

# VENTURA COUNTY Rescue Mission

An Outreach ministry of



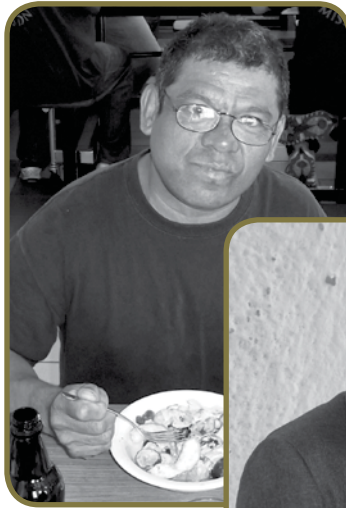
September 2011

Changing Lives for Good



## It Took a Decade of Meals!

For more than a decade, Frank Lopez lined up at the mission to be fed. The excellent food made Frank return to the mission again and again. Frank said, "Often after I ate and was full, I would notice the men in the program. They seemed happy and healthy. I wasn't ready for many years to come into the program. Although I loved the food, I didn't want to submit to the rules and regulations. The hot, delicious food kept me returning; however, my addictions grew worse. My homeless friends began to see my health deteriorate and encouraged me to speak with someone about the program. Mike Blair, in guest services, had often attempted to encourage me to come into the program over the years. So due to my health, the prompting of



others, and guaranteed meals three times a day, I finally entered the program last August. For the first thirty days, I was detoxing and questioned my decision. Yet, the good food and proper sleep began to bring my health back."

Frank added, "Months ago my estranged daughter was looking for me while I was homeless and found me at the mission in line waiting for food. She became very upset because of my sickly condition. She recently attended my graduation from the program and she simply couldn't believe the difference in my appearance, health, and life! I graduated in June of 2011 during the same week as my birthday. I thank God through Jesus, because my life is excellent and couldn't be better. And it all began with a wonderful meal!"

## Fresh Food, Fresh Start

"I never understood what it meant to eat right," says Patricia. At least not until I spent a few days in jail where I received daily meals that made me feel so much better. When I was living on the streets, I had no place to keep or prepare food. One main attraction of the Lighthouse is the fresh and plentiful food. Now that I am eating right, I am getting healthier, and I can better focus on my recovery."



## *Sunken Eyes and in Need of Help*

My wife Becki and I were walking into a local restaurant, when we noticed a man asking for a quarter. As we approached him, he was talking incoherently, the only clear statement we heard was him asking for the quarter. I asked him if he was hungry, yet before he was able to respond I noticed he was extremely thin with sunken eyes, blotchy skin, and missing most of his teeth. My wife with tears in her eyes asked me, "who stopped loving this man?" Although he did not appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, his mind was not clear enough for any type of conversation, perhaps due to a mental disease or years of alcohol or drug abuse. After my wife brought a dinner out for him, she said, "I can see why it's so important to provide a meal first."

Dear friends, it often starts with a meal. The meal provides more than nutritional sustenance; it can be the trigger for change. As our donors, the meal starts with you! May God continue to bless you as you give of your treasure, time, and talents for the poor and needy.



For the sake of the broken-hearted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Saltee".

John E. Saltee, Director

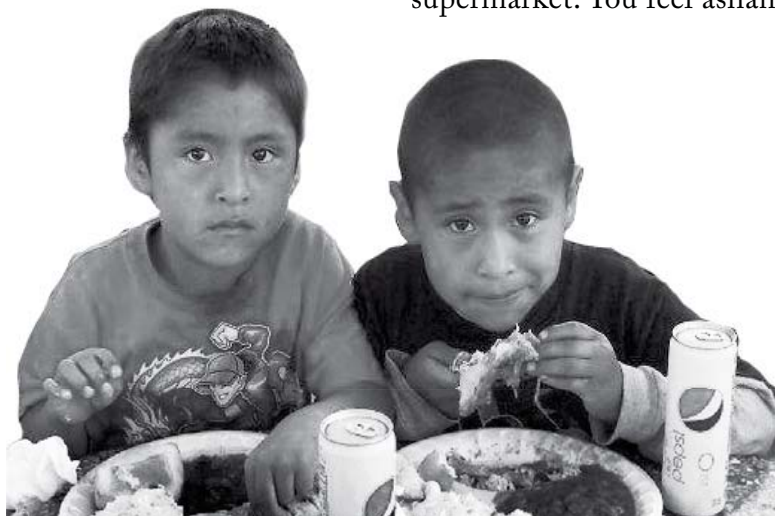
## **Adorable Kids...Empty Stomachs...Empty Dreams...**

Attempting to convince a mother or father that they need to consider changing while they are worrying about their hungry children can seem like a futile waste of time. As a parent, your heart breaks when your children lack the basic essentials of life. We, at the Ventura County Rescue Mission, strive

to produce hot, nutritious meals, realizing it is often the first step towards recovery.

Imagine for a moment, you are sleeping out of your car with two children. The dinner you often find for your family is in the trash bins at the back of a restaurant or supermarket. You feel ashamed,

hopeless, and disheartened. Then someone tells you the Ventura County Rescue Mission offers wonderful meals, twice a day for your entire family free of charge! You show up nervous and intimidated until you are greeted by the men in the program (men who used to eat out of those very same trash bins). These men welcome you and your family into the dining hall for a delicious meal that includes fresh vegetables, fresh bread, salad, pasta, pork, beef, or chicken. When you look at your sweet children you notice they are smiling and full for the first time in many days. As a parent, you are grateful and relieved. Because of this, you may now be willing to talk to someone about the possibilities of recovery and change.



# Mission Serves over 700 Meals a Day

*“When you give a banquet, invite the poor.” ~ Jesus*

Men, women and children line-up every day to partake of our nutritious, hot, ‘family style’ meals provided by the kitchen of the Ventura County Rescue Mission. These meals are provided without charge because of the compassion of our donors.

What if you were on a fixed income, well beyond what is considered to be the poverty limit? You have to de-

cide if your money will go towards rent, gasoline, medical expenses, or food. As a donor, your gifts provide hope for the poor. Hope that that they can make it as they struggle to make ends meet with their limited resources, because they can eat, because of the meals the mission provides. “It breaks my heart,” says Mike Blair a past graduate from the mission’s recovery program. “These little kids are so innocent, yet live

with a mom or dad who is struggling to make ends meet. Most of these children have very little, but their smiles say ‘thank-you’ when they sit down to eat. I thank God I am part of a ministry that provides wonderful meals. It makes me proud to serve at this mission.”

700 meals a day provide hope for men, women, children, and senior citizens of our county!



## Filled with Food, Filled with Hope

Victoria can remember every detail of her first day at the emergency shelter at the Lighthouse. She says, “After two years of drug binges and a couple of months in jail, I am sure you can imagine how grateful I was for a good meal. I remember having a smile from ear to ear when I walked into the dining room for the first time and saw a table filled with pizza. I know this may sound silly to some people, but believe me, after eating ‘mystery meat’ sandwiches in jail for a few months; the pizza was a huge blessing! Then when I thought the food situation couldn’t get any better, I was accepted into the Life Recovery Program. My first night in the

program chicken tacos were served. They happen to be my favorite meal, so I know it was meant to be. God spoke to me first through the food at the Lighthouse. Beyond all of the amazing dishes that are prepared, we are filled with hope, faith, knowledge, and sisterhood. My decision to come to the Lighthouse has changed my life. I no longer have to be physically, emotionally, and spiritually starved. Today, I have a second chance at life and a second chance to be a good mother. I am grateful to God for bringing me to this home where we are well led and well fed.”

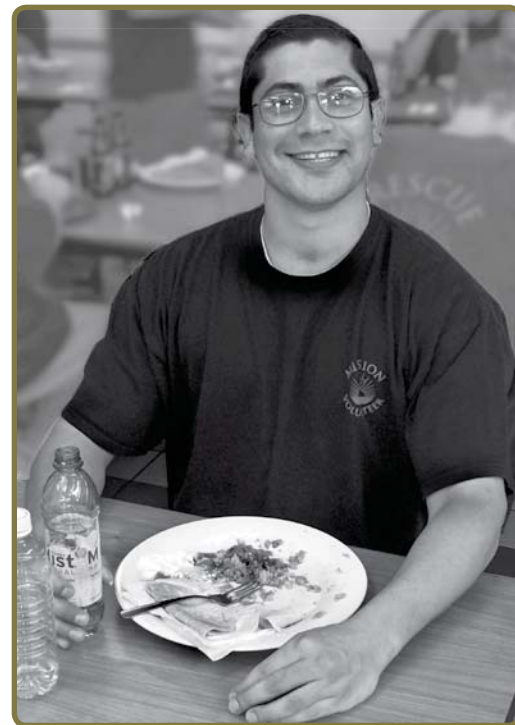


# Too Good to be True

Have you ever been hungry or known a painful hunger few ever experience? God has blessed this nation with incredible resources, yet a growing number of people are experiencing severe hardships with the loss of a job, the loss of a home, the loss of medical insurance and experiencing something they have never experienced before---hunger!

Octavio Esqueda, a man in the mission's recovery program said, "Life was unmanageable, everything I did seemed difficult. There was nowhere to put my belongings, and no place to call my own. I often would watch people walk into restaurants and order dinner. When they were full and satisfied they would leave the restaurant and I would ask them for

change. Sometimes they would give me a smile; others gave me unkind words, and told me to 'get a job'. I so desired a job, but I was untrained and unwanted. This made it impossible for me to work. Then I heard about the mission. My first thought was, how much will this cost? I asked one of the chaplains if they had room for me. I found out they not only had room, but they would provide help with my drug recovery, give me a nice, clean bed, an education, job training, and food, glorious food, three times a day! I have seen changes take place in my life I thought were once impossible. I am indeed grateful to God for this place and I am being trained as a cook in our culinary school."



## Food for the Body and the Soul



Valerie, a client at the Lighthouse shares, "We all come from different walks of life. What I have a hard time forgetting is how badly I used to feed my mind, body, and soul until I came to the Lighthouse. My mind was focused on my addiction, my body never had a decent meal, and my soul only knew ugliness and pain. I didn't know how to survive or feed myself with anything that was good for me. Even as unhealthy

as I was, I still had a hunger and thirst for God. Now my mind is focusing on God, and I am learning about tools that can help me overcome my addictions. My body is becoming healthy and my soul is filled with God's everlasting love. I am now happy and eager to seek more ways to reap the benefits of God's love for me and my family. I finally understand the concept that 'God is good'."

**GIVE AND  
YOU SHALL  
RECEIVE**



A Charitable Gift Annuity is a gift that provides you with financial rewards for a lifetime. You will receive:

- Immediate tax deduction
- Fixed and secure payments throughout your lifetime
- Satisfaction of helping us deliver vital services to the hungry and homeless in our community

For more information, please call: (800) 876-7958 ext. 2112, Jay Haddix.