

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSIONS



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Life Doesn't Change **on** **an Empty** **Stomach**

Since the 1990s, Mary has struggled to find stable housing. Even with a steady job, she couldn't afford rent anywhere in the area.

She's couch surfed.

She's stayed in shelters.

She's slept in her car.


The Pain of Hunger

"You're already worried about not having no place to stay. Then you ain't got no food to eat and then you're stressed out," Mary says.

But when she came to the Mission and friends like you made sure she got hot meals, those worries began to fade.

"It was great. You don't have to worry about food because they feed you," she says. "I've been there many times. I ate lunch over there many a times. You guys have been providing – God's been providing – for a very, very long time."

(Continues inside)



Even one meal can be the start of a changed life. *"I realized there's got to be a better life for me,"* Mary says.

Life Doesn't Change **on an Empty Stomach**

*"I thank everybody
who supported me
and been on my
journey here."*

— Mary



(Continued from cover...)

The love that went into those meals kept Mary coming back. She enrolled in our Transitional Saving Program. She vividly remembers how the Thanksgiving meal friends like you provided made her feel.

"It normalizes stuff," she remembers. "It doesn't feel like, 'Okay, you're at a shelter, so there's no Thanksgiving.'"

Since then, Mary has found her footing and been able to establish a new life for herself.

The Power of Meals

"When I was there and they were feeding us and I was able to save money," she says. "And then I was able to break that cycle of being homeless, and it was a good feeling... That was my goal, to go to the shelter, find

some housing, get stable."

Each meal friends like you provided helped make that possible!

Today, Mary has a full-time job working at the Front Desk at our new Family Campus and is focused on helping others encounter Jesus and get the help they need to move off the streets.

Blessed to Bless Others

It's come full circle – Mary is now working and caring for women in her new position. She wants to help other people that are homeless.

Mary knows her life wouldn't be possible without the generosity of partners like you.



***Each \$2.02 you give this Thanksgiving
can change another life!***

I Will Say it Again: Rejoice!



Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

As I look ahead to Thanksgiving, I kept thinking about the apostle Paul and his incredible attitude of gratefulness.

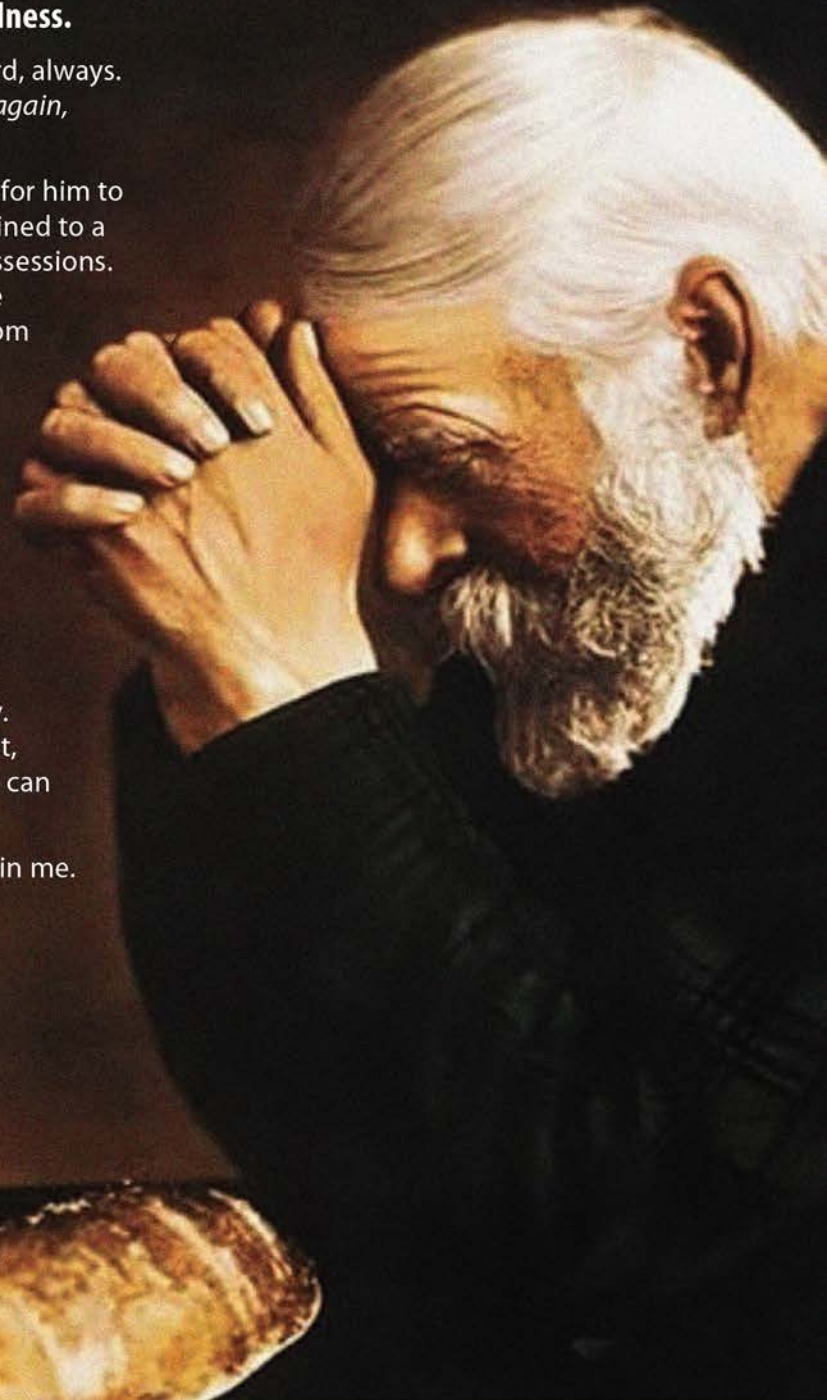
In Philippians 4, he encourages us to rejoice in the Lord, always. He's so emphatic about it he says it twice. *"I will say it again, rejoice!"*

Many people might think that those were easy words for him to write, but the truth is, he wrote them while in jail, chained to a wall. He had been persecuted. He had no material possessions. He didn't know if he would live or die. Yet, none of the hardships he was facing were enough to deter him from giving thanks.

Every year at the Banquet, I see that same kind of gratitude. Most of the people who come to us have struggles that could far outweigh the gift of a hot meal. But our guests don't focus on those things. Instead, they are overcome with gratitude so infectious that it changes how I look at my life.

All too often, I get caught up in grumbling about the little things that aren't going my way. But I don't have to do that! I can be free of complaining and negativity. Instead of getting caught up on what's not going right, I can focus on the daily gifts that God provides – and I can rejoice again.

I hope to do that all season long, and I invite you to join me.



Why David Keeps Coming Back



David first volunteered at the Mission with his parents when he was just a kid.

"I was probably around eight years old or nine years old," he says.

Now 30, David, the associate Pastor at Hessel Church Santa Rosa, has lost count of how many events he's helped at, and we can't imagine doing the Great Thanksgiving Banquet without him and his church family.



David

"We've done booths and we've also been doing the chapel. We've done the worship for, I don't know, seven years now, I think."

But it's not just tradition that keeps David helping. It's because every year he sees lives transformed.

"I think the biggest impact is being able to see people receive Christ," David says. "It's great, because it gives the opportunity for us to connect with people that we probably would've never connected with and being able to share the Gospel with them."

Several families David met at the banquet now attend and serve at his church!

"Some of them were searching and some of them were just not believers, and it gave an open door," he says.

David and his church already have plans to help at this year's banquet – but with 600 different volunteer opportunities, there's plenty of space for you, too!

"I encourage anybody and everyone to participate or be part of it," he says.

If you're interested in volunteering, mark your reply form or contact Tina Karns: 707.578.1830 x314 or volunteer@rgm.org.



"I think it's always been a great event to be able to reach the community," he says.



David organizes the worship team for all 10 of our chapel services during the Great Thanksgiving Banquet. He and his church also host a carnival-style booth.

The Great Thanksgiving Banquet



600 Volunteer Opportunities

When: Wednesday, November 26th

Where: Sonoma County Fairgrounds

This year's Great Thanksgiving Banquet will be on November 26th. In addition to an incredible feast, there will also be dental and medical care, haircuts, a winter coat giveaway, children's activities, face-painting, a Gospel message and more!

With so much going on, there are plenty of ways for you to get involved.

We have opportunities for 600 volunteers, including welcoming guests, serving meals, cleaning up, helping at different stations and many more.

"I would encourage anybody that is thinking about serving to go and serve because I think they're not going to regret it," David, who has been volunteering for well over a decade, says.

If you're interested in volunteering, mark your reply form or contact Tina Karns: 707.578.1830 x314 or volunteer@rgm.org.



Sign Your Thanksgiving Coat Tags!



At our Great Thanksgiving Banquet, we often see men and women who have nothing to wear but a stained t-shirt or fraying sweatshirt. They can't afford a hot meal, let alone warm clothing to help them survive the fall and winter.

So, in addition to serving up hot meals at the banquet, we give away winter coats. This year we hope to give away 2,500 winter coats, and we want each one to have a special Coat Tag signed by a friend like you.

You'll find your Coat Tags included with this newsletter. Just sign and return them when you send your gift – by Nov. 24th!



Give Thanksgiving Meals!

For \$2.02 you could buy a small soda, one and a half candy bars, or a single serving bag of chips.

Or you could provide a life-changing Thanksgiving meal for someone in need, like Mary.

"Not getting a holiday meal makes you just not feel whole," Mary says. "Just thinking about it makes me want to cry."

Not only will each \$2.02 meal you give help someone feel like their life matters, but it will also demonstrate God's love and can put someone on the path to a relationship with Him, and a whole new life!

Most of the thousands of people who will come to the Great Thanksgiving Banquet have nowhere else to go to get a holiday meal, which means every meal you give will make a difference.

To help in time, please respond by Nov. 24th!

Just \$2.02 is enough to feed one person!

When you send your gift, please include your signed Coat Tags!

Give Thanksgiving Meals

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

- ☐ \$_____ to help as much as possible.
- ☐ My signed coat tags are enclosed.
- ☐ 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.



Giving by credit card? Fill out the back of this form, or use postage and, providing to donating securely online at rgm.org/fall

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



The Great Thanksgiving Banquet, when we'll serve 5,000 people, is the Mission's biggest meal – and biggest outreach event – of the year. It's only possible because of the generosity of friends like you. Each \$2.02 provides one meal!

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 ministries in your will that you are passionate about – 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

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