

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSIONS

FALL 2024



INSIDE:

- Deep Distress Needs Deep Healing
- Eating Well Leads to Living Well
- The New Kitchen is Open – Just in Time for Holiday Meals!
- Caring for the Whole Person
- Up and Running Again
- Food is the Foundation

Alone. Dying. Desperate.

When Wayne came to the Mission, he was on death's door.

He'd just gotten out of the ICU, where he'd been on dialysis for kidney failure. His communication with his family was broken. They were frustrated with his drug use and not managing his type 1 diabetes.

With nowhere else to go except the streets, he came to the Mission to recover.

Recovery is More Than Sobriety

But Wayne didn't just recover. Instead, he began living a new, healthy life.

For years Wayne had been in and out of the hospital since he couldn't manage his diabetes because of his drinking, which started when he was young.

"My dad committed suicide when I was age seven," Wayne says. "It was like a switch clicked, like a light switch, and I turned off every emotion except one, and that was anger."

But Wayne didn't act out on his anger towards others. Instead, he kept it locked up inside and ...

Continues inside.

"The benefits of the health plans that we have with the Redwood Gospel Mission mean so much in recovery because bad food equals feeling bad."
– Wayne



Alone. Dying. Desperate.

(Continued from cover...)

"I got to the mission at 350 pounds. I was unable to tie my shoes without being out of breath, barely able to walk up the stairs to join the program and on a variety of heart medications, diagnosed with chronic heart failure. During my time at the Mission, I lost 50 pounds." – Wayne

... tried to wash it away with alcohol.

"At age 12, I began drinking alcohol out of my parents' liquor cabinet," he says.

Three years later, his family kicked him out. For the next 38 years, Wayne battled the life-controlling effects of alcohol and meth while neglecting his diabetes. He was in and out of the hospital at least 10 times until he came to the Mission.

A New Way to Live

Here at the Mission, he learned about health from every angle: body, mind and spirit. After 12 months, he was a new man. Not only is he sober, but his body has healed. On his last checkup, his kidneys showed no signs of damage!

"Before I graduated the program, my doctors took me off the last blood pressure medication. I was on five blood pressure medications, and now I'm on zero. And they did tests and they said to me, 'You were diagnosed with chronic heart failure.' They said, 'We no longer see that in your test results.'"

Those dramatic changes happened because of our focus on health and wellness, including nutritious meals, portion control and teaching people what it means to steward your body out of love for God.

If it weren't for the Mission and friends like you, Wayne wouldn't be as healthy as he is today. He might not even be alive.

"Having to be able to take insulin to survive, I think homelessness would've killed me," he says. "I'm so thankful for the Mission."

Feed a Neighbor in Need and Change a Life!

Each \$2.02 you give today will provide a healthy, nutritious meal for someone else in need.



Deep Distress Needs Deep Healing

Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

When I was reading Psalm 31 recently, I was struck by how many of the words David uses apply to the homeless men and women who come to the Mission.

Take verse 9 for example: "Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also."

Everyone who comes to the Mission feels that kind of deep distress. They feel it in their body, mind and soul. And helping them fully heal and become who they were created to be can't happen in a vacuum.

It can't only be about meals or shelter. It can't only be about mental or spiritual health. It can't only be about physical well-being. It has to be about all of it. And this special edition newsletter is a celebration of all the ways

God is using the generosity of friends like you to heal people.

It often starts with meals because that's what first brings people to our doors. But it can't stop there. It can never stop there.

There is far too much more to life, and we believe that God wants everyone to have life and have it to the fullest. Thanks to you, they are. Stories like Wayne's or Mike's, which is on page 7, are beautiful examples of that.

I look forward to seeing how many lives God uses you to change this holiday season!



Eating Well Leads to Living Well

Several years ago, one of our volunteers, Karen, who is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, saw that our New Life Program was missing nutrition education.

"I'm a Certified Health Coach as well, so I could see that where we were addressing life-controlling issues, food can be especially tricky. We needed to nourish, but there's a point where it becomes an addiction in itself," she says.

With Karen's guidance, we adjusted what we served and focused more on nutrient-dense foods. We cut foods that can be particularly addictive, including overly processed dishes that are high in sugar, fat and salt. And Karen started teaching a nutrition class as part of our New Life Program.

It's all a part of helping people become the healthiest version of themselves, just as we believe God intends.

"We're helping people take ownership and showing them that they are in the driver's seat of their health," Karen explains. "It's saying, 'Lord, I surrender it all. I want to care for this vessel that houses the Holy Spirit.'"

Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us, Karen. You've helped change the way we feed people – and the way we feed ourselves.



Karen is a volunteer Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

We serve fresh fruit at breakfast and fresh vegetables, salad and fruit at lunch and dinner. Being intentional about what we serve at meals teaches our guests to be intentional about what they eat.



The New Kitchen is Open – Just in Time for Holiday Meals!



We have been blessed by God and generous friends like you with a much-needed, brand-new kitchen at the Men's Mission.

This renovation has been in process for six months, and we officially opened the doors on July 8. Because we were able to enlarge the kitchen and make it more productive and functional, we now do all our meal preparations in one place and then transport meals to our other locations, like Manna Home, the Rose and Ukiah.

As usual, God's timing is perfect, as we're up and running just in time for the busy fall and holiday meal season. It's going to be a real asset for this year's Great Thanksgiving Banquet on November 27.

Our old kitchen, where we prepared more than 4,392,700 meals, was built in 1971.



We have been blessed by God and generous friends like you with a much-needed, brand-new kitchen to serve all our ministry locations.



Ernie, our food service manager says, "The new kitchen is AMAZING! We can cook so much more food. We can feed so many more people!"

Caring for the Whole Person



The Soul-Healing Power of Therapy

Joy, a licensed therapist with Fourth Street Christian Therapists, began volunteering at Manna Home in 2015. After teaching several classes, she asked if it would be helpful for her to also offer therapy.

That was the start of an amazing partnership that now includes five licensed therapists who work one-on-one and in group settings with people going through our New Life Program.

"It's not just religious principles or adding a scripture verse here or there in our therapy. It's really looking at a person's identity," Joy says.

"I think there's something really special about having it all overlap and being able to, in our therapy sessions, talk about recovery, talk about mental health, talk



about the spiritual issues and have all of that come together into one place for a very holistic healing," Jeremey, another therapist, adds.

We agree. Since having onsite therapists who are specially trained, we've seen an amazing shift in the mental health of our guests.

A Medical Focus on Wellness

When he retired from medicine, Dr. Stephen began volunteering at the Mission. That's when he noticed how sick some of the men and women coming off the streets were.

He knew with his background in family medicine and nutrition, he and his wife, a teacher, could come up with a curriculum that would be a blessing to the Mission. They did, and it has!

The program focuses on every aspect of life – mind, body and spirit – and is based on an acronym for WELLNESS.

W: Water	N: Nutrition
E: Exercise	E: Environment
L: Light	S: Sleep and Sabbath
L: Laughter	S: Support and Service

"It's more than just adopting a healthy diet and getting onto an exercise program," Dr. Stephen says. "It really is a change in the way you think... If you don't change the way you think, then it's really hard to change the behavior from old patterns. It's about developing a biblical mindset."



Dr. Stephen and Maria have been financial supporters and volunteers of the Mission for 25 years. They launched their Wellness Program here in 2022.

Dr. Stephen and Maria have made the program available to guests and Mission staff, and people are loving it! They feel better, have more energy, have gained (or lost) the weight they needed to and are healthier in all aspects of life.

You can find out more about their program offerings at: www.cranetransformationcoaching.com

Up and Running Again



Up and Running Again is a non-profit organization dedicated to training homeless individuals living in rescue missions to complete half marathons.

They are a great ministry partner in helping men and women in our New Life Program, like Mike, regain their health, strength and confidence.

"Before coming to the Mission, my life was basically a big bowl of vodka," he says. "I woke up to it, and I went to bed to it, and it was bad."

Thankfully, Mike came to the Mission and joined our New Life Program. That's when he heard about Up and Running Again.

"I was at a point in my life where either I was going to make this program, or I was going to die, so I needed it. I needed to run. Everything fell into place for me there," he says. "The running really helped me. It helped me stay focused."

While in the New Life Program, Mike ran five half marathons in 10 months. He graduated in 2024, restored his relationship with his wife and now they run together!

"It definitely changed my life," Mike says. "It gave me confidence again that I could start something and finish something. . . It was pretty special."



Mike, left, with running mates.

"Thank you, Redwood Gospel Mission, for allowing me to become the person I'm supposed to be in Christ."

– Mike, New Life Graduate and Up and Running Again participant

If you would like to discuss how you can be a part of this program, contact Tina Karns at tkarns@rgm.org.

Is God Calling You to Serve?



You may have noticed that Karen, Joy and Dr. Stephen all started out as volunteer teachers at the Mission.

While they were serving, God showed them how they could use their unique training and talents to help make a bigger impact. And now they are!

Their stories are an example of how, when you follow God's call to serve, amazing things happen.

As we get ready for our Great Thanksgiving Banquet on November 27th, we have hundreds of volunteer opportunities. If you're interested in helping serve there – or have a unique talent or training you'd like to use at the Mission – contact Tina Karns at **707.578.1830 x 314** or tkarns@rgm.org.



Volunteer opportunities for Thanksgiving start October 22nd!

You can also find out more about volunteering at:
rgm.org/volunteer

Food is the Foundation



No one comes to the Mission on a winning streak.

By the time someone comes to us, they are desperate.

They need food, but not just any food.

They need healthy, nourishing food.

Then, and only then, can their bodies and minds begin to heal. Then, and only then, can they really see clearly. Then, and only then, can they begin to take steps to change their life.

And that's what we all want for them, isn't it?

Because the Mission runs 100% on donations, the life-changing meals given to all 4,000 people who come to the Great Thanksgiving Banquet are provided by friends like you.

Will you help by sending a gift today?

Every meal – every dollar – makes a difference!

\$2.02 is enough to provide a high-quality, nourishing meal to one person!



Give Life-Changing \$2.02 Meals

Yes, Jeff! I will help provide meals for my poor and needy neighbors. I'm sending a key partner gift of:

☐ _____ to help as much as possible.
☐ I'd like to volunteer.
 Contact me at: _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State ZIP _____

A key partner gift of \$202 helps provide 100 meals! Please respond by Nov. 24th.



Redwood Gospel Missions
 10000 1st St. N. Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0493
 Phone: 707.578.1830 Fax: 707.578.4841
 www.rgm.org

You can also give securely online at rgm.org/fall

Let Your Passion Live On



It can be hard to think about what life will look like after you're gone, but you can make sure that your passion for helping others continues! By naming the ministries you are passionate about in your will – like Redwood Gospel Missions – you can know that you'll continue changing lives.



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



REAL CHANGE

is the newsletter of Redwood Gospel Missions
 PO Box 493, Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0493
 T: 707.578.1830 | F: 707.578.4841
rgm.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin P. O'Malley, President
 Richard Pedersen, Vice President
 Judy Bowhall, Secretary
 Gary Bel, Treasurer

Dave Edmonds

John Adams
 Judy Samson
 James Mortensen
 Todd Felciano
 Maria Letwinch

