

CHANGING LIVES

FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION & HARVEST FARM



FROM BEING HELPED
TO HELPING

**FORT
COLLINS
RESCUE
MISSION**

YOU PROVIDE A PATH AWAY FROM ADDICTION

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH A COFFEE SHOP PASSIONATE ABOUT COMMUNITY

Dear Friends,

Recently my wife and I had the opportunity to support an 18-mile trail run in Northern Colorado. When I say support, I mean that we manned an aid station at the 12-mile mark, providing food and water as runners came off the rocky and steep trail. They were tired and sore, but so glad to see us. Just being able to cheer for them, (wild, loud cheering actually!), giving them something to eat and drink, and then encouraging them as they thought about the next six miles to complete the run, was all that they needed. If you have ever participated in any kind of organized race, you probably know exactly what I mean.

The path away from addiction is a difficult one, and to complete it, you need people who are willing to passionately cheer you on. You need people who know how to run an aid station and will stand next to you when you are exhausted. You need people to hold you up so you can stand, help you head in the right direction and wrap their arms around you saying, "lean on me."

That's what we do at Fort Collins Rescue Mission, Harvest Farm and our facilities in Denver—we are the people who God has sent to light the path away from addiction. We are very mindful this Christmas season that we cannot do this without you. As you enjoy Christmas this year with family and friends, I hope you will think of our staff and volunteers lighting the way with the light of Jesus for those who are addicted, who are experiencing homelessness and who need our help. Your partnership—your cheering as they run on the path away from addiction—is so appreciated. I have learned to never underestimate the power of those yelling encouragement!

Merry Christmas,



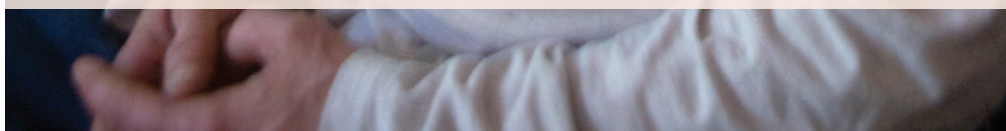
Brad Meuli
President/CEO



FROM BEING HELPED TO HELPING



When Brad moved to Colorado from Illinois 18 years ago, he thought he was escaping a life of addiction. However, addiction's grasp made it hard to escape the thought of I want more, I need more. When that desire for more led to serving years in prison, Brad realized his lifestyle needed to change.



Life in Illinois is a past that Brad never wants to go back to. He struggled with addiction to marijuana and cocaine to the point where he ended up living in fear, isolation and what he called, "a double life."

"I had a good job, but I was living a double life—I was doing cocaine and working at a restaurant," he said. "But I was struggling. I was on my own, divorced from my first wife, paying child support for four kids, and broke all the time."

When a friend invited him to go on a trip to Colorado, Brad decided to join, but ended up making a life-changing move. "I thought moving out here would get me away from the cocaine problem, but I just found a different drug—meth," he said.

Brad's battle with addiction led him to live in several places—behind bars, at a parole house and at Fort Collins Rescue Mission, where his life began to change for the better. "I came thinking, *I'm going to be stuck here, I'm not going to like it, it's just a shelter,*" he said. "But right away they welcomed me and were helpful with everything and anything that I needed."

Within a month or two, Brad began volunteering as a housekeeper at the Mission, working at a restaurant where he still works today and finding resources to help him with financial, mental health and addiction challenges.

"I was not expecting anybody do anything for me there," he said. "I hate asking for help, but after being there a

while, I knew that I could go to [the staff] and ask for help anytime I needed it. And that meant a lot to a guy coming out of prison."

Former program manager at the Mission, Paula Ordaz, made a significant impact on Brad. She saw his good spirit and willingness to give back to others give him purpose. "I think he gained confidence again and seemed more sure of himself, more like a person again," she said. "I think he also struggled with his faith, but it did grow in the time that I saw him."

"The Mission gave me something that I don't think anybody else could—from being helped to helping. Coming out of prison I've been looked at as a criminal, but [people at the Mission] don't treat you like that. I really enjoyed being a part of the community, being a part of something bigger than [myself]." —Brad

Faith has always been a part of Brad's life, even through his struggle with addiction. "I know God is always there for me and that He's behind all of this—the Mission, the people I interact with, my job. He's behind the scenes on everything," Brad said.

Now, Brad has been living in a house for about five months. "Once I was in a place [of my own], it made me be more responsible, be a better part of the community and want to do good, because I want to keep this place," he said, "My neighbors are nice people and this is a good neighborhood, and it's all because of the Mission helping me find it."

Once Brad gets off parole in about nine months, he hopes to go back to Illinois to visit his children and four grandchildren.

Although the road to recovery is not an easy one, he is grateful to the Mission for giving him the community, support and resources that he has truly needed. ■

"Thank you for your generosity and investment," Brad said. "There are people that are struggling out there that are really good people, and you are making sure that there's somebody there when people need help."

Extend a helping hand this holiday season by giving today at FortCollinsRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.



A CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY

Christmas at the Mission is a special time for our vulnerable neighbors to eat a warm meal, enjoy fellowship with others and feel love from those around them. Last Christmas, Brad volunteered in the kitchen and hopes he can volunteer again this year.

"We fed a lot of guys that day, it was a big turnout. I passed out gifts with food and candy in them. It was a good day," he said. "That was another day that I felt part of something, just being able to help somebody that needed help. All those years that I was isolating in my room doing drugs, it brought me away from that. That day I didn't even think about it."

THE MISSION in my words




Krista Smith

Krista Smith has worked at Human Bean, a locally owned drive thru coffee shop for 16 years. What started as a college job working as a barista, turned into managing two different locations and now, working as the assistant director of operations.

Will you describe Human Bean's partnership with Fort Collins Rescue Mission?

While coffee is where we start, we put our heart in our community, and the owners Frank & Kay Sherman are very passionate about Fort Collins Rescue Mission. The Human Bean has been hosting a baking item drive for many years now, and our management team has also volunteered to prepare and serve meals. We like to keep our donations local, and with the Mission so close to our North College shop, it just felt like a great fit.

What does it mean to you personally to get to partner with the Mission?

Working for a company that gives back SO much into our community has really opened my eyes. There are many different needs in our community, and when we can it is important to give back. You never know if you will be the one in need in the future. Everyone should have food resources and it is important as a community that we fulfill this need for others. The holidays specifically can be a really tough and lonely time for some. I hope to raise my two sons with the same will to give to others.

What is your favorite part about doing baking item drives at the Mission?

I love when The Human Bean hosts these drives! It's so convenient and easy for the public to be involved. It's always so awesome to see people come with bags and bags of items—our customers are seriously some of the most generous people. One year we baked cookies with the supplies we acquired, decorated them and then served them as dessert with dinner at the Mission. It was very cool to see the items we collected and baked into delicious cookies, serve those in our community.



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THOUGHTS?

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