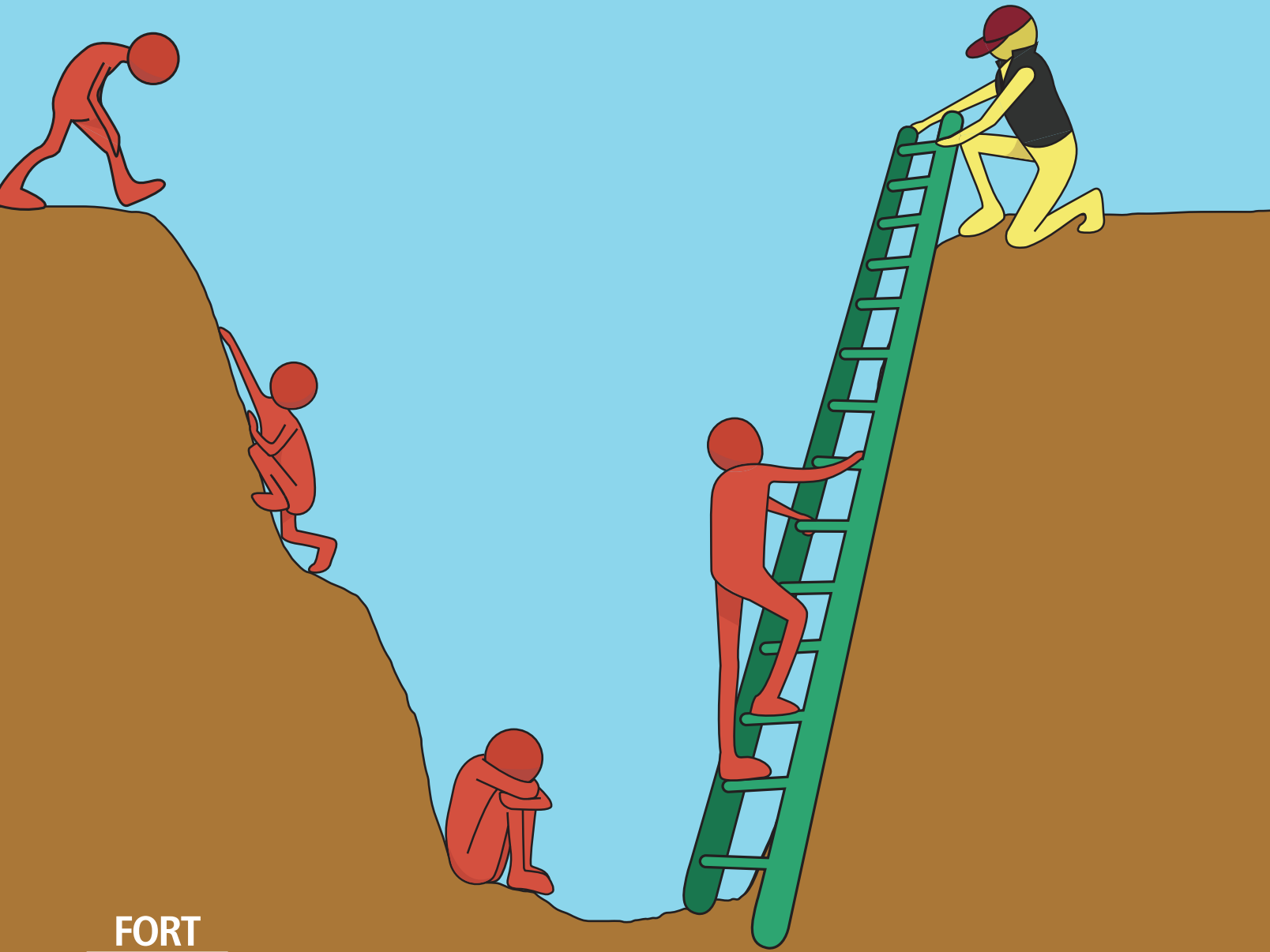


CHANGING LIVES

FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION & HARVEST FARM

THE TRUTH ABOUT RELAPSE

And the Importance of Community



**FORT
COLLINS
RESCUE
MISSION**

4 MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ADDICTION

NEW LIFE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT SHARES RELAPSE EXPERIENCE

Dear Friends,

In Philip Yancy's book, *What's So Amazing About Grace*, he tells a story of C.S. Lewis walking into a discussion regarding Christianity's contribution to world religions. His immediate reply was, "Grace." The more I experience in my life, in our society, and in how the world works, the more I find grace to be the truly difficult, revolutionary and redemptive core of God's love for us.

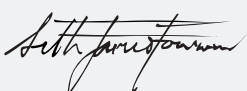
Grace is difficult because in our society we value hard work and celebrate excellence. In our families we teach our children to earn rewards and develop skills and character. Even in our churches we often look to the most functional, healthy and driven to lead, guide and model the Christian life. This is all well and good, yet I do want to carve out some room for grace.

In this newsletter you will read Chris' story and the reality of relapse in our work at Fort Collins Rescue Mission and Harvest Farm. I hope you connect with this on a personal level because it holds a deep truth—no matter how functional, healthy, productive, and excellent we are, we can never be perfect. Within this moment of imperfection is the good news of the gospel, where God is waiting to pour grace in to heal, restore and bless. It is true that at our very core we are more defined by God's grace than by any productivity or achievement. But it is also true that any relapse, failure, mistake, or sin we experience is totally and absolutely eclipsed by God's abundant grace!

Communities that embrace only excellence can become lean and competitive, casting the broken into the darkness. Communities that embrace God's true grace are planted in the soil of humility and forgiveness from which each individual grows to become better contributors and fulfill their God-given roles. From this grace comes excellence, health and productivity, yet let us never lose sight of God's work in all of our lives to accept us at our worst and love us into our best.

We all need places of grace where we encounter God's love for us just as we are without condition. Because of you, our generous donors, Fort Collins Rescue Mission is a refuge for many who have fallen out of other communities, and because of God's grace, they can be restored! Thank you for being a crucial part of our community of grace!

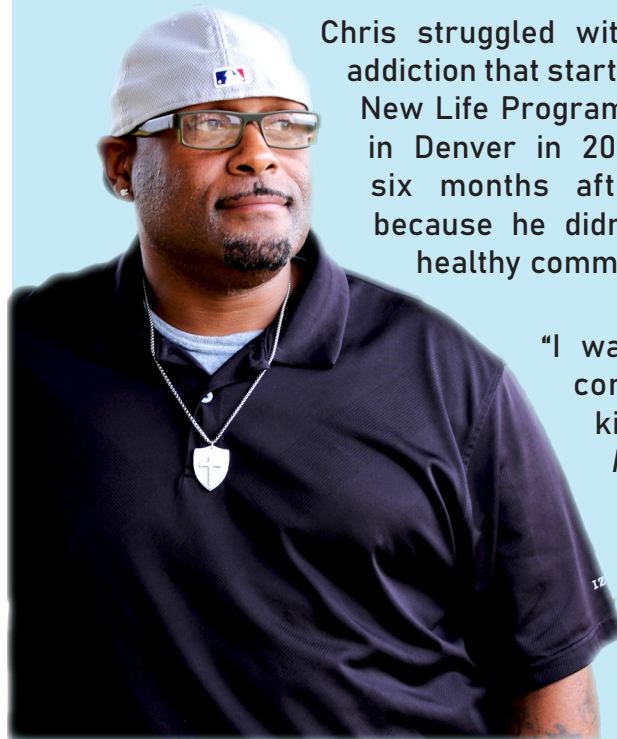
God bless,



Seth Forwood
Senior Director
Fort Collins Rescue Mission



Relapse Happens



Chris struggled with a methamphetamine addiction that started in 2004. He joined the New Life Program (NLP) at The Crossing in Denver in 2017 and relapsed about six months after graduating—largely because he didn't stay immersed in a healthy community.

"I wasn't working and was considered disabled. It kind of hit me, wow, I have nothing. At least that's what I was telling myself. I allowed that to be my truth.

There was no conscious thought of, I'm going to go out and use. It slowly progressed. I didn't have a community, and that gave way to everything. At first, I was telling myself that I'll just do it on the weekends. That's a lie that every addict will tell themselves. It turns into every day.

*I remember sitting in my room. You know how you can delete numbers from your phone? But then, oh wait, they're backed up to something else, like an email account. I found myself thinking about it, but then I was like, **don't do it. You got rid of those numbers for a reason.***

*After a couple of months of wrestling with that, I remember one day really looking hard for those numbers. Next thing I knew, I was reaching out. **And that's how it happened.***

In January 2021, Chris returned to the Mission and joined the NLP at Harvest Farm. Today, he is determined to maintain the relationships that will keep him accountable as he starts a new life of sobriety.

"[Harvest Farm] is an opportunity to refocus. When I got here, I was ready to allow God and other people to expose in me [things] I needed to get rid of. It's about finding what makes [you] tick and with intentionality building a community. I truly wanted to change the aspects of myself that I've never been able to change on my own."

THE TRUTH ABOUT RELAPSE

And the Importance of Community



Relapse is a harsh reality for many who come to us for help, but with the right coping mechanisms and a strong support system, it can be prevented. There are many misconceptions about relapse that place blame on an individual's lack of strength or desire to resist addiction, but that is often not the case. Below, we share four common misconceptions and the way the New Life Program (NLP) at Harvest Farm steps in to help participants prevent relapse in the future.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT RELAPSE:

1. Relapse is a sign of weakness or lack of willpower.

Many people view addiction as a moral failure instead of a behavioral health issue, but addiction is an ongoing disease that needs to be managed. According to the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, drug use increases the release of a chemical called dopamine. Over time, if dopamine is regularly present, the brain attempts to balance things out by producing less dopamine. At that point, the brain relies on substances to trigger the release of dopamine instead, which is when drugs and alcohol start to feel normal.*

2. Relapse happens out of the blue.

Usually, there are many indicators that an individual is falling into old patterns of behavior. Linda Elliott, a licensed professional clinical counselor who teaches recovery-based classes for the NLP, said the program helps participants learn from their last relapse. They write relapse prevention plans and come up with healthy alternatives. "If they can identify their triggers, they can identify what their state of mind was, and we help them connect the dots," she said.

3. There's a cure for addiction.

Addiction is chronic, and there is no cure.* "It's not a matter of *if* somebody's going to be triggered, it's a matter of *when*," Linda said. The NLP classes focus on four aspects of recovery: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. We stress the importance that participants need to be pro-active about self-care on all four of those levels.

4. Preventing relapse can happen alone.

Addiction is a disease of isolation, so we encourage participants to form a healthy community. Each participant works with a chaplain, case manager, counselor, and volunteer mentor and attends Bible studies and group counseling. "[We] help them learn to function in a community where there is no substance use," Linda said. "[After graduation], the people around them will be able to hold [them] accountable in a loving way."

*Source: HazeldenBettyFord.org

AT HARVEST FARM, WE BELIEVE ANYONE CAN BE FREED FROM THE BONDAGE OF ADDICTION.

In fact, 75 percent of New Life Program participants maintain sobriety one year after graduating. Help prevent relapse for Chris and so many others by giving today at FortCollinsRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

THE MISSION in my words




Bob Gregg

Bob Gregg has worked at Harvest Farm for more than 22 years as a chaplain and counselor. He has a bachelor's degree in pastoral theology from Bethany College in California and a master's degree in guidance and counseling from the University of Colorado Denver. Bob lives with his wife, Terri, and two dogs in Bellvue, Colorado.

Will you describe your role as a counselor at Harvest Farm?

I work to be a positive Christian role model and have a loving, caring and therapeutic relationship with the men God puts on my caseload. I work with them to deal with any pain, hurt, rejection, and trauma of the past and help them create peace in the present so they can look forward to the future with hope. This is done by rewriting a new script for a new life because the old ways have not worked. We do vision casting for their futures, where they see what their lives look like clean and sober. If *addiction* equals *loss*, then *recovery* equals *found*, so I encourage them to commit to the process of change and trust God with the results.

How do you support men who have relapsed and encourage them in their journeys of recovery?

I try to give them peace and [encourage them] to forgive themselves as God has forgiven them. Success is getting up one more time than you have fallen. I encourage them to accept the reality of what went wrong and find what they can do to correct that in this process of change. Many of the guys do relapse, but the key is asking, *what have I learned from it?* It is being committed to a lifelong process of recovery and realizing that there is spiritual warfare every day. Staying humble and cooperating with God and His word are critical in preventing relapse.

How have you seen Chris grow during his time in the program?

I have had 24 counseling sessions with Chris, and I think the key to his growth has been his spiritual walk. There needs to be an inner determination for success, and Chris has that. After eight and a half years of praying and working, Chris is now reconciling with his three children, and those are significant victories. Also, the first time Chris was at the Mission, he did not establish a healthy community. Now, he has a very strong community and a very solid Christian mentor. The opposite of addiction is community, so community support and accountability are critical in preventing relapse.

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LOCATIONS

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Meals, shelter and access to resources and services



Harvest Farm

Rural rehabilitation program near Fort Collins



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THOUGHTS?

Send your questions and comments to Newsletter@DenRescue.org.

DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



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