

# VENTURA COUNTY Rescue Mission

An Outreach ministry of



October 2011

Changing Lives for Good

## No Chance for Success...Until Now!

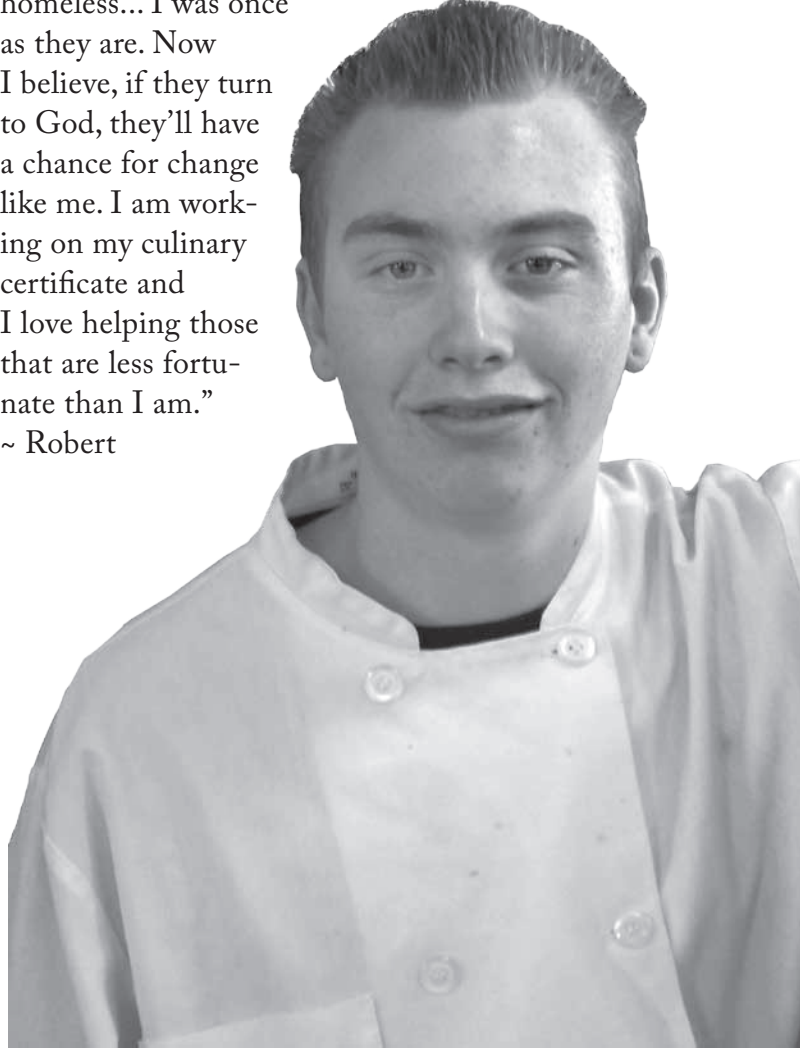
When you think of the mission's recovery program, you may think of older, seasoned men. While this is an accurate picture, our program also has many young men in it. One young man is eighteen-year-old Robert. Here is his story.

"My parents divorced when I was three. When I turned five, my mom overdosed on drugs and her boyfriend stole all the money we had. This was third time my dad had bailed my mom out of jail, so he took my brother and me to live in an apartment where family members were managers. When I was eleven my dad remarried and, though he had been sober for many years, his new wife got him into drugs again. At age eleven I started smoking marijuana. After my new step-mom left, my dad became a heroin dealer and, when I was sixteen, we moved into my dad's best friend's house. They were both dealers and abusers of narcotics. I lived around heroin, methamphetamines, weapons, and money. I dropped out of school and was addicted to Norco, a high potency pain killer, a 28 tablet a day addiction! That became so expensive. I began using a less expensive drug, heroin, and then speed to keep me awake. By seventeen I was wanted by the police and hiding from law enforcement for half a year! I had burned all of my bridges with any family. I was homeless and had nowhere to turn. I was waiting until I turned eighteen so I could enter the mission. Finally, on my eighteenth birthday, I came into the Ventura County Rescue Mission.

"At first I was miserable, I wasn't use to all the rules, and I had to get-up and shower every day! I have been in the program for almost five months. I have never been this happy in my life! I love my work in

the kitchen. I love to feed the homeless men, women, and children. The emptiness I have had my entire life has been filled with the Lord Jesus and the Gospel of Christ. I have a new Bible and I am reading it everyday. One of the benefits of being here is the older men have treated me as a son; I feel a genuine love and concern from them. When I look at the homeless... I was once as they are. Now I believe, if they turn to God, they'll have a chance for change like me. I am working on my culinary certificate and I love helping those that are less fortunate than I am."

~ Robert



## From the Heart of the Director...

When we think of the approaching holidays, we often think of food like turkeys, cranberries, mashed potatoes, and pie. Most of all, when we think of the holidays, we think of our families and those we love and hold dear.

When our clients in the mission's drug and alcohol recovery program think of the holidays, for many it brings feelings of unrelenting pain and sorrow mixed with a dose of regret and guilt. Their hearts break over failed and lost relationships such as broken marriages or failing as a parent, son, daughter, brother, sister, or friend.

Yet these men and women come to the mission with a genuine wish to change; to change not only for

themselves, but to change for their families. Will you consider being a part of this change as we draw close to the holiday season? Will you consider providing a hot, nutritious Thanksgiving meal that will begin to change hearts of despair into hearts of hope? Thank you for all you have given already. Will you consider giving again to help the poor during these upcoming holidays?

For the sake of the brokenhearted,



John E. Saltee

## Celebrating my Blessings...

As the Thanksgiving and Christmas season grows near, I like to think about the times before I was caught up in drugs and a gang. I think about decorating the tree with my family and children and all the hectic shopping that needed to be done. But most of all, I think about the



wonderful moments I spent in the kitchen making all the old family recipes. Being with family and catching-up with family members I hadn't seen in a while would always warm my heart.

I haven't experienced a holiday like this in a while because of my involvement with the gang and with drugs. In fact, I would steal and sell drugs to afford gifts for my children and family. It may have seemed "normal" but it wasn't! When I came to the Lighthouse and realized I would be here at Christmas, I was bummed. I thought about what I would be missing with my family. But then, I stopped to think about all the blessings that lay ahead for me. This year I will be spending the holidays with my children, and I will be in a sober and safe place. We will celebrate with Christ in mind. My gifts will be bought with honest money from hard work. This Thanksgiving and Christmas, I will be celebrating my blessings! ~ Vivianna



# A Blessed Day

The Thanksgiving meal is one of the oldest American traditions and a day we look forward to celebrating with our family and friends. At the mission, this feast takes more planning than any other meal of the year! Can you imagine preparing a Thanksgiving consisting of 6,000 pounds of turkey, with 1,000 pounds each of vegetables, potatoes, and yams? This feast's preparations begin weeks in advance and is served fresh under the supervision of the kitchen staff at the mission.

You may wonder where does all of this food come from, how do all of those turkeys get served?

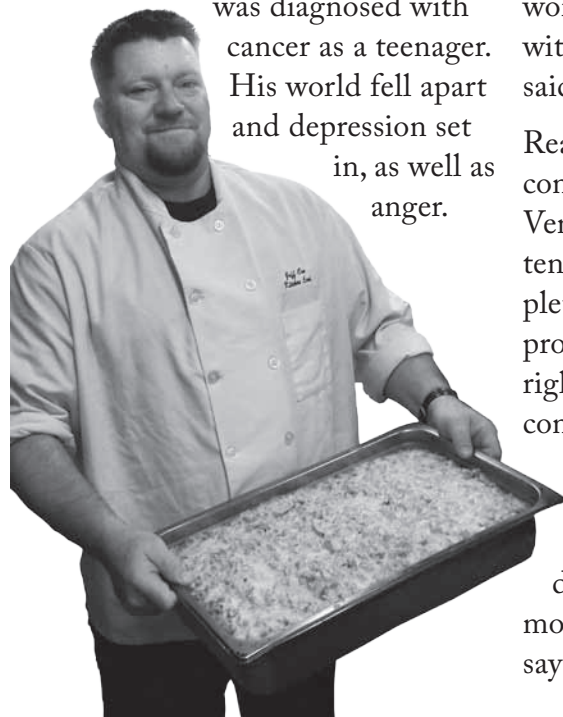
Many members of the community and county come together to provide the turkeys and trimmings. Individuals, families, churches, and organizations are encouraged to donate turkeys. Volunteers offer to help set-up and decorate tables, many serve the food, while others send in cash donations. It takes so many kindhearted souls to ensure a memorable meal where no one is

turned away. A thankful heart will bless others. Call us to see what opportunities are available for you to be a part of this blessed day.



# A Cancer Survivor's Story

Jeff had been battling with alcohol for fifteen years. His entire family is successful and Jeff was the Star Football player in High School, until he was diagnosed with cancer as a teenager. His world fell apart and depression set in, as well as anger.



As the years passed, his dependence on alcohol also grew, "I was looking for relief from the pain of failure and depression, and alcohol worked...for a while. I lost touch with reality and dived into a bottle," said Jeff.

Realizing his lost and hopeless condition, Jeff said, "I entered the Ventura County Rescue Mission ten months ago and it has completely changed my life. I love this program, they (Chaplains) hit you right between the eyes with the true condition of yourself, yet they give you hope through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am happy now and no longer depressed." Jeff has been promoted to lead in the kitchen and says, "I enjoy serving the homeless

population, for they are truly grateful for the wonderful food they receive, without charge. This gives me a sense of fulfillment that I have never experienced before." The director asked Jeff if he was concerned about the upcoming holidays and the pressure it places on the kitchen. Jeff said, "Do you mean the fact we must cook 24 turkeys in our combi ovens, every three hours, twenty four hours a day, for almost two weeks, that kind of pressure? The director laughed and said, "Yes, that kind of pressure, are you concerned?" Jeff smiled and said, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Jeff is no longer depressed, angry, or addicted to alcohol, because of your generous donations and the love of God.

# Happy Faces, Happy Meals, Happy Hearts...

Throughout the year at the mission, thanks to your generous donations, our guests are provided with not only food, but with some everyday items most of us take for granted. For example, at the beginning of the school year, because of the generosity of volunteers and donors, much needed school supplies and backpacks were handed out to many children who otherwise would have had to go without. These new

school supplies not only bring a smile to the faces of the children, but get them excited about school!

It is a long-standing tradition at the mission to make sure the Thanksgiving meal and the Christmas season are memorable and special. You have the opportunity to play a role in blessing someone during these important days. You can provide one or more turkeys for the Thanks-

giving meal. For the mission's toy give away, you can buy a new toy for a child who, without your kindness, would have none. Because of your thoughtfulness, our guests are able to experience the holidays with a smile on their face and a delicious meal in their stomach. Such simple gifts and acts of love make a difference in the hearts and lives of a man, woman, or child.



## Focus on what's Important

As I get closer to the holiday season, I am more mindful of what I have to be grateful for. I look back to where I was one year ago and how things have changed in my life! I used to think the holiday season was about food, kids, presents, and decorations. Now I realize there is so much more—family, friendship, and reflections with the Lord. Last year at this time, my main concern was myself and moving to find a new job. Now, in the days ahead, my desire is to stay focused on what's important. I want my children to understand the bigger picture, and that is Christ's love for us. I give praise and thanks to the Lighthouse and to our Lord!

~ Courtney



## THRIFT STORES

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*100% of ALL proceeds help feed, shelter, and clothe the Homeless*

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**Super Thrift Store**  
815 North Oxnard Blvd.  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
Phone: (805) 201-3750



[www.vcrescumission.org](http://www.vcrescumission.org)