

TRANSFORMING LIVES  
IN FOUR AREAS:

 HOMELESS  
SERVICES

 TRANSFORMATIONAL  
RECOVERY

 EMPLOYMENT  
NETWORK

 YOUTH



CITY GOSPEL  
MISSION

Recovery and  
Employment  
Network grad  
Kendra: 'I have  
a job ... I'm an  
overcomer.'  
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# WINGS OF HOPE APRIL 2026

*Breaking the cycle of poverty and despair ... one life at a time*



Hello friend,

In this season of our Lord's resurrection, I simply want to share a perfectly fitting story, one about a former Princesses Ballet dancer who was baptized by our Ballet director Gordon Havens.

The girl had moved to Indiana, but she specifically had requested Gordon come to baptize her.

Here is what the young woman's mother shared on social media:

*"Today, I stood in awe as my brave, radiant, and deeply resilient daughter took one of the most sacred steps of her life – baptism.*

*But it wasn't just the baptism that touched my soul. It was who stood beside her in the water: a beloved elder who has become so much more than a teacher or pastor to her. Gordon stepped into her life during a time that was shadowed with challenges – when the light seemed dim and her heart was heavy.*

*In time, he became not only her ballet teacher, but also a spiritual guide and the grandfather figure she never expected but so dearly needed.*

*He helped her find something she didn't even know she was searching for: a personal relationship with Christ. He didn't push her; he simply lived a life that reflected God's grace. And she saw it. She felt it. And eventually, she followed it.*

*To see her step forward in faith ... was breathtaking. And to see this man, who has been a vessel of healing and hope, lower her into the water and raise her back up as a new creation in Christ ... words fail me.*

*God weaves the most unexpected and beautiful stories. I am forever grateful that ours includes this chapter, this day, this man, and this incredible daughter of mine."*

We praise God for how He uses ordinary relationships to do extraordinary things. And we thank you for making these extraordinary things happen in the lives of people every day through your generosity.

God bless you,

**DR. JONATHAN BROWN, PRESIDENT, CITY GOSPEL MISSION**



Gym manager Joe Loving (left) trains and ministers to the men from our shelter and men and women in our recovery program.

## Gym time: Strengthening bodies & faith

It's 11:30 a.m. on a Monday at the gym at City Gospel Mission's campus. The men in our transformational recovery program wrap up their workouts and update their notebooks with the day's accomplishments. They high-five and fist-bump with their "coach," Joe Loving.

The gym – formerly the Lord's Gym, which left the property years ago – operates weekday mornings under Joe's supervision. It serves three segments: Men in our shelter, men and women in our recovery program, and City Gospel Mission employees.

"The gym is such an important component to our ministry because it is a key to our holistic transformation process," Joe says. "We focus on achievable goals and holding participants accountable. Our slogan, 'One Win a Week,' is something we truly believe in, and when achieved it promotes confidence, sense of accomplishment and mindset of wanting to continually improve. I have seen a direct reflection of a participant's success in the gym carry over to their spiritual and mental well-being."

Joe is an independent contractor raising his own support since February 2024. The men and women regard him as an approachable and friendly coach, with his white hair and a very long whitish beard.

A key component to the gym ministry is that Joe is available for life coaching and discipleship.

"Participants become vulnerable and share their traumas and problems with me," Joe says. "I offer encouragement, support, and most important prayer for them during our meetings."

The gym was vital to Matt's success in the recovery program. He graduated in 2024.

"My life is a testimony to working out and physical fitness – what we do here in the gym translates to the work upstairs (in recovery)," said Matt when he was in the program.

Matt said God's presence was with him when he was working out and "teaches me things" during workouts about life and recovery.

"We have numerous success stories," Joe says, pointing out one man currently in recovery who could barely walk when he came to the program but who is now thriving by working out regularly. "We document each success and have over 100 names on the board of men and women breaking their personal records. The confidence snowballs as they see their improvement."

City Gospel Mission is unique in its treatment of the "body" in its holistic approach to recovery. An analysis of the Cincinnati area's residential treatment facilities shows an infrequent emphasis on this aspect of recovery.

"The gym also functions to help people build relationships and most important learn about Jesus Christ," Joe says. "It is not uncommon for past participants in both the shelter and recovery to continue using the facilities and building upon relationships they previously cultivated."

Thanks, Joe, for playing an important part in helping so many people better themselves!



# A PROMISE FULFILLED

The first tenants moved into our newest affordable housing initiative - The Promised Land, a major renovation of our former women's recovery program buildings. Now, up to 17 graduates of our program will have a beautiful place to call home.

**THANK YOU to all the donors and supporters who made this possible. You truly are breaking the cycle!**



This old, brittle bible written in German was found hidden in a space above a door during the renovation.



Laneen

*"It is a form of starting over again when I thought all was lost. My family and grandkids are excited for me as well. I graduated from the program and now get to move down the street and stay connected to this program. It's just a blessing."*



Cassandra

*"It means freedom and safety in numbers. It means happiness and well-being. It means being able to have some privacy, where I can be alone, but still be in the community and feel safe."*



Melody

*"What this means to me is freedom. A chance to be with my family and have my own place and to be out on my own again. It's been many years since I've had my own apartment, and I get to be in that place again. I'm looking forward to that."*



Emiellia

*"This, for me, means that I am unbound. I'm no longer bound to my past. I'm no longer on the streets. I'm in a safe place being restored and have freedom. I'm free. I'm free at last."*



## JEREMIAH: Out of the wilderness to find God and clarity

*“Having dedicated time to focus on God and spiritual growth is probably the most important thing in a person’s life.”*

Recovery program grad Jeremiah



The men sit shoulder to shoulder at the dinner table, the hum of conversation softening as the meal begins. One by one, they share what they’re grateful for. When it’s his turn, Jeremiah doesn’t hesitate.

“Daily, we do a gratitude testimony before dinner, where everybody goes around the circle and says what they’re grateful for. Without missing a day, my first ‘grateful’ is always I’m grateful for City Gospel and for the provisions that are being met. The donors making this possible is just mind blowing. This recovery program is just a life-saver.”

Not long ago, Jeremiah’s life looked very different.

For nearly two decades, he worked steadily in remodeling — skilled, self-reliant, and successful. But a pivotal season changed everything. What began as a spiritual journey — a months-long hike seeking God and clarity — took a difficult turn. A relationship led him into heavy drinking, and after two years, it ended abruptly. Stranded, with his belongings gone and his car failing, Jeremiah found himself spiraling into depression and addiction.

“I was a mess when I came in here. I was completely broken.”

Living out of his car and drinking to cope, he reached a breaking point. That’s when a friend suggested City Gospel Mission.

“The only thing I really knew was that something was impressing on me that this was the place to be.”

From day one, the Mission provided what he had lost — stability, structure, and care. Meals, a safe place to sleep, and a consistent schedule gave him the foundation he needed.

“Once you have all your basic needs met, it just frees your time and space in your mind to focus on other things like recovery ... to decompress and think clearly.”

Jeremiah began rebuilding spiritually and mentally. His faith deepened as he committed each morning to prayer and reflection.

“Having dedicated time to focus on God and spiritual growth is probably the most important thing in a person’s life. This place provides those times.”

In just months, Jeremiah experienced what he calls a “night and day” transformation. Clear-headed, focused, and grounded in faith, he began to see a future again.

He hasn’t forgotten what made that possible.

“I found God on a very deep level.”

**After this interview, Jeremiah graduated from the recovery program and moved into our transitional apartments in March. To every donor and volunteer who helped restore Jeremiah’s life and the lives of so many others, we gratefully say, “THANK YOU!”**



# A crowning moment for our Princesses

The girls in our Princesses Ballet program brought the house down at their signature performance - ToyMaker's Daughter - before big crowds for two nights at the Aronoff Center. THANK YOU to all attendees, volunteers, sponsors, and donors for building into the lives of these amazing girls!



**Funded Partner**

United Way is one of the supporters of City Gospel Mission Youth programs.



# Kendra: 'I have a job ... I'm an overcomer'



The first night Kendra arrived at City Gospel Mission, she didn't know if she had anything left to give – or if anyone believed she was worth saving. But as she lay down on a small twin bed, something unexpected happened.

"It was the most peace that I felt in months, if not years," she says.

That moment marked the beginning of a journey that would not only lead to sobriety, but to purpose – through the life-changing support of our Employment Network.

She first entered the recovery program in 2017 but left before graduating. When she returned, she came back ready to fight – for her life, her faith, and her future.

That's where the Employment Network became critical. Through job readiness training, mock interviews, and one-on-one coaching, Kendra began rebuilding something that addiction had taken from her: confidence and faith.

"I thought God gave up on me. I thought I used up all my chances, and I didn't think I was worth saving anymore. But Abe and City Gospel Mission never gave up on me."

Abe Woolfolk, who leads the Employment Network, became a steady voice in Kendra's life.

With support from Abe and the team, Kendra prepared for opportunities she never imagined.

"I hadn't had a real interview in like 20 years. Job readiness skills, interviewing skills, and mock interviews are an essential portion of the Employment Network's curriculum."

A breakthrough moment came during an Employment Network event, where she was introduced to a representative from The Christ Hospital.

"They offered me the job, and I just remember jumping up and down," she

says. "I was like, 'I have a job ... I'm an overcomer.' I got through some really hard things. I felt like God was restoring me."

Today, Kendra has worked for two years at St. Elizabeth Hospital in their substance abuse unit, helping others find the same hope she once thought was impossible.

"Through all the pain that I went through, through God, I found my purpose, and now I get to live it out every day."

"Thinking back to my very first night at City Gospel Mission, when I laid my head down on a pillow, if I could say one thing to the people who donated so I had a place to heal, I would just say, thank you for having the heart for people like me in recovery, trying to be better and find the Lord through their mess."

"And thank you for rescuing me."

"Thank you for giving me my life."

## EVENTS UPDATE

### Thank you supporters!

#### PRINCESS BALLET "TOYMAKER'S DAUGHTER"

**Diamond Sponsor:** Kings Electric

**Silver Sponsor:** The Bounty Fund

**Bronze Sponsor:** Don & Jill Daniel

**Partner Sponsors:** Hugh O'Donnell, Lexus

Pursuit of Potential, Minuteman Press Fairfield

**Patron Sponsors:** Dan Tarkington, Powernet, William & Laura Koontz

**GIK:** LaRosa's Pizza, David Slaughter Photography



## SAVE THE DATES

### NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

May 7, 8:30 am

The Well Church  
5550 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, 45237

We host one of the local National Day of Prayer events, where staff and guests pray for our country, state, and city. Leaders in local organizations will help lead the program. The public is invited to this free event. Lunch to follow.



SCAN TO RSVP

### GOLF OUTING

**Experience Sponsors:** Alpaugh Family Foundation, Kurt Friedmann

**Investor Sponsors:** Great American Insurance, Lou Meyer, Santos Auto

**Hole-in-one Sponsor + Hats:** Jeff Wyler Automotive

**Welcome Gift Sponsor:** Tim and Barbara Steff

**Golf Ball Sponsor:** Clippard Instrument Laboratory Inc.

**Clubhouse Sponsors:** John Gould & Jennifer Yeung

**Cart Sponsor:** Furniture Fair

**Lunch Sponsor:** PF Chang's

**Beverage Cart Sponsor:** ESS Inc.

**Photography Sponsors:** First Financial Bank and David Slaughter Photography

**Breakfast Sponsor:** Chick-fil-A

**Raffle Sponsor:** David Lange/Morgan Stanley

**Ice Cream Sponsor:** United Dairy Farmers

**Water Sponsor:** Alpine Valley Water

**Hole Sponsors:** Christian Blue Pages, First Financial Bank, Family Tree

Chiropractic, Don & Jill Daniel, New Creations, Scroggins Grear, MSA Designs



### ANNUAL GALA

May 19, 6 pm

Cincinnati Museum Center  
1301 Western Ave., Cincinnati, 45203

Join us for our annual gala as we celebrate a Night of Living Stories: Notes of Hope and Renewal. Tickets are \$125 each or \$1,250 for a table of 10. Event sponsors and table sponsors are needed.



SCAN TO RSVP

**QUESTIONS ABOUT EVENTS?**  
Contact Event Planner Jennifer Osborn at  
513-345-1045 or [josborn@citygospelmission.org](mailto:josborn@citygospelmission.org)

## YES! I'll provide food & care for those in need this spring

WILL YOU BECOME A **PARTNER IN HOPE** AND SUPPORT THE HOMELESS, HUNGRY & HURTING YEAR 'ROUND AS A MONTHLY GIVER?



I'm enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Make this donation monthly

Please allocate my gift to:

Where it's needed most  Homeless Services  Recovery  Jobs  Youth

I have included City Gospel Mission in my Will or Estate Plan.

Please send a FREE copy of "The Gift That Keeps on Blooming"

Bill my credit card:  VISA  MC  AMEX  DISCOVER

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To give by credit card online, visit [citygospelmission.org](http://citygospelmission.org) or by phone, call 513-345-1027.



## Thank You!

Please return this completed form with your donation. Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt for your records. **Please make sure your check is payable to: CITY GOSPEL MISSION**

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