

JULY 2022

CHANGING LIVES

FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION & HARVEST FARM



GET UP
& WALK

**FORT
COLLINS
RESCUE
MISSION**

HARVEST FARM GRADUATE SHARES STORY OF TRANSFORMATION

MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR PAULA ORDAZ

Dear Friends,

The road to recovery takes many steps—some are small, some are giant leaps and some require a “re-do.” Everyone has a different path, but the one step everyone must take if they desire to get out of homelessness or break free from addiction, is to have the courage and desire to change.

Here at Fort Collins Rescue Mission, staff have the privilege of encouraging men who are experiencing homelessness or struggling with addiction to seek change. As men come in for shelter and meals, we get to build relationships with each person. We meet them where they are, both physically and spiritually. We provide a safe place to sleep, hot showers, warm food to eat, and prayer for those who want it. When we see men who want a change, we connect them to our case manager and to other resources within the community. For those struggling with addiction, we encourage them to go to our recovery program at Harvest Farm.

“Getting up and walking” can be scary for some. We at Fort Collins Rescue Mission get to be the voice of Jesus and ask, “Do you want to get well?” We offer hope and encouragement and cheer the guys on when they take each small step toward self-sufficiency. And, if they fall, we are here to help them up and go at it again. When they’re ready to “get well,” we are here to help them “get up.”

In this month’s *Changing Lives* newsletter, Mike shares how he heard God calling him to “pick up his mat” and take the next step forward in his recovery walk. Thank you for partnering with Fort Collins Rescue Mission to support men like Mike by offering hope and encouragement to those who want to make positive changes in their lives.

God Bless,



Paula Ordaz
Director of Fort Collins
Rescue Mission



GET UP & WALK

John 5:3-9

“Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, He asked him, ‘Do you want to get well?’

‘Sir,’ the invalid replied, ‘I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.’

Then Jesus said to him, ‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.’ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.”

Mike felt like the man on the mat when he came to Fort Collins Rescue Mission. For 25 years, his life was a constant cycle of addiction, running away from God and having no hope for his future. But as soon as he began to seek God and accept support from the Mission, his life completely changed.

“It was three in the morning at the Mission, and with the little knowledge of God that I had, I started saying these little prayers: *God help me. I don’t have any purpose right now. No hope. Show me what You want me to do,*” Mike said. “In the Bible, there was a moment when Jesus said, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ I almost felt like I heard that in a sense and something just told me it’s going to work out.”

Mike heard about Harvest Farm first from his mother, who had prayed for his recovery for years, found the Farm’s New Life Program (NLP)

and encouraged him to go. He had been in the program twice before, but after the night on the streets that ended with him at the Mission’s shelter—when Mike felt God calling him to ‘pick up his mat’—he joined the program for the last time.

“I called [Program Coordinator] Ed Creecy and said, ‘I have to come back to the Farm. I’m going to get it this time.’

And it’s like he had hope where I didn’t even have hope in myself. He said, ‘I know you’re going to get it Mikey.’”

This time, Mike felt his life transforming. His life before was consumed with drinking, but at the Farm, he was consumed with



the Spirit. "I learned how to pray about things, be still and let the Spirit talk to me," he said. "I started listening at church, getting involved with other guests at the Farm and trying to be of service. It felt good to be a part of something."

Not only did he grow in his faith, but he learned new habits that he still applies to his life today, like how to be accountable and work effectively with others. "I'll always be grateful for the Farm. Without all the rules, I don't think I would be where I'm at today," he said. "As small as making your bed in the morning, if you can't do the small stuff, you can't do the big stuff."

During his time at the Farm, Mike got a job and began to save money for the first time in his life. He also attended Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), and one of the most impactful things he learned from his AA sponsor is that he's already forgiven. When Mike would come to him with shame and guilt about his past, his sponsor would remind him that **God has already forgiven him.**

Mike is grateful to God, not only for His forgiveness, but for the Farm and all the staff who never gave up on him. "I know it took me three times, but a lot of people that didn't give up on me, like Creecy, would speak life into me and not break me down," Mike said. "They didn't treat me any different and supported me 100 percent."

Now, three years sober and two years after graduating the program, Mike is married, a father to four daughters, a homeowner, working a job he loves, and is looking forward to giving back to others in the future.

Whether becoming an addictions counselor or sponsoring somebody in AA, Mike wants to give hope to those who are going through what he went through. He has already begun doing that by going back to the Farm and having conversations with the men in the program.

"I like to think I'm giving them some hope, but it helps me just as much to be able to do that," he said. **"I mean this is what it's all about—giving back what was given to you."** ■

Help men like Mike break free from the cycle of addiction and lean on God for hope for the future. Give today at FortCollinsRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

Scan to Give!



THE MISSION in my words




Kristy Neeley

Kristy is a wife and a homeschool mom of five. She currently helps run the outreach ministry in her church, which includes working with those facing homelessness. She is a big believer that everyone has a role to play and making yourself available to God will put you where you need to be to say "Yes" to whatever He brings your way!

What inspired you to get involved with Fort Collins Rescue Mission?

I was working to help run a soup kitchen somewhere else Sunday nights and I wanted more contact with [those experiencing homelessness], as I enjoyed getting to know them and sharing Jesus with them. I have been volunteering for about six years. I started back when there were chapel services and I loved going and offering prayer. I also would come out front where everyone was lined up, offering prayer and visiting with the guests of the Mission.

What do you do as a volunteer both at the Mission and Harvest Farm?

I have led Bible studies, served dinner, helped with chapel, visited with the guests, offered prayer and friendship, and picked guys up for church [with my husband] on Sunday. I run them all back after the service to the Mission and head back for the late service when my Harvest Farm friends come so I can encourage and pray for them. What a blessing it has been to see them growing in the Lord! I also lead a team from my church that serves dinner two times a week. I have so loved working in the kitchen, mostly because I love to get to know the guys.

What is one of your favorite memories from volunteering?

I love to share hope, love and friendship with people who don't know how valuable they are to the King. One of my best memories was on the side of the road in front of the Mission holding hands with an elderly Vietnam veteran who—with face lifted—was crying, calling out to the Creator for forgiveness and making peace with God as he knew he was near the end of his days. I haven't seen him lately and am so grateful we got to share that moment where he was able to make peace with his Maker. Getting to pray with people finding God's forgiveness for the first time is unforgettable and the inspiration to keep me coming!

How has volunteering at the Mission personally impacted you?

It has given me so much joy in loving on others and so much purpose knowing my time with these guys has eternal value for all involved. I have seen all kinds of things that have spiraled people into homelessness. Regardless of the cause, everyone is made in Christ's image and deserving of dignity and love. I love being a part of where God is moving and getting to be used by Him!

OUR CORE STRATEGIES



EMERGENCY SERVICES



REHABILITATION



TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LOCATIONS

**FORT
COLLINS
RESCUE
MISSION**

Meals, shelter and access to resources and services



Harvest Farm

Rural rehabilitation program near Fort Collins



**DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION**

Meals, shelter, emergency services, rehabilitation programs, family services, transitional programs and services, permanent housing assistance and clothing distribution



Volunteers With Us!



DENVER RESCUE MISSION
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