

Headed Towards Hope

It's tough being in sixth grade and getting the news that your mom has cancer. Even tougher when the news breaks again three years later, after you thought your mom had beat it. But when the cancer finally takes her life a week before high school graduation...tough doesn't begin to describe the pain.

All of this happened to Taylor. And he says it "...caused my outlook on life to shift." He did what many young people in pain do, and turned to drugs to escape. "I was drinking or smoking weed or doing pills every day," he recalls.

Taylor had always been a good student, and went on to Northern Kentucky University. He not only used drugs there, he sold them. "I still got decent grades," he says. "But I didn't go back for my [sophomore] year."

Prison, death or insanity

Looking back over the last few years, Taylor recognizes he made one mistake after another. He joined the Marines, continued to use drugs, and was "booted out." He got married and divorced. He landed jobs and lost them. He committed crimes and went to jail. He even overdosed twice. "My life was leading me to prison, death or insanity," he says solemnly. "I was fringing on all three."

But while life was leading Taylor towards self-destruction, **God** was leading him toward hope, healing and a place where he could find the help he needed to reclaim his life. That place was City Gospel Mission, and Taylor came here through a connection of his dad's. "One day, I woke up [and] said, 'I need to fix myself.' I was broken. I had nothing left inside me to fight it anymore." Ready to give up, Taylor even called his dad and threatened

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans...to give you hope and a future."

—JEREMIAH 29:11, NIV



Taylor says, "I like the direction I'm headed in...I think God has a purpose for me to have a positive effect on others."

to "walk." But his wise father refused to enable his son, and urged him to stick it out. Ashamed and discouraged, Taylor finally put it all in God's hands. And the healing began.

On March 3rd, Taylor graduated from the Exodus program, and is now making plans to go back to college and major in business management. "I can honestly say I love who I am... I like the direction I'm headed in," he says. "I think God has a purpose for me to have a positive effect on others." At first, Taylor was headed for destruction...now he's headed for hope!

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A personal word from the President



It's hard to find words to express my gratitude for your support of City Gospel Mission—especially during the summer months,

when giving typically drops despite the continuing needs of those we serve. The ongoing support, heartfelt prayers, and volunteered time of friends like you enable us to give people hope. And hope has the power to change lives. *Thank you!*

“Every success God gives us is directly related to the generous gifts and earnest prayers of friends like you.”

As we all know, there's no vacation from hunger and homelessness. That's why the doors of City Gospel Mission remain open 365 days a year. We couldn't do this without your help. You may not realize the difference you make, but we do. You help feed people who are hungry. You help provide shelter and comfortable beds for people who have no homes. You help provide *many* programs and services

that transform lives. And your example of Christlike love encourages people whose hearts and lives are broken.

As our partner in ministry, you're helping to make our community a better place. That's why we want to keep you well-informed about everything that happens here at the Mission. There's a lot going on this summer—events and opportunities you'll want to get involved in to help keep our doors open and our programs and services running. You can read all about them in this newsletter. Your support of these events will help turn a season of challenge into a Summer of Hope! Thank you, and may God bless you.

Roger Howell
President

Never underestimate...

The Power of One

Many people believe that the small amount they have to give isn't enough to make a difference. But never underestimate the power of **one!** For example, think about this: It only takes \$1.79 to give one man, woman or child a hot, nutritious meal at the Mission. That means if every person in our community gave just \$1 to the Mission, we would have enough to feed all our guests for more than two years!

A single dollar has the power to help—but even more importantly, one person can make a huge difference in the lives of the hurting and homeless. Consider setting a fundraising goal and rallying your friends, co-workers, and family to help the homeless. You'll be surprised when the gifts start adding up because of your efforts. We are continually amazed and humbled by the innovative fundraising efforts of City Gospel Mission supporters. And it all starts with a single person.

Every dollar given, every hour of donated time, every prayer...whatever you can give makes a difference!



conGRADulations!

On March 3, 2011, City Gospel Mission held its fifth semi-annual Graduation Banquet! The event, hosted by College Hill Presbyterian Church here in Cincinnati, was attended by over 100 guests who joined with City Gospel Mission staff to celebrate the success of seven men who have completed the Exodus Program—William Harder, Ed Neil, Dustin Trentman, Rick Deaton, Steve Rippey, Mike Tolbert and Taylor Luessen. The festivities included a delicious, banquet-style meal prepared by our chef Jay Boys, followed by fun and fellowship with the guests who came to applaud and encourage our grads.

Please join us in congratulating and praying for these men as they move forward with their lives. We are very proud of them and will continue to support them in their commitment to sobriety. City Gospel Mission hopes to have an equally blessed event and turnout for the fall graduates of the Exodus program. Stay tuned!



"I felt like I was truly a part of something."

Ed was about 11 years old when he took his first drink. At 14, his drinking was out of hand. He always thought that drinking was about "trying to be part of something." But now he realizes he used alcohol to "suppress things." Things like childhood molestation. To escape the pain, he partied his way through high school.

After his teens, Ed managed to drink and function for a long time. He worked as a cook, and seemed to be holding things together—until he lost his job in January 2010. Ed sank into a depression and drank himself to the point of alcohol poisoning. Scared and discouraged, Ed called his mother, who put her son in touch with someone who used to work at City Gospel Mission. "He talked to me about the program," recalls Ed.

"At first, I was really reluctant. I didn't want to give up being in the world for a year. But *I really wanted the help* and I surrendered."

Open arms

From the moment Ed walked through our doors, he knew this was where he was supposed to be. "I was welcomed with open arms," he says. "For the first time in my life, I felt like I was truly a part of something...that's the feeling I've had the whole time I've been here."

Today Ed is making plans to go to trade school and learn carpentry. "Since high school, I always wanted to be a carpenter," he says. "But...my biggest thing is I'd like to help eradicate homelessness." By staying involved here at the Mission, Ed hopes to make a difference for other people. And he realizes he needs to "stay connected to this program" to hold himself accountable to sobriety. "You get out of this program what you put into it," says Ed. "I'm proof that this program works!"



Ed (front left) says, "I feel I'm prepared to go back into the world, but I know I have to stay connected to this program."

UNSUNG HEROES

She's here every Tuesday and Thursday morning, serving breakfast to the homeless with a kind heart and a warm smile. A psychology major at UC, 24-year-old Cary is a busy young lady. But she learned a long time ago that getting involved and giving back is, as she says, "the ultimate way to feed your soul and lift your spirit." So she makes time...to make a difference.

Volunteering has been part of Cary's life since she was in sixth grade. But when she suffered the loss of someone she loved, she discovered how *personally* healing it can be to help others. "I had just finished reading *Same Kind of Different As Me*, by Ron Hall," she explains. "It's about a homeless man's journey, and how it is changed when he meets a couple who help him get off the streets and further his life with love, compassion and faith."

After reading the book, Cary was compelled to look into volunteering at City Gospel Mission. "Not only do

I get to give back to my community, but it has helped me in my own healing process," she says. "The two mornings I serve breakfast are the best days of my week."

They're great days for us, too. Thank you, Cary! We applaud your caring heart.

"The two mornings I serve breakfast are the best days of my week."

—Cary



**A WORD OF THANKS TO MEMBERS OF OUR...
LIFE AND HOPE CLUB**

Special friends deserve special recognition. That's why we would like to publicly thank the members of our Life and Hope Club who support our Mission with a generous gift every single month. Your faithful generosity provides so much! Things like nutritious meals for people who are hungry. Shelter for men who are homeless and desperate. And long-term programs that provide help and hope for those who want to put their lives back together. We're talking about new life... and it all starts with **you!**



Life and hope begins with faithful friends like **you!**

If you are not a member of the Life and Hope Club, we invite you to join your friends and neighbors who are making a difference month by month. As a Life and Hope monthly supporter, your gifts will help us respond quickly to every call for help. Your steadfast support will also help provide the stable funding we need to continue and expand this vital work. And if you join this special club now, we will be able to put your gifts to work immediately. To learn more about the many benefits of our Life and Hope Monthly Giving Club, call us at 513-345-1061. Bless you for caring!

FLYING PIG 2011 FOLLOW-UP!

On April 30 and May 1, over 140 runners and walkers participated in the Flying Pig Marathon. City Gospel Mission supporters, staff, participants, and volunteers went the distance to help bring awareness to the work of City Gospel Mission and to raise funds to enhance the physical, spiritual and mental well-being of the homeless, hurting and poor in Cincinnati. Thank you to all who helped with their time, gifts, and prayers. Through your support, you are providing help and hope for the men, women, and children we serve. If you'd like to learn more about City Gospel Mission's participation in the Flying Pig Marathon, please contact Jeannette Robinson at jrobinson@citygospelmission.org or call (513) 345-1028.



GOLF, ANYONE?

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2011 CITY GOSPEL MISSION GOLF OUTING!

Take a moment right now to mark your calendar and plan to join us on September 17, 2011 for a day of fun, food, fellowship and a round of golf on a championship course. Sound good? What makes it even better is that, while enjoying yourself immensely, you'll also help change the lives of hurting people in Greater Cincinnati.

So talk to your friends, get your foursome, and sign up today! You can register online at www.citygospelmission.org or contact Jeannette Robinson at jrobinson@citygospelmission.org or call (513) 345-1028.

And by the way...cart, meals, refreshments, and gifts, along with a chance to win prizes and awards are all included with your registration. You don't want to miss this great event!

*Thank you Cincinnati
Equitable Life Insurance
& Family Tree
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JUST A CLICK AWAY

It's a great feeling to help change a life. And it's really easy! Any time...day or night...type in www.citygospelmission.org and visit us online. You can read all about your support in action, check out what's new in our ministries, learn about upcoming events, and even help change lives today through your secure online gift. Your comments and suggestions are welcome! E-mail us at contact@citygospelmission.org.

COMPLETE MEALS, JUST \$1.79!

Yes, I'll help provide meals and the power of hope for hungry and homeless people this summer.

- Here's my gift of \$_____.
- Bill my credit card: VISA MC AMEX DISC

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