

# VENTURA COUNTY Rescue Mission

An Outreach ministry of



July 2011

Changing Lives for Good

## I Broke My Father's Heart

“My mother left me when I was two years old. My dad, although hurt by the abandonment of his wife, loved me unconditionally. My dad had a great job; he worked a swing-shift from 4pm to midnight, so we had lots of time together. Yet, even with my dad always around, I still got into abusing pain medication and drinking with my best friend. After a while, I was tired of the feeling of always lying to my dad and others. I decided to clean myself up and, with the help of my dad, I went through detox myself for five days in my bedroom. This was the worst experience of my life. I had cold sweats, headaches, diarrhea, and vomiting. At times, I wanted to die. After five days, with my dad's help, I was beginning to be free from the withdrawals and feel good about life again.

Things were going along fine, until my best friend died from complications of years of drug and alcohol abuse. He was only 23 years old, and over 4,000 people attended his funeral.

I couldn't handle it; I went on a drug and drinking spree. I took whatever to get high, and I did not care if I lived or died. I was hurting

inside and the only thing I thought of was smothering the awful pain with drugs or alcohol or both. I lied to everyone, stole items from stores and people, and was rapidly becoming a person I did not recognize.

Then in 2011, during sober moments, I realized my attitude and actions were deeply hurting my dad. Our once great relationship was rapidly disintegrating and I could see the disappointment on his face. I could take his anger, but I couldn't take seeing my dad disappointed. My dad's wife, my step-mom, suggested that I go into the Ventura County Rescue Mission and enter the men's program. I entered the mission and found it to be very difficult at first. They had rules and restrictions that I did not want to follow. Yet, as I detoxed for a second time, I found the love, support, and acceptance at the mission better than I experienced anywhere else, except with my dad.

I thought I was a Christian, but the way I was acting spoke louder than words. Now, I am trying, with God's grace, to live and talk like a true believer. I have found the joy of life and peace of mind

that I was seeking before, this time without drinking or drugs.

I thank God for the mission, for without it I would still be floundering. Or worse, I could have joined my best friend in death.”  
~ Shaun



# “Ain’t No Cure for the Summertime Blues!”

Eddie Cochran made this song famous, and it became such a huge hit because so many people can relate to its message.

“I’m gonna make a fuss, I’m gonna make a holler, work’n all summer, just-a trying to earn a dollar.”

Summertime is difficult for many, but it is particularly difficult for the homeless. It is very dangerous to live without shelter, to be exposed to the elements and hazards of living on the streets.

**Yet unlike this song, we do have a cure, and the cure is you!**

As you give to the Ventura County Rescue Mission, which includes the Lighthouse for Women & Children, you are providing men, women, and children with wonderful opportunities. This opportunity not only covers the basic essentials, but provides long term recovery, vocational training, and restoration.

The men, women, and children who come to us seeking help and deliverance from the trauma of being homeless or addicted to drugs and alcohol have absolutely no resources to pay for their restoration and

recovery. Without you, our generous friends, we would not be able to provide the excellent level of vocational training, recovery, and restoration for the lives of these men and women.

Following are the stories of Carin Swinehart and Kristi Jackson, two dear ladies who are currently in the Lighthouse under the care and management of Cassie Sorenson.

We at the Ventura County Rescue Mission are so blessed to have Cassie as the director of the Lighthouse. Her compassion and support of the women has produced an atmosphere of unconditional love and acceptance, allowing the women every opportunity to change and become the women God intends.

Thank you for partnering with us and I hope by reading these stories and seeing the pictures of the people you help, you will be encouraged and blessed.

Thank you,



John E. Saltee  
Director



**Kristi Jackson** - “Prior to coming to the Lighthouse, I was in Santa Paula running from the law and the Lord. Not only was I suffering from being out in the sun, but I was suffering from an addiction to three different types of narcotics. I was hungry and thirsty for more than just food. I was hungry and thirsty for stability and forgiveness. I desperately desired stability in order to focus on rebuilding my relationships with all six of my children and my granddaughter. The Lighthouse has been a safe and secure place where I have learned to recognize and overcome self-defeating habits. The staff and volunteers have embraced me with compassion and genuine love. The whole environment at the Lighthouse demonstrates unconditional acceptance. Because of this, I now thank God for my past failures, which drove me to the Lighthouse and to realize what a tremendous privilege it is to be here.”

# Ready for a New Life After Eight Lonely Years

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**Carin Swinehart** has been homeless for approximately eight years. The last five years, Carin was in and out of jail due to her addiction to narcotics and problems with theft. Being alone and on the dangerous streets can be extremely difficult, especially during the summer months.

Carin shares, “There was no escaping the heat and the elements. It was especially painful for me to watch other ‘normal’ families having fun with their children. Watching scenes such as this made me feel all the more lonely. Hope came into my life when I entered the Lighthouse Shelter on March 14, 2011.

Since that day, the Lord began a very dramatic change in my heart. I have had several great things happen to me personally that only God could orchestrate. One of these good things is I have been given the opportunity to learn how to become a dog groomer at “Precious Paws.” Although life can still be difficult at times, I have surrendered my life over to the Lord and have realized this very important truth, “With God, all things are possible.”



## Three Words Changed My Life

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**Glen Shorter** - “My life is summed up in three words, guilt, grace, and gratitude. Summer was a very difficult time for me when I was on the streets due to the inescapable heat. I found relief from the elements when I entered the Ventura County Rescue Mission. At first, I didn’t think this type of program and structure would do me any good because I came in carrying a huge bag of guilt and regret. The change began as I experienced true love and concern from the chaplains at the mission. They listened to my story with genuine compassion.

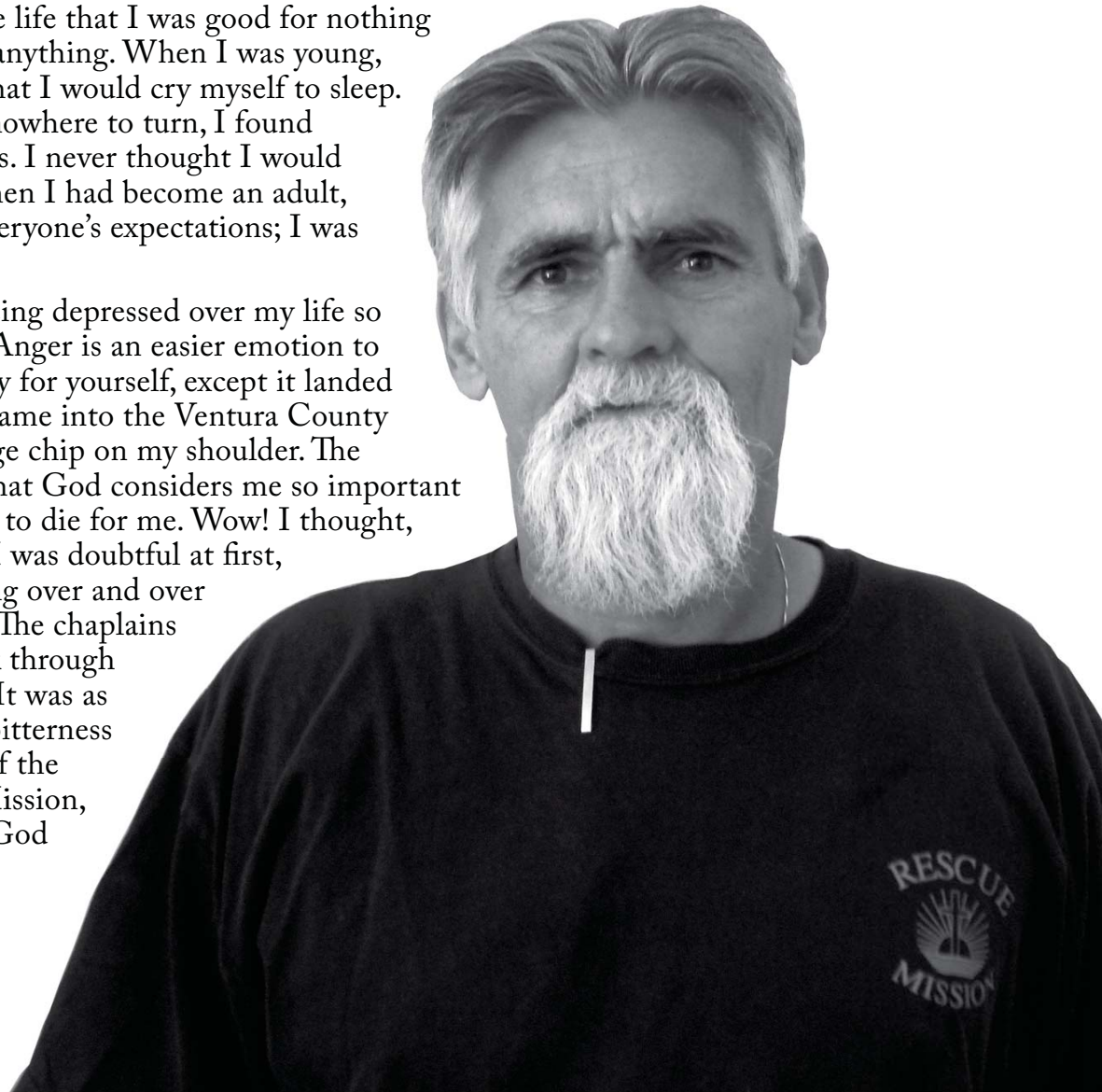
I was very needy in the beginning of the program and often sought out their advice and counsel. It seemed as if they would drop whatever they were doing to take time out to listen to me.

After several weeks, I heard the greatest three words I have needed to hear my entire life. These three words actually changed my life. The words were, “You are forgiven!” When I finally began to believe, that I could be forgiven by God of all my past sins and wrongdoings, I actually had a heart change from guilt to gratitude. I thank God for bringing me to the mission for now my life is marked as one who is truly thankful.”

# From Good for Nothing to Worth Dying For

“I have been told my entire life that I was good for nothing and I wouldn’t amount to anything. When I was young, I did so poorly in school that I would cry myself to sleep. With no one to help and nowhere to turn, I found temporary relief with drugs. I never thought I would live to be very old. And when I had become an adult, I realized I had fulfilled everyone’s expectations; I was good for nothing!

As a man, I was tired of being depressed over my life so I turned to anger instead. Anger is an easier emotion to deal with than feeling sorry for yourself, except it landed me in jail several times. I came into the Ventura County Rescue Mission with a huge chip on my shoulder. The chaplains began to teach that God considers me so important that He sent His only Son to die for me. Wow! I thought, if only that could be true. I was doubtful at first, but they continued teaching over and over again, that God loved me. The chaplains were used by God to break through my hardened angry heart. It was as if God took the sword of bitterness out of my chest. Because of the Ventura County Rescue Mission, I believe I am valuable to God and to society. I have been taught that I am capable of doing good, and I have the ability to be good, no matter what others may say or think of me.” ~ Paul



*As you can see from reading these stories it would be impossible to provide such excellent accommodations and in depth programs without your generous support. We at the Ventura County Rescue Mission appreciate you more than mere words can express.*



## **DONATIONS NEEDED**

**100% of all proceeds help feed, shelter, and clothe the homeless**

*• Clothing • Shoes • Purses • Small Appliances • Books • Toys • Jewelry & MORE!*

**For Pickup CALL (800) 417-5678**