

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSIONS



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Sometimes One Meal Can Change Everything

Years before Gene ever needed Redwood Gospel Missions, he volunteered at our Great Thanksgiving Banquet.

He served meals, pitched in wherever he was needed and watched neighbors enjoy a warm holiday meal surrounded by kindness and compassion.

He never imagined that, one day, he would return through those same doors looking for help himself.

After years of battling alcoholism, Gene's life had fallen apart. The successful businessman who had once built companies and traveled on corporate jets found himself overwhelmed by addiction, guilt and shame.

Guilt, Shame and Vodka

"I was struggling just to exist," he says. "I was digging my own grave with a shovel made of guilt, shame and vodka."

(Continues inside)

"I was lost..." – Gene



Meals and the Transforming Power of HOPE

(Continued from cover...)

***"Before the Mission,
I lived in fear..." – Gene***



With nowhere else to turn, Gene entered the Mission's Men's New Life Program.

He arrived believing his best days were behind him.

Instead, they were just beginning.

Gene expected a recovery program.

Instead, he found hope.

"I surrendered and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior," he says. "Since then, I experience every day the unexplainable peace that is knowing God."

Little by little, the fear that had defined his life gave way to something he thought he had lost forever.

The End of Fear and Hopelessness

"Before the Mission, I lived in fear and I was hopeless," Gene says. "Now I have no fear and I have more hope than I could have ever imagined."

That hope transformed everything.

Today, Gene has rebuilt his business. He manages a Christ-centered sober living home, teaches job skills to men in the New Life Program, volunteers at the Mission and has started a nonprofit that drills water wells in rural Africa.

Every Year, He Comes Back to Serve

"I think the Great Thanksgiving Banquet sets the table for the whole year," Gene says. "My prayer is that more people would become involved and understand just how impactful the Mission is."

Your gift helps provide a wonderful Thanksgiving meal for neighbors who have nowhere else to go. But every meal also offers something harder to measure.

It offers a place where someone can encounter God's love.

It offers hope to someone who believes there isn't any left.

Sometimes, as Gene's story shows, that's where an entirely new life begins.

"Thank you. You changed my life."



Each \$2.02 Thanksgiving meal you provide could become someone's first step toward real change.

My Favorite “Rescue Mission” Bible Passage



Jeff Gilman
Executive Director

After all these years, I’m surprised I’ve never written you about my favorite Rescue Mission passage in the Bible.

It’s Psalm 107, and it begins with these words:
“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

Keep reading that Psalm, and you’ll discover why I love it so much.

It tells the stories of people who were lost and homeless, hungry and thirsty. People trapped by the consequences of their own choices. People who cried

out to God in their distress.

And God rescued them: *“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress,”* (Verse 6).

Every Thanksgiving, I see those same stories unfolding at our Great Thanksgiving Banquet. Men, women and families who are struggling come through our doors looking for a meal, encouragement and hope. Many are crying out to God, whether they realize it or not.

That’s why we gather each Thanksgiving.

We give thanks because God is good. Then, together, we become part of His answer for neighbors who are hungry, hurting and searching for hope.

Thank you for your part in God’s rescue.



Sometimes You Find Your Place by Showing Up



When Bev first started volunteering with Redwood Gospel Missions, she wasn't looking for a leadership role.

She simply wanted to help.

Bev had supported the Mission for several years before she began volunteering. With a professional culinary background, she was a natural fit to work in the kitchen. But that didn't mean she immediately felt like she belonged.

"I was intimidated the first couple of times," she remembers.

She kept coming back anyway.

From Volunteer to Family

Over the years, that changed.

The unfamiliar faces became friends. The Mission became a community. And Bev, who once described herself as "just a cog in the wheel," gradually found herself leading.

Today, she oversees the food line at our Great Thanksgiving Banquet, coordinating several teams of volunteers and helping keep thousands of meals moving from the kitchen to the guests.

She never planned on becoming a leader.

"I know that I'm helping people. It's God using my talents," she says. "I didn't set out to be a lead."

For Bev, that is part of what makes volunteering so meaningful. You arrive to give something of yourself, then discover that God may have something for you there, too.

There Is a Place for You

Bev sees it every Thanksgiving.

Some people serve meals. Others greet guests, hand out coats or help wherever someone needs them. Different people bring different abilities.

What matters most is showing up.



***"Jump in. Jump in somewhere and you'll find your place."* — Bev**

"Everybody's got their own talents and skills," Bev says. "There's definitely a place."

That is her invitation to anyone wondering whether they belong at our Great Thanksgiving Banquet.

You do not have to know exactly where you fit before you come.

Sometimes you find your place simply by showing up.

Ready to volunteer? Mark the box on your reply form or contact Tina Karns at 707.578.1830 x314 or volunteer@rgm.org.

Our Great Thanksgiving Banquet



600 Opportunities

For thousands of our struggling neighbors, our Great Thanksgiving Banquet is more than a holiday meal. It's a place to be welcomed, encouraged and reminded they're not alone.

Along with a wonderful Thanksgiving feast, guests can receive medical and dental care, haircuts, warm winter coats, children's activities, a Gospel message and more.

It takes more than 600 volunteers to make it all happen.

Whether you greet guests, serve meals, help at activity stations, clean up or lend a hand wherever needed, you'll play a part in making Thanksgiving unforgettable for someone in need.

When: Wednesday, November 25th
Where: Sonoma County Fairgrounds

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



Volunteer Opportunities for our Great Thanksgiving Banquet go live on October 21st.

Visit rgm.org/gtb to learn more and sign up.

The Power of Your Coat Tags!



As the weather turns colder, many of our homeless neighbors have little more than a worn shirt or thin sweatshirt to keep them warm.

That's why, along with serving a wonderful Thanksgiving meal, we'll give away 3,000 winter coats at our Great Thanksgiving Banquet.

Your Coat Tags make every coat even more meaningful.

Simply sign the enclosed tags and return them with your gift by Nov. 23rd. We'll attach them to the coats as a reminder that someone cares, someone is praying, and they are not forgotten.



Give Thanksgiving Meals!

Gene first came to our Great Thanksgiving Banquet as a volunteer.

Years later, when his own life had fallen apart, he returned to Redwood Gospel Missions looking for help.

Today, he's serving others again.

That's the kind of transformation your Thanksgiving gift makes possible.

Each \$2.02 you give provides a nourishing Thanksgiving meal for a neighbor in need. It may be the first good meal they've had in days. It may also be the first reminder in a long time that someone cares.

For many of our guests, that's where hope begins.

Most of the thousands of people who come to the Great Thanksgiving Banquet have nowhere else to go for a holiday meal. Your generosity makes sure every guest is welcomed with compassion, dignity and the love of Christ.

Please send your gift by Nov. 23rd to help in time.



Every Thanksgiving meal is an invitation to hope. This year, we'll welcome 5,000 neighbors to the Mission's largest outreach of the year. Your gift of just \$2.02 provides one life-changing meal.

Just \$2.02 could change one life!

Leave a Legacy of Hope

Your compassion can continue changing lives for generations to come. By remembering Redwood Gospel Missions in your will or estate plans, you'll help ensure that future neighbors find food, shelter, hope and the life changing love of Christ.



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

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 _____

Giving by credit card? Fill out the back of this form, no same postage and processing by donating securely online at rgm.org/fall

Redwood Gospel MISSIONS
PO Box 493
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

A key partner gift of \$202 helps provide 100 meals! Please respond by Nov. 23rd.

When you send your gift, please include your signed Coat Tags! You can also give securely online at rgm.org/fall



REAL CHANGE is the newsletter of Redwood Gospel Missions
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