

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION



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The Gift of a Father

People have said a lot of amazing things about what God, through the Redwood Gospel Mission, has done for them. But one of the most beautiful statements ever uttered is Brandon's, who says, ***"The Mission gave me a father."***

But the Mission didn't only give him a father. Because the Mission gave him a father, Brandon himself met Jesus – and so did his mom. And now, Brandon and his wife lead worship every Sunday for the young adults ministry at their church.

The transformation started over 20 years ago, with Brandon's stepfather, Ken.

Back in the 1990s

Ken's life had been devastated by addiction. But by God's grace, he came to the Mission and went through our New Life Recovery Program, where he met Jesus!

At the time, he didn't even know Brandon existed.

(Continued inside)

"I can honestly say that I would not be here if it weren't for the Lord. My mom, I guarantee if you ask her, she'd say the same thing. My dad would definitely agree." – Brandon



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The Gift of a Father

(Continued from cover)

"It just shows how the Lord restores what the world eats away and what the enemy tries to take away from you." – Brandon

But, after graduating, while living in new life, Ken met Brandon's mom. She was struggling as a single parent. But Ken wasn't scared away. Instead, he dove in. They married.

"With all of the baggage that me and my mom came with, my dad took it in stride and kind of worked with us, and really just became the father that I needed and the spiritual head that I needed," says Brandon.

By the time Brandon was ten, he and his mom had accepted Jesus, too!

The Young Boy at Chapel

Each month, Ken came back to the Mission for chapel services, and he brought Brandon with him.

"My first initial experience with the Mission was just

watching my dad share his testimony for a chapel service," Brandon says. "Then he started forming a band, and I was super into music growing up, and that really, just naturally became a part of that band and started playing at the Mission every month."

"Chapel services definitely played a huge part in just giving me an opportunity to share what God was doing with me," Brandon explains.

A Living Testimony

"I felt like I was a testimony being in there just because this guy who had been through the Mission now has a son who wants to also reach people, like his dad. That in turn creates this just overarching helping people, and then those people that were helped, help other people. And it's this cycle that just keeps going. It doesn't stop."

Your Easter gift of any amount can transform another life, and another, and another . . . and another!



My Favorite Movie

Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

Brandon's story reminds me of a scene in what I consider to be the greatest movie ever made, *The Princess Bride*.

Do you remember when Inigo Montoya is battling with the six-fingered man? He's been seeking him for years, wanting to avenge his father's death. At the start of the scene, he says this famous line,

"Hello, my name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

The six-fingered man pleads with him, saying he will give him anything, will do anything if he will spare his life.

Inigo's response isn't what I'd call appropriate language, but his sentiment is powerful. Essentially, he says, there is nothing in all the world you can offer me, because I want my father back and I can't have that.

Now I'm not advocating for revenge, but what I am saying – with tears in my eyes – is this: Fathers are **THAT** important. Family is **THAT** important. And because of the Mission, Brandon has a father. And if Brandon and his wife have kids, they will have a father. And all around the country, there are men and women who are mothers and fathers because of what God did through their life at the Mission.

There is nothing more beautiful to me than generational change like that. Sometimes I can't believe that you and I get to be a part of it!

Happy Easter! Not only do we have a father who loves us so much He sent His only Son to rescue us, we get to share His love so that fathers and mothers are restored to their children.

If you want to see what the start of that looks like, we'd love to have you join us as a volunteer for our Easter Feast on Sunday, April 9th.



More Family Ripple Effect

Melinda's uncle met Jesus through the Mission nearly 30 years ago.

"When he came to know the Lord, he wanted to help my dad and my mom get out of their rut," she says. "He extended all of his resources and exposed us to the Lord."

Melinda's mom came to Manna Home and both she and Melinda's father met Jesus! Melinda and her younger sister did too! They've all been walking with Him and connected to the Mission since.

After graduating, Melinda's mom took a job working with the women and children here. Even after she moved to a different job, their family connection to the Mission stayed strong.

"My dad did jail ministries and would mentor the men downtown. My brother-in-law, Max, runs the coffee program," Melinda says.

And now, Melinda has stepped into the same role her uncle once had – she's the manager of our Thrift Store! The ripple effect is amazing, and it's continuing!



A whole new family legacy started from what God used friends like you to do in Melinda's uncle's life 40 years ago!

How Transformation Grows

It started here over 30 years ago

Melinda's uncle comes to the Mission, gets sober and meets Jesus.

He shares the Gospel with Melinda's parents.

Melinda and her sister meet Jesus.

Melinda's mom comes to the Mission. She and Melinda's dad both meet Jesus.

Melinda's four children meet Jesus. Melinda's brother-in-law works at the Mission.

Melinda works at the Mission.

God's love and the Gospel continue to spread – from now into eternity.

Each of these people has impacted lives outside of their family.

The Center for Hope



"The seed is definitely being planted up here and the culture is starting to change. It's beautiful seeing lives changed and transformed. That's what it's about! And being the hands and feet of Jesus." – Karla

Karla Brown, Site Director, stands in front of the Center For Hope in Ukiah.

Beyond Mission Walls: Ukiah

Transformation starts at the Mission, but as Brandon and Melinda's stories show, it doesn't end there. It continues and continues.

But now, God in His goodness has allowed us to expand where our ministry happens. Our Ukiah day center, The Center for Hope, is seeing lives change in incredible ways!

"We're open Monday through Friday," Karla Brown, Site Director of The Center for Hope, says. "Our doors open at 7:00am and we close at 9:30pm. . . .Our guests come through the door at 7:00 and they're able to have a warm place to sit and get a warm cup of coffee. We have worship music going on. We have showers. We have a clothing room. We provide a warm meal, which every meal that we have is provided by volunteers here in Ukiah. And the other thing that we also have is we have street medicine weekly.

"We also have volunteers that are out with the guests just developing relationships and talking and praying

with them. . . a different pastor that comes each day and shares the word of God as they sit down to have their meal."

The center also just started Bible studies for both men and women who are homeless.

Already some of the guests from the center have gotten connected to other programs at our Sonoma County location, including a few people who have joined the New Life Program!

We're thrilled by what God is doing and excited that we are in talks to expand even farther in the future. We're in negotiations to expand south into Rohnert Park and Petaluma. Be on the lookout for more exciting news!



Men and women come in every day to receive nutritious meals.

To see lives change with your own eyes, consider volunteering at any of our locations!



Only God knows how many generations will be impacted by the next person who comes to faith through the Mission. But, in His generosity, He invites us to be a part of it!

Transform More Lives!



A single pebble tossed into a lake doesn't just cause one ripple – it creates a ripple effect that goes on and on.

The same thing happens with transformed lives. Think of the disciples. Their lives were changed when they encountered the risen Lord and they went on to tell others, who told others, who told others and now we know Jesus and get to tell others about Him, too!

But while ripples in water stop when they reach the shore, transformation in Jesus never does! It's a ripple that never stops!

And you can be a part of it by "tossing the first pebble" by giving an Easter gift.

Each \$30.03 you give this Easter will provide one person with three hot meals, a night of safe shelter and a day of Christ-centered care that can lead to a new life for someone like Brandon's dad or Melinda's uncle.

The people you reach will never be the same – and neither will their families. Once someone encounters the risen Jesus and recognizes what He's done for them, they are never the same!

Please send your gift by April 5th to help in time for Easter.



You can also give securely online at: srmission.org/newlife

A Legacy of Transformation



If you're looking for another way to continue sharing God's love so that more lives and families are transformed, 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



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