was a successful business owner with a small staff. Her husband, Florin, had a good job. Then the pandemic hit. Jennifer lost business, and it never really recovered. And Florin’s up-and-down contract work wasn’t enough to pay the bills.

Eventually came the dreaded — though expected — knock at the door.

“February 16,” Jennifer says, like it was yesterday. A constable was there to serve an eviction notice.

Jennifer, Florin, and their kids — Timothy, 21, and Leena, 11 — had to leave immediately. So did their two cats, Slinky Bob and Sonny Boy, whom Jennifer considered like family.

The ensuing days were “a living nightmare,” as Jennifer describes it. Homeless shelters don’t allow pets, so Jennifer opted to live on the streets — and in those tunnels — with the cats until they could find a place for them. Meanwhile, Florin and the children made their way to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission.

“My cats are as much family as my two-legged children,” says Jennifer.

So she spent a few days underground — Jennifer, her cats, and the Mole People.

“It was the first time I ever slept on the street,” she says. “I was desperate. But I met some amazing people in the tunnels. They’re no different than you or me.

“People ride by and yell, ‘You bums!’ I hear them and think, *The only difference between your situation and mine is one paycheck. Don’t take it for granted.*”

After three days, Jennifer found a place that would

Continued on page 3

What's Inside >

A Note From Heather
Page 2 >

“The Mission Saved My Life”
Page 3 >

Deliver Christmas Joy
Page 4 >



A Note From the CEO

Many of those we serve know what it's like to be homeless, to sleep on the streets, to have no place to lay their head.

They have felt what it's like to have "no room at the inn."

Joseph and Mary experienced that as they desperately sought a warm, safe place to have their child. Instead, they spent that night essentially on the streets, in a dirty stable, surrounded by animals and dung and straw.

It's unbelievable, isn't it? That the baby Jesus — the son of God — would enter the world in such an environment?

But in that astonishing moment, the angels broke into song:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

When homeless travelers — or those struggling with addiction or escaping abusive situations — knock on our door, they will *always* be welcome. There is always room at the inn ... precisely *because* of the baby born that day.

This Christmas, I'm grateful for the gift of your kindness. Thank you!

Heather Engle

Heather Engle
CEO

Volunteers Needed!

Now that the holidays are upon us, we need more volunteers!

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Mission; we simply cannot open our doors without them. There is always more work to be done than there are people to do it — especially during the holiday season.

Volunteering benefits the Mission, those in need, and YOU — and takes as little as two hours. Everyone has a talent or gift they can share through volunteerism to make a difference and change lives.

Learn more at vegasrescue.org/volunteer



"I Wanted To Change"

Bryan was seeking new life. You helped him find it.

Bryan got married at 17 and had his first child at 18. When the marriage failed after about eight years, his wife took their son, leaving Bryan alone to himself.

He fell into a deep depression and became addicted to heroin. While living on the streets, he got a woman pregnant. Child Protective Services (CPS) took the baby, a boy, because both parents were addicts.

That was a wake-up call for Bryan. He didn't want to fail as a father this time, and CPS gave him a chance. If he messed it up, they would give the boy up for adoption.

"It really hit me," Bryan says. He went right into rehab, and then to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission.

"The Mission has helped me get my life back together," says Bryan, now on staff as a security supervisor. "I like this place. I wanted to change, and they helped me do it."

Bryan finished the program and settled down at his brother's home with his little boy, now 2, whom he was awarded custody of. (The mother has since died of an overdose.)

"I just want to be sober with my son and be happy," he says.

Your support makes it possible for men like Bryan to find new life. ✝



Thanks to you, Elaine will have a merry, and sober, Christmas.

"The Mission Saved My Life"

An overdose almost killed her. Now, thanks to you, she has a fresh start.

Elaine had already survived cancer once, about 20 years ago.

When she was diagnosed with cancer again a few years ago, doctors said she had a 5% chance of living. The diagnosis and prognosis nearly broke her. She was wracked with pain, and heavy painkillers weren't helping.

Then a friend offered her heroin. It killed the pain ... but in time, it almost killed Elaine too.

She'd never been a drug user before, but she quickly became addicted, living on the streets, sleeping in abandoned houses. She accidentally overdosed in early 2022, and when someone woke her up, she was not happy.

"I was like, 'I was gone. I didn't feel anything. You should've let me be,'" Elaine says. "But they didn't."

The next day, she realized she didn't want to die. She has three

children and a 7-year-old grandson. "I wanted to live for them," she says. "So I'm still here!"

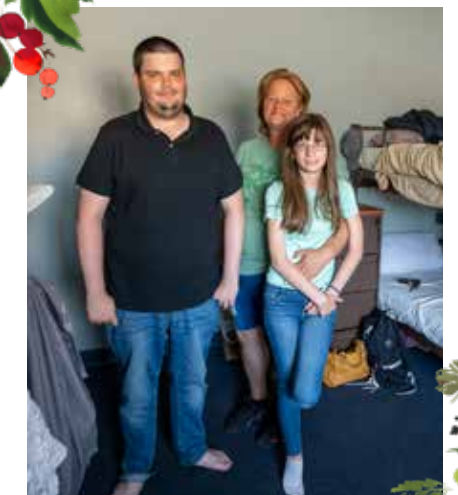
These days, "here" is the Las Vegas Rescue Mission, where Elaine has continued her recovery, learning the tools to stay sober and live a clean life.

She says that without the Mission's intervention, she'd be dead. But thanks to their help — "God put me here," she says — she's well on the way to independent living again.

Elaine is working on restoring her relationship with her kids, and is eager to get to know her grandson, whom she hadn't seen in almost four years, due to her addiction.

"The Mission saved my life," she says. "The people here are amazing. They were always there for me, and never abandoned me."

Thank you for never abandoning neighbors in need. They're grateful! ✝



Sleeping With the Mole People

continued from front

keep Slinky Bob and Sonny Boy in a kennel at a local resource center. She was now free to seek shelter for herself.

Of course, she came to join the rest of her family at the Mission ...

Reunited!

Finally reunited with her family, Jennifer felt complete again.

"We love to laugh together," she says. "We find strength in that laughter. When we weren't together, it was hard."

The Mission gave them a safe place to stay till they could land on their feet. Shortly before this newsletter printed, they'd found independent housing — a two-bedroom apartment where they'd all be together ... including the cats. And just in time for the holidays.

"If it weren't for the Mission, we wouldn't have found the right resources for our needs," Jennifer says. "They truly care. They gave us support and encouragement."

"I walk out with my head held high because of them. I am so grateful!"

Thank you for providing help and hope this Christmas season! ✝

How You Can Deliver Christmas Joy

The holidays are a challenging time for neighbors experiencing homelessness and for families struggling to get by — and with soaring prices this year, things are harder than ever. But YOU can help bring blessed relief to these neighbors in need.

Our annual Toy Giveaway, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 16, is one of our biggest outreach events of the year. You can help by donating toys from Dec. 1-15. Gifts for children ages 11+ are the most needed.

We will also hold our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, though when this newsletter went to print, details had not been finalized. Please keep checking our website for updated information.

To learn more about volunteering, please call 702-382-1766, email volunteer@vegasrescue.org or visit vegasrescue.org/volunteer.

Thank you!



Please Remember the Mission This Christmas!

- Donate on GivingTuesday, Nov. 28
- Toy Giveaway, Saturday, Dec. 16
- Give anytime at vegasrescue.org/give

PLEASE CUT OFF THE REPLY FORM BELOW, AND RETURN IT WITH YOUR GIFT. THANK YOU.

I WANT TO TRANSFORM LIVES THIS CHRISTMAS



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

To give online, visit vegasrescue.org or use your phone to scan this code
Thank you!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Yes! I want to help my neighbors in need this Christmas. Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$19.92 to provide 8 meals and care.
- \$32.37 to provide 13 meals and care.
- \$64.74 to provide 26 meals and care.
- \$_____ to provide as much care as possible.
- I'd like to give monthly. My first *Visionary Club* gift of \$_____ is enclosed.

Please make your check payable to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission.