

CHANGING LIVES

FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION & HARVEST FARM



By Grace Through Faith

FORT
COLLINS
RESCUE
MISSION

“ Jesus made it so that I can be who I am and still worship Him. ”

Dear Friends,

A friend and spiritual mentor of mine often reminds me: "God writes straight with crooked lines." I believe it is a quote from the Spanish medieval Christian author, St. Teresa of Avila.

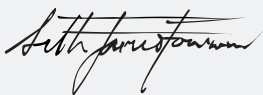
Kevin's story of finding a home for himself is a story of God writing straight even though the path to Him may include the crookedness of homelessness, addiction, loss, and loneliness. It's a story of finding a physical space of safety and belonging in a home, while also recognizing that ultimate safety and belonging are found in a loving God. It's a story of those whom God has redeemed, like our volunteer Randy, when he chose to follow in Jesus' footsteps, calling others to bring their messy, crooked lives to God.

Everyone has something to contribute even if all we can offer is our weakness and dependence—God can turn that into healing and grace. So we find that, day after day at Fort Collins Rescue Mission, our Father is integrating the generous gifts of donors, the tireless work of staff, the abundant investment of volunteers, and the humble witness of good men like Kevin into a story more than the sum of its parts: the story of a real God who came to be with us, die for us and rise again so we can rise again with Him.

To borrow a phrase from another Christian author, Wendell Berry, at Fort Collins Rescue Mission we, "Practice resurrection!" Thank you for all the ways that you may contribute so that we might practice resurrection at the Mission: prayer, financial contributions, volunteering, or advocating for the marginalized in your community.

I hope Kevin's story and this newsletter bless you this Easter!

God Bless,



Seth Forwood
Senior Director
Fort Collins Rescue Mission



By Grace Through Faith

After 20 years of struggling with addiction and homelessness, Kevin's newfound faith transformed his life. With help from the Mission, he is now in housing and, with Jesus by his side, is hopeful for his future.



Simply Surviving

Since the age of 14, Kevin has struggled with addiction. After a traumatic experience in his childhood, he turned to alcohol to cope with the pain. That later spiraled into consistent instability in housing and employment.

Kevin ended up getting arrested in 2002, and after being released from prison, he found himself with nothing—no place to live, and no job prospects—and falling back into his old patterns.

He lived with his grandmother until her passing in 2012 and spent the next 10 years experiencing some of the effects of homelessness—cold, hunger and loneliness.

While his days were spent struggling with alcoholism, his nights were spent sleeping on the streets with nothing but a sleeping bag, sleeping at friends' houses for short periods of time or taking shelter at Fort Collins Rescue Mission.

"The worst feeling is not having a place to stay," he said. "I would drink and, it's sad to say, but that would help me get through the night. It was rough. It's not something I got used to but accepted it and just had hope that it's got to get better than this. That's kind of what kept me going and wanting to succeed."

Fort Collins Rescue Mission not only provides men with shelter and meals but gives them the chance to grow in their faith.

Finding Faith

Wanting to make a change and feeling like he had nowhere else to go, Kevin went to the Mission. He not only received a permanent bed and warm meals, but experienced fellowship, a community and the love of Jesus like he never had before.

It was there that he really read and understood the Bible for the first time. He got connected to a church, and the Mission held weekly Bible studies led by volunteers from local churches, which gave Kevin the space he needed to grow in his relationship with God.

"I learned a lot from the volunteers who do the Bible studies. I would come to every one," he said. "It was a learning experience for me, and I really started to develop a relationship with Jesus. I started to realize what kind of a person He was and what kind of things He was doing for me."

One of the Bible study leaders, Randy, is a recovered alcoholic and has experienced homelessness for a brief period in his own life. His own experience allowed him to connect with Kevin and the other shelter guests on a deeper level.

"I remind them that Jesus sat with sinners, that's where He spent His time. And so, I would say, 'You're in good company because He's more than happy to accept you as you are,'" Randy said. "I try to encourage them that having faith in God is a good place to start learning how to overcome those difficult situations in life."

Kevin really appreciated the way Randy connected with him and offered to answer his questions even outside of their Bible studies.

"It's so refreshing and rewarding when you come across a person like Kevin, who's so willing to get a hold of the Bible," Randy said. "And then when you see the



success he's had to elevate himself, through dedication and hard work, that is about as heartwarming a feeling as you can get."

Housed & Hopeful

While living at the Mission, Kevin also found a job. The responsibility and meaningfulness of his work helped him stay away from drugs and alcohol and gave him the structure he needed. "My job kept me structurally sound, and it kept me on the right path of getting done what I needed to do," he said.

Kevin was also able to get an ID, save money, quit smoking, and even start his own small group with some of the other men at the shelter.

This past fall, Kevin got into housing through his parole program and is thankful to have his own space that he is comfortable in. He attends church regularly and is considering going back to school.

"My faith keeps my spirits up and it keeps me headed in the right direction of decision-making," he said. "My faith has grown so much that, regardless of the situation, I know that I'm going to be okay." ■

"It makes me want to do better for myself, and the Mission made that possible. It gave me structure and stability and made me realize I can do it." - Kevin

Give today to extend this opportunity for men like Kevin at FortCollinsRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.

Scan to Give!



THE MISSION in my words




Trina Markey

Trina has been volunteering regularly in the kitchen of Fort Collins Rescue Mission for a year and a half. She has worked for State Farm Insurance for 30 years and is married with two high school boys.

What inspired you to get involved with the Mission and volunteer multiple times a week?

My brother has gone in and out of homelessness. He is still with us because people who didn't know him were willing to step up and help. I wanted to be there to serve the hungry, just like those who helped my brother when he needed it most. The need is there and, selfishly, it feeds my soul to help others. It also allows me to get to know the guests and see them as they progress down their path.

Do you have a favorite memory from your time volunteering?

The meals are always amazing, but I will never forget the first time we served fried chicken while I was there. The kitchen was crazy with how much effort it took! The guests could tell how much love and care went into that meal for them too. It was such a vibe in the building that it was almost buzzing with hope and thankfulness.

As we reflect on the resurrection of Jesus this Easter, how have you seen the guests receive forgiveness and a second chance at the Mission?

I have seen so many of the guests grow while I have been there. Those who accept Jesus in their life are able to get beyond whatever they need to put behind them to make a new life. From simply praying before a meal to creating a prayer circle for someone in need, they know they have something to give in this life and that hope just keeps spreading.

In what ways has volunteering impacted your life?

Even if I am having a rough day, I know my volunteer time at the Mission will re-energize me and reinforce that even doing small things for others and giving hope is all you need to get by. It has made me want to do even more in my community. I feel such a connection with all of the guests.

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



Volunteer With Us!



Thank You Volunteers

You spent 6,119 hours serving in 2022

Volunteer Appreciation Month is here, and we are grateful for you!

DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



316 Jefferson Street • Fort Collins, CO 80524

970.224.4302

