The Prodigal’s Path

A Message from Union Gospel Mission Executive Director Jason Christensen

Making Heroes

“There’s a saying that “Rock bottom has built more heroes than privilege.”

Most of the men and women who come through our LifeChange program have experienced rock bottom in their lives. Whether it’s addiction, loss of job, an abusive spouse, houselessness, or abandonment by family, everyone who walks through those doors for the first time at Union Gospel Mission has experienced some form of trauma.

Their journeys aren’t easy. It takes a lot of work to get to the core of their trauma and unhealthy dependencies, but they’re able to do so in a supportive environment marked by accountability and love.

And they’re emerging heroes.

We see it in families, once broken, now reunited. Addictions overcome, living clean and sober lives. Employment and housing obtained, providing physical and financial security.

Here at Union Gospel Mission, we’ve been intentional in expanding mental health services to help our residents overcome the issues and emotions that prevent them from living fully productive lives. And thanks to our high impact volunteers who give of their time, talents, and treasures. We are sad to have lost such a great champion of our current campaign, The Journey Home, to a new home for women and children.

But more than that, the most powerful transformation we see in our residents is their new identity – an identity that is no longer rooted in their addiction or broken relationships, but an identity rooted in our loving redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The journeys aren’t easy. It takes a lot of work to get to the core of their trauma and unhealthy dependencies, but they’re able to do so in a supportive environment marked by accountability and love.

And they’re emerging heroes.

We see it in families, once broken, now reunited. Addictions overcome, living clean and sober lives. Employment and housing obtained, providing physical and financial security.

Here at Union Gospel Mission, we’ve been intentional in expanding mental health services to help our residents overcome the issues and emotions that prevent them from living fully productive lives. And thanks to our high impact volunteers who give of their time, talents, and treasures. We are sad to have lost such a great champion of our current campaign, The Journey Home, to a new home for women and children.

But more than that, the most powerful transformation we see in our residents is their new identity – an identity that is no longer rooted in their addiction or broken relationships, but an identity rooted in our loving redeemer, Jesus Christ.

This is the work of Union Gospel Mission: To help people move beyond their traumatic past and make a way in the wilderness (Isaiah 43:18-19). Through the love, grace, and resources provided by the Father and by you, our faithful supporters, we are helping people emerge heroes.

Thank you all for your support,

Jason Christensen

Heart of Hope Monthly Partner:

By becoming a Heart of Hope partner, you can make an even bigger impact in the community!

Reasons to join Heart of Hope

Reliable Income: Monthly giving helps provide stable support to vital Mission programs like meals, clothing, and addiction recovery. The Mission can more effectively plan with support the Mission can count on.

Reduced Administrative Costs: Heart of Hope members receive reduced mailings, with just occasional newsletters and one annual receipt each January, saving the Mission anywhere from 30% - 75% in mailing costs, this means more money goes straight to the ministry.

It’s convenient: With the automated Heart of Hope program, you don’t have to hassle with checks, envelopes, and stamps. Your gift comes automatically to the Mission each month.

By being a Heart of Hope Monthly Partner, you are taking a stand against poverty, addiction, and homelessness, joining what God is doing among our most vulnerable neighbors.

Monthly giving can be set up by calling 503-274-4483 or visit ugmportland.org/heart-of-hope

In Memoriam

It is with sad hearts that we share about the recent passing of one of the members of our board of directors, Hal Mackin. Hal joined the Union Gospel Mission board in June of 2019. He was a member of the Finance Committee and a champion of our current campaign, The Journey Home, to build a new home for women and children.

UGM is grateful for his service to those experiencing homelessness, addiction and abuse. The work of UGM is not possible without members of our community who give of their time, talents, and treasures. We are sad to have lost such a great man and are very grateful for the time he spent serving with us.

Thank you all for your support,

Jason Christensen

LIFECHANGE LETTER

is a publication of Union Gospel Mission
3 Mill Third Avenue | Portland, OR 97209 | 503-274-4483 | www.ugmportland.org

Executive Director Jason Christensen

A Message from Union Gospel Mission Executive Director Jason Christensen

Making Heroes

“There’s a saying that “Rock bottom has built more heroes than privilege.”

Most of the men and women who come through our LifeChange program have experienced rock bottom in their lives. Whether it’s addiction, loss of job, an abusive spouse, houselessness, or abandonment by family, everyone who walks through those doors for the first time at Union Gospel Mission has experienced some form of trauma.

Their journeys aren’t easy. It takes a lot of work to get to the core of their trauma and unhealthy dependencies, but they’re able to do so in a supportive environment marked by accountability and love.

And they’re emerging heroes.

We see it in families, once broken, now reunited. Addictions overcome, living clean and sober lives. Employment and housing obtained, providing physical and financial security.

Here at Union Gospel Mission, we’ve been intentional in expanding mental health services to help our residents overcome the issues and emotions that prevent them from living fully productive lives. And thanks to our high impact volunteers who give of their time, talents, and treasures. We are sad to have lost such a great champion of our current campaign, The Journey Home, to a new home for women and children.

But more than that, the most powerful transformation we see in our residents is their new identity – an identity that is no longer rooted in their addiction or broken relationships, but an identity rooted in our loving redeemer, Jesus Christ.

This is the work of Union Gospel Mission: To help people move beyond their traumatic past and make a way in the wilderness (Isaiah 43:18-19). Through the love, grace, and resources provided by the Father and by you, our faithful supporters, we are helping people emerge heroes.

Thank you all for your support,

Jason Christensen

Heart of Hope Monthly Partner:

By becoming a Heart of Hope partner, you can make an even bigger impact in the community!

Reasons to join Heart of Hope

Reliable Income: Monthly giving helps provide stable support to vital Mission programs like meals, clothing, and addiction recovery. The Mission can more effectively plan with support the Mission can count on.

Reduced Administrative Costs: Heart of Hope members receive reduced mailings, with just occasional newsletters and one annual receipt each January, saving the Mission anywhere from 30% - 75% in mailing costs, this means more money goes straight to the ministry.

It’s convenient: With the automated Heart of Hope program, you don’t have to hassle with checks, envelopes, and stamps. Your gift comes automatically to the Mission each month.

By being a Heart of Hope Monthly Partner, you are taking a stand against poverty, addiction, and homelessness, joining what God is doing among our most vulnerable neighbors.

Monthly giving can be set up by calling 503-274-4483 or visit ugmportland.org/heart-of-hope

In Memoriam

It is with sad hearts that we share about the recent passing of one of the members of our board of directors, Hal Mackin. Hal joined the Union Gospel Mission board in June of 2019. He was a member of the Finance Committee and a champion of our current campaign, The Journey Home, to build a new home for women and children.

UGM is grateful for his service to those experiencing homelessness, addiction and abuse. The work of UGM is not possible without members of our community who give of their time, talents, and treasures. We are sad to have lost such a great man and are very grateful for the time he spent serving with us.

Thank you all for your support,

Jason Christensen
Homeless Services: Dignity And Respect  Continued . . .

Serving meals helps build trust and relationships with people on the streets. Trust allows us to guide or coach them to get services that can help their situation or ultimately get them off the streets. “Our LifeChange residents take time to talk with and pray for our guests,” said Pete. “A lot of our residents come from the streets to they can easily relate to our homeless guests.”

As an extension of our downtown services, in 2016, Union Gospel Mission launched its Search + Rescue outreach. Five nights per week, the Search + Rescue van goes to homeless camps in the greater Portland area to provide basics, such as food, coffee, socks, and hygiene items. Search + Rescue rekindles hope by providing resources, consistent weekly contact, and prayer to people outside of the downtown hub.

Addiction is one of the biggest challenges facing the people on the streets. Addiction complicates the process of getting into stable housing from homelessness. Helping people get free from addiction requires trust, compassion and patience. “I love working with our folks downtown, when they come for food, clothing or a shower, they’re able to gain a little dignity and respect and their faces just light up,” says Pete.

We are all made in the likeness of God. UGM believes that every person has value and deserves dignity. Union Gospel Mission provides more than 190,000 meals a year to the homeless and people in need. In addition to basic needs UGM is home to LifeChange, a Christ-centered recovery program where residents live and work in a community of people committed to transforming their lives and breaking the grip of addiction. LifeChange consists of counseling, work therapy, discipleship and transitional after care, at no cost to the resident.

If you know of someone battling addiction or homelessness and they are interested in a LifeChange, then contact our Intake Coordinator at mensintake@ugmportland.org or call 503-274-4483.

VOLUNTEER / STAFF SPOTLIGHT: John Baily

“I love seeing them as a new creation in God. Graduations are very special here.”

John has been on staff at the Union Gospel Mission for over 10 years. He began as a volunteer on the main lobby phones when the Men’s Ministry Director noticed he had a heart for the men in recovery.

John was invited to join staff as a mentor/counselor for the men coming into recovery.

For the last 10 years, John has walked with each man coming into LifeChange and helped introduce them to a new life. He guides men into the first phase of LifeChange.

“When men come in from the streets, they are very toxic, they’ve been in and out of jail or living on the streets in addiction. We work with the men and get them, mental health counseling, surround them with prayer and introduce them to some churches. We help them to make better choices in their lives.”

“My favorite part of my job is seeing the room I’ve helped come into LifeChange graduate the program. I love seeing them as a new creation in God. Graduations are very special here.”

John says “Come on down to the Mission and volunteer; help serve food or volunteer on the phones, it will lift you up as much as the people you serve. Who knows, you might just end up here for 10 or 12 years.”

Save the Date

Union Gospel Mission’s Ladies Tea Fundraiser

14th of May, 2022

12 PM to 2 PM

The Embassy Suites

9000 SW Washington Square Rd Tigard, OR 97223

You’re invited to Union Gospel Mission’s Ladies Tea to benefit women and children escaping homelessness, addiction and abuse. Join us as we enjoy a light lunch along with delicious teas as we hear stories of radical transformation!

More info on how to register coming soon!