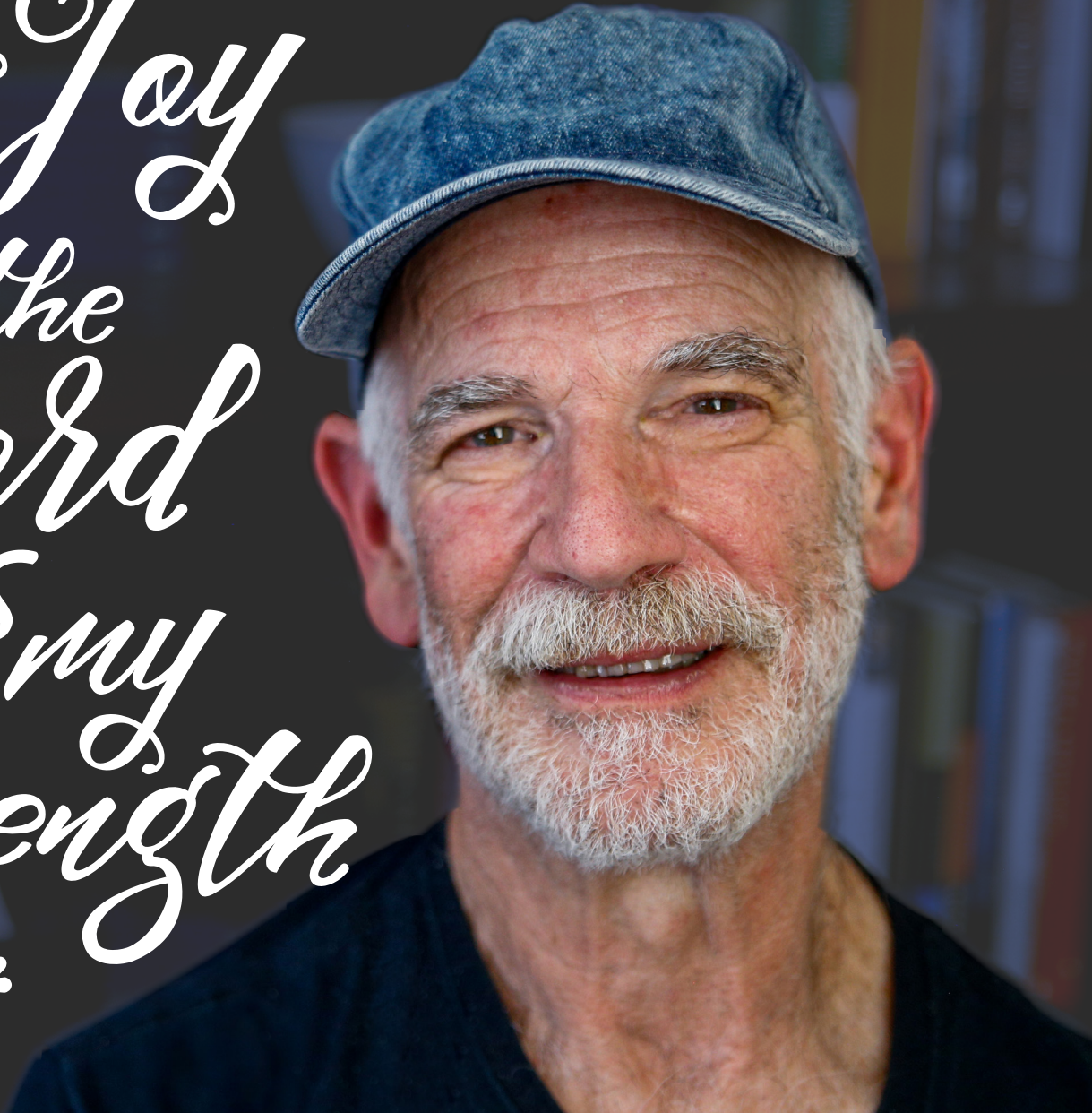


CHANGING LIVES

FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION & HARVEST FARM

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The Joy
of the
Lord
is my
Strength
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"Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always."

1 Chronicles 16:11

Dear Friends,

In a recent meeting, one person claimed that those experiencing homelessness in our community are "lost souls" and never change. I sympathized with him, yet I also disagree with his outlook because the time I have spent with the guests at Fort Collins Rescue Mission and the participants at Harvest Farm has shown me that these men can change. Stories like Gary's in this newsletter show me two things: 1) the road to recovery and healing is difficult and takes time, and 2) when given refuge and care, people CAN change!

I am much more comfortable saying that we all fit the description of "lost souls," and it is only because of the grace of God that we aren't left as lost souls. Thankfully, our work bridges both the reality that our guests and participants require for safety and security, and the eternal reality as we invite them to explore who Jesus is and what difference He makes in our lives.

I've always loved a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, which ends, "For Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not His, to the Father through the features of men's faces." We remain faithful in our work because we can find Christ in the most unexpected places including those we serve.

God has chosen to include us in His plans by calling you all as donors to support our work, by calling our staff to be the hands and feet of Christ and by the love of Christ being quickened in the hearts of those who arrive at our front doors. With your faithfulness and generous giving, we will continue to be a place where lost souls find Christ in ten thousand places.

God Bless,

Seth Forwood
Senior Director
Fort Collins Rescue Mission



Gary's identity used to be rooted in worldly things. When life took him through hardship, Gary's life was transformed as he instead found his identity in Christ. Now, his faith is the thing that brings him joy and gives him hope for his future.

For Gary, music has been a central part of his family life and his story. "There was always music in my house. My mom called it more like rock and roll banging," he said. "My background in music used to identify me. It doesn't anymore." For years Gary traveled all over the country working in restaurants, playing music and using drugs. "In the early seventies I was a pot head. Whatever that means to you, quadruple it," he said. "All day long, it was go to work, take a lunch break, smoke again, go back to work, and punch out at five. I lived that way for many years."

"Even though it broke me, it led me more to the cross."

Over time, drug use and time in prison wore on Gary, but God had a bigger plan for his life. Eventually, Gary met a fellow musician who showed him the love of Jesus. He invited Gary to live with him under two conditions: Gary had to study the Bible with him and stop using drugs. Gary did just that, and from that time forward, his identity was no longer solely based on the music he played and drugs he used, but in Christ.

His newfound relationship with Jesus did not eliminate future struggles in Gary's life. But through it all, one thing has stayed the same: "The joy of the Lord has been my strength."

Gary has not had permanent housing for the last 12 years, but God has provided shelter through places like Fort Collins Rescue Mission. God has healed him from past traumas and complicated relationships. And God has helped him realize that he is loved, and he is forgiven.

"God has blessed me in a lot of different ways," Gary said. "Sometimes you'll get a blessing, and you don't know why—it just happens. I'm not saying I'm righteous, but I'm forgiven."

"I'm not saying I'm righteous, but I'm forgiven."

Often, blessings come out of hardship. For Gary, some of his biggest blessings have come out of his time experiencing homelessness and the faith-based support he has received at the Mission.

Staying at the Mission surrounded him with a community of believers. Through attending Bible studies with other guests and going to church services with some of the volunteers, Gary's faith was strengthened.

"It's helped me keep my faith strong and helped me love a little more," he said. "I can't survive without being around other believers. This place has done a lot for me, and these people have treated me very lovely."



Standing firm in his faith, Gary can look toward the future with hope in his heart. With help from his case manager, he hopes to be in a place of his own in the coming months. But most of all, he is looking forward to the day he comes back to the Mission as a volunteer.

"I'm going to be here volunteering and helping the ones who helped me," Gary said. "Because this place is worth it." *



For many experiencing homelessness, the holidays can be a reminder of severed relationships, causing feelings of loneliness, grief or depression. That's why we find it so important every year to serve our guests at the Mission a traditional Christmas meal, with the hope that it will help them feel less alone.



"The holidays are very incredibly sorrowful. My birthday is three days after Christmas and the hardest part is just feeling very little love. But this year if I'm feeling down, I will most definitely go to the Christmas banquet at the Mission because it will cheer me up." -Gary

Help people like Gary find faithfulness in hardship this holiday season.
Give today at FortCollinsRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

Scan to Give!



THE MISSION in my words




Ben Parsons

Ben has worked for State Farm since 2002. His team loves helping people make smart insurance decisions to secure their financial future. Ben has also been a supporter of Fort Collins Rescue Mission for 10 years.

What initially inspired you to get involved with the Mission?

The Mission does a wonderful job of serving the homeless in our community and it's my pleasure to support them. My wife Lauren and I have a heart for the homeless and find that supporting the Mission is a great way for us to know that those in need are receiving help. We have been able to get a sense of how well this organization is run and how much they care for our community.

What are some of the ways you've served at the Mission?

My State Farm agency has done an annual food drive for about six or seven years around Thanksgiving to help provide food for all the guests. We've been there serving food as well and it's a lot of fun and a rewarding time. Then every December, my agency holds an annual drive where we collect clothing to donate. My wife Lauren and I also support the Mission with an annual financial gift.

Do you have any favorite memories from the times you've spent at the Mission?

Seeing the smiles on the guests' faces when we serve them food is very rewarding. Sometimes they are just down on their luck or have been dealt some bad cards, but deep down they are good people. The Mission does a great job of helping them get back on their feet and more importantly, find direction with employment and more.

WARM A HAND, WARM A HEART



GIVE THE GIFT OF WARMTH TO MEN
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.



WE ARE ACCEPTING DONATIONS OF GLOVES, WOOL SOCKS, THERMAL UNDERWEAR, BEANIES, JACKETS, AND BOOTS (NOT COWBOY) FROM THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 TO SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31.

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



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