

Changing lives

FortCollinsRescueMission.org December 2018

GIFTS OF THE SEASON



"So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

ROMANS 12:5 (ESV)

GIFTS OF THE SEASON

When people reflect on Christmas, they often mention faith, joy and family. And the responses don't change just because someone is experiencing homelessness. But for many of our homeless friends, the holidays can be a reminder of family they no longer see and of the tragedies they've encountered.

Keely, a program participant at Fort Collins Rescue Mission, talked about her experience at Christmas last year.

"Last Christmas, I remember it being extremely cold, and I was literally living outside—no family, no friends. I think a lot of people reflect on family this time of year, but for me, Christmas definitely hasn't been good."



THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, WE ASKED FELLOW STAFF AROUND THE OFFICE WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO THEM. HERE ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSES:

"It's a time to celebrate the birth of our Savior."

"It's about Jesus, warmth and joy."

"It's spending quality time with family."

"It's a time to be thankful and to serve others."



Darryl also shared his story.

"About ten years ago, my son died. He was nine years old. Before he died, I was 14 years sober, but when I lost him, I didn't know what to do, it was such a tragic feeling ... I started using again. I take Christmas a little harder than most people, and that's what I remember about last Christmas, and not just last Christmas, but every Christmas since he's passed. I've been sober for four years now, but even today, as Christmas approaches, I know I'll have that feeling of sadness."

Both Keely and Darryl are part of Fort Collins Rescue Mission's, Steps to Success program. Men and women who join Steps to Success are given a permanent bed, provided with avenues to find a job and taught life skills such as budgeting and time-management.

Perhaps most importantly, though, people enrolled in Steps to Success are provided with a community of support.

"This Christmas feels different," said Keely "I've accepted God back into my life, and I'm looking forward to waking up on Christmas morning and being sober. I'm looking forward to having a place to lay my head on Christmas Eve, and I know that there's people here for me every step of the way. I'm glad I'm here; I'm very blessed."

From the CEO



Dear Friends,

If you are like me, Christmas is a time of joy—remembering the Savior's birth, giving and receiving (everyone loves getting a present!), time with family and friends, and lots of good food! But for people experiencing homelessness,

Christmas can be one of the hardest times of year. It can be a sad time, often lonely and depressing. Many people who are staying with us, or just coming for a meal, do not have family that they can connect with; their Christmas may look far different than yours and mine.

I often hear people say, "Jesus is the reason for the season," which is so true! He gave us a great model of how to reach

out to the poor and needy, and He taught us to love one another as He loved us. Your gifts for this season are so appreciated. Please continue to remember our work here for Jesus as we reach out to the people we serve with the good news of the Savior this Christmas season. And for our guests at Fort Collins Rescue Mission ... we will be their family. We will be the ones who say, "Merry Christmas! We love you. We care for you. We want to serve you." This is our gift of the season to all those who are struggling with homelessness. And this is only made possible by your compassion, your financial gifts, volunteering, and of course, your prayers. Thank you!

Merry Christmas,

Brad Meuli
President/CEO

"I know I'll be thinking about my son," said Darryl. "But this Christmas, it's different. I'm reaching out for guidance, and I know I can rely on the staff here. **Once you're homeless, it's hard to climb out of it and you need help, and that's why I'm glad the Mission is here, especially on Christmas.** They give you a foundation to help you get out of homelessness, and I've grown in my faith."

At the Mission, we can't change people's previous experiences, a lot of which has been tainted with hurt, pain and loss. Not knowing where to turn, many of our homeless neighbors have attempted to cope with their hurt through drugs, which in turn leads to a life of seclusion and instability. But your donations help us provide a community of support and sobriety. And during the holidays, our community begins to feel a bit more like family.

"I just feel really cared for here," said Keely. Recently, after being enrolled in Steps to Success for nearly two months, Keely's dad was rushed to the hospital. "He's

the only family I have left. I was gone for nine days, just staying with him in the hospital. When I came back to the Mission, every single woman in Steps to Success gave me a hug and asked me about my dad and how I was doing. They had food for me and—it was just so meaningful, it was like family."

Our family wouldn't exist without you. Thank you for providing the people we serve with a way out of homelessness during the holiday season, and thanks for being a part of our family at Fort Collins Rescue Mission.



YOUR DONATIONS MATTER.

Giving today means that someone experiencing homelessness can find faith, joy, and family. Give the gift of a merry Christmas. Visit FortCollinsRescueMission.org/Donate.

We'd like to give a special shout out to **Blue Federal Credit Union!** In October, they sponsored Harvest Farm's Fall Festival and put on fun activities for kids.



Thanks for your partnership
Blue Federal Credit Union!

How You Help

October	YTD (fiscal year)
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Meals Provided



Nights of Shelter



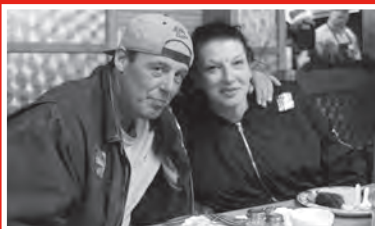
Chapel Attendance



Churches Involved



2018 Christmas Banquet



On **December 20**, we're inviting our guests to join us for live music and a special holiday meal. And after the music winds down and the food settles, guests will receive a Christmas gift!



Outreaches

Fort Collins Rescue Mission

Meals, overnight shelter and transitional services for men and women.

Harvest Farm

Long-term New Life rehabilitation program for men, farming and ranching operation, and Fall Festival.

Denver Rescue Mission

(Multiple locations in Denver) Meals, overnight shelter, daytime emergency services, health clinic, rehabilitation programs, family services, transitional programs and services, assistance for permanent housing, clothing and furniture distribution.



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