

# REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION

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NOVEMBER 2022



**“My life before the Mission was insanity. It was hopelessness.” – Jessica**

## Faith, Hope and Jesus

If you ask Jessica what God's been up to in her life since she left the Mission three years ago, she smiles and says, *“Oh gosh, He's showing off.”*

Jessica's life is so good, so blessed, she just can't believe how good it is. But it wasn't always that way.

*“Before Manna Home, I had gotten out of a relationship and didn't know who I was. I lost everything about me, my self-worth, and was completely just broken. . . Being by myself is when I turned to drugs and alcohol.”*

Jessica left her kids with her parents and continued to spiral out of control.

### A Glimmer of Hope

*“I was completely broken, completely lost, pretty much did not want to live. . . I found Redwood Gospel Mission. As I sat with Deborah (the Women's New Life Recovery Program Manager) and just saw hope for the first time ever in my life.”*

Jessica applied for the New Life Recovery Program at Manna Home and got in! Here she built. . . *(Continued inside. . .)*



Get involved at [srmmission.org/joy](https://www.srmmission.org/joy)

# Faith, Hope and Jesus

*(Continued from cover)*

... healthy relationships for the first time in her life.

*"It's also so crucial to your recovery, to your life, to have those kinds of relationships because we can't do it alone," she says. "I found a mentor who brought me to her church for the first time. ... I've never felt so peaceful, so uplifted, and so emotional all at the same time."*

## Real Healing. Real Change.

As Jessica gave her life to Jesus, she felt Him begin to heal her – and she got to experience the real joy of Christmas for the first time.

*"To have joy, and happiness and peace. That's exactly what the holiday felt like in Manna Home."*

Jessica was far enough in her recovery that it was also healthy for her to go and celebrate with her family for the day.

## Christmas Presence and Presents

*"I was able to go home for the first time and to actually be that person that was present and what God created me to be," she says. "I remember going home and being a part of my family, and seeing my children open their presents and being a part of that."*

From that first sober Christmas, Jessica's life has gotten better and better as God continues to blow her away with His love.

*"My life before the Mission was insanity. It was hopelessness. But today, I have hope, I have faith and I have Jesus."*

Jessica's faith has given her courage as she continues to build relationships and reconcile with family. She recently met her biological father for the first time, and has reconnected with her brother. She also now has full custody of one of her children and is working to get custody of the other two. And she's doing all that while reaching out and helping other women who are in the situation that she was in!

*"I wanted to give up over and over and over. I just remember being on my knees, crying out to the Lord and grabbing onto Him because it was literally what was my strength, what pulled me through." – Jessica*

**Each \$30.03 you give this Christmas can help someone like Jessica meet Jesus and begin walking in new life!**



# Help Without Hurting

Jeff Gilman  
Executive Director

**I love how compassionate our community is. We are truly blessed to be connected to so many generous individuals and churches!**

During the holiday season, when even more people feel God's stirring to reach out to the poor and needy, one of the questions I hear most often is, "how?"

"How do I love the people I encounter on the street?"

"How do I point them to Jesus?"

"How do I help them without enabling them to stay stuck in their current situation?"

"How do I not get sucked in to their circumstances?"

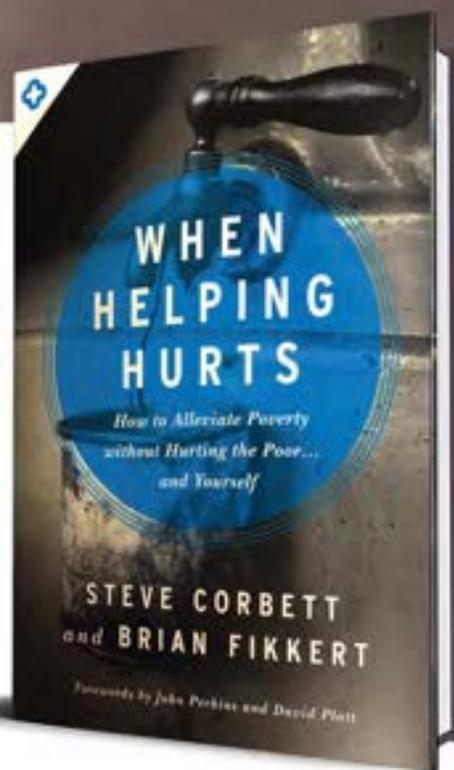
I love the thoughtfulness behind those questions. I believe they truly show the heart of God. And yet, the answer can be different for every situation. That's why we offer the Helping Without Hurting seminars. These seminars are available to any church in our area and are the best way we've found to educate a larger group of people about homelessness and the best ways to help.

## **Here's how the seminar works:**

1. Your church provides the space for a 1-day seminar and invites people to attend.
2. The Mission provides the video curriculum, a copy of the book, *When Helping Hurts* for every attendee, someone to help emcee and facilitate the program, as well as lunch.
3. Everyone walks away better equipped to help the people God places in their life in sustainable ways.

We'd love to bring *When Helping Hurts* to your church. Talk to your pastor and then give Rod Bowman a call at 707.578.1830 x 317 or email to [rbowman@srmission.org](mailto:rbowman@srmission.org) to schedule your church's seminar.

**Christmas and the New Year are both great times to get started!**



# Ways to Share Peace, Hope and

## The Joy of Walking Alongside Jessica

Karen met Jessica in 2018 when she volunteered to become her coach.

*"A coach comes along a woman and helps her to navigate life," Karen explains. "We go through curriculum and life issues together and help to look at things from God's perspective."*

As Jessica walked through the program, Karen was right alongside her.

*"I think for me it has been a joy to watch her heal, to see her grow closer in her walk with the Lord. . . it's transformed her life."*

Even though Jessica has graduated and moved on, she and Karen still stay connected as much as they can with Jessica's busy schedule.

*"I see that she's sharing her love for the Lord with others, and that is such a joy."*



*"The men and women were just so welcoming. And I realized that the pain I had gone through, God could use," Karen says about her experience the first time she volunteered at the Mission.*

In addition to serving as a coach, Karen has been a volunteer teacher at Manna Home since 2017 and she says there is always room for more volunteers in nearly every department at the Mission.

*"Bring your story, your pain, how God has healed you, and you get to share that hope with the women," she says. "You don't have to be a Bible scholar. I didn't go to Bible college. . . use what God has gifted you and bring it. Because everyone needs*

*what you have to offer. . . The blessings that you receive are far more than you offer."*

*To get find out more about volunteering or to sign up, contact Tina Karns at 707.578.1830 x 314 or tkarns@srmission.org.*

## Blessing Bags Put People on the Path of Real Change

Another great way to help homeless men and women that you encounter as you're out shopping this holiday season is by giving them a Blessing Bag. But before you can give it to them, you have to create them. Don't worry, they're easy and especially fun to do with kids.

Here's what to do:

Take a granola bar, a bottle of water and the Real Change Certificate that you can download from [srmission.org/realchange](http://srmission.org/realchange) and put them into a bag.

The next time you encounter a homeless person, give them the bag and tell them there's a hot meal waiting for them at the Mission. The certificate has a map on it to help them get here, and once they are here, we can help feed them and start building a relationship and find out which of our services will help them the most.



# Love this Christmas

## Christmas at the Mission

*"Christmas was always a big holiday in my family. So, coming off the street, estranged from my family for the first time in my life during the holiday season, I was very sad. The sadness was lifted from all the love I received from RGM and the volunteers during Christmas."*

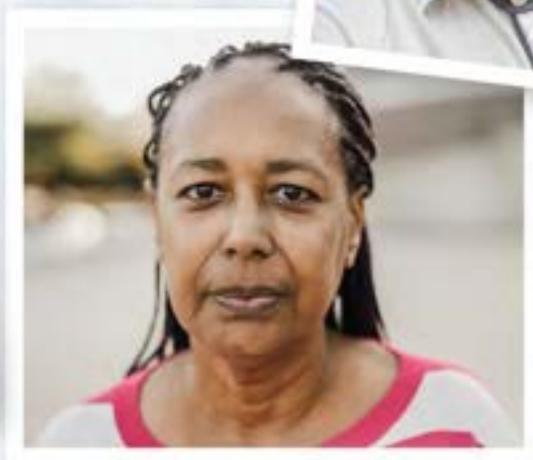
– Malikka, former Rose Guest, Manna Home Graduate, Volunteer and Staff

*"It's not just Christmas, it's the ladies there and what it has to offer if you open yourself to the Lord...if you look for love and the love of God it's there in spades for you...to me they act like every day is special and like Christmas."* – Alyce, Former Rose Guest

*"Christmas at the Rose was the most amazing experience. We were loaded with wonderful gifts and great food. It was the only Christmas I spent homeless where I felt like I was truly home for Christmas."*

– Liz, Former Rose Guest

*"I feel like I'm with family when I'm at the Mission on Christmas."* – Timothy, New Life Recovery Program Graduate



## Want to Make this Christmas Different?

We've all bought Christmas gifts we weren't thrilled about because we felt the pressure to just give someone something. It's a real challenge. Well, this year, you can try something different by shopping from Redwood Gospel Mission's Christmas Gift Catalog.

**Just visit [srmission.org/shop](http://srmission.org/shop) and select from six life-changing gifts that have up to 5x the impact!**



# Give New, Abundant Life this Christmas!

*"I owe my life to the New Life Recovery Program," Jessica says.*

This Christmas, so many of our poor and needy neighbor are right where Jessica once was.

They are all alone.  
They are trapped in despair.  
They are heading straight for death.

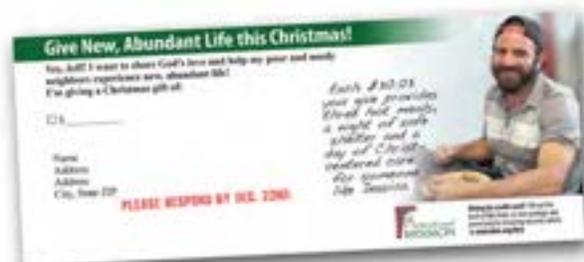
But together, we can offer them the gift of a new, abundant life!

**When you partner with the Redwood Gospel Mission, each \$30.03 you give this Christmas will provide three delicious meals, a night of safe shelter and essential care for one person.**

The day you give can be the first day someone is introduced to Jesus. Wouldn't that be the best Christmas gift of all?

*Please be sure to send your gift by Dec. 22nd to help in time for Christmas.*

*You can also give securely online at: [srmission.org/joy](http://srmission.org/joy)*



**Any amount you can give will make a difference!**



## Give a Legacy Gift at Christmas

If you're looking for another way to continue sharing God's love, consider remembering Redwood Gospel Mission in your will. Over the years, a number of faithful friends have left gifts to the Mission, and their impact on our poor and needy neighbors is still continuing!

**For more information on legacy giving, contact Jeff Gilman at 707.578.1830**



### REAL CHANGE

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