



# Heart of the Mission

AUGUST 2014

## from HOMELESS to HOME

Your gifts led Sylvain to a place of his own



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**Rev. Glenn Cranfield**  
President and CEO

## ANCHOR *of* HOPE

*Your gifts provide a safe harbor for the lost*

*We have this hope  
as an anchor  
for the soul, firm  
and secure. It  
enters the inner  
sanctuary behind  
the curtain...*

HEBREWS 6:19 NIV

I was thinking the other day of an old song that says, “When you walk through a storm, keep your head up high and don’t be afraid of the dark.”

So many people who come to Nashville Rescue Mission are going through stormy times. They are living in darkness.

Perhaps they’ve suffered the loss of a job or a loved one. Maybe they’ve been evicted from their home. Others are battling drug or alcohol addictions. Some have been abused. Most are homeless. They’ve run out of options and have nowhere else to go.

But no matter what storms are raging in their lives, the

Mission is a safe harbor for the lost. Because of your gifts, we can provide the care, the counseling and the encouragement they need to move forward. And we let them know Christ is the anchor that will give them the strength and stability to take their next step.

This help and hope is the foundation of our work. Your support is the bedrock on which that foundation is built.

Thank you for all you do to ensure those in need “never walk alone.”

**SHARE  
WORTHY**  
FROM A GRATEFUL GRAD

*“Nashville Rescue Mission’s Life Recovery Program saved my life. I have three children, ages 14, 12 and 7. It is because of the kindness of strangers that today I’m able to be a mom to my kids. Thank you to everyone who supports the Mission. Your sacrifice is immeasurable.”*



**Tracy**  
(May Life Recovery Graduate)

## LOVE & THE OUTCOME

**Chris and I [Jodi]**  
have always loved living  
downtown where we can feel  
the heartbeat of the city.



MISSION IN MY WORDS

We love to walk or ride our bikes everywhere we go when we’re home. It’s such a welcomed change from tour life, which is spent in buses and vans. I know when I walk, I’m more awake and aware of my surroundings—which is what led me to Kristen.

Kristen was walking through the same downtown streets I was walking in Toronto, Canada, one sunny afternoon. She was crying into her cell phone hoping the person on the other end could save her from the desperate situation she found herself in. A young woman who had spent most of her life in and out of foster care—was now homeless. I smiled and said hello, and that was all it took. She began pouring out her life story to me. I offered her my cell phone number and told her I wanted to help if I could.

Later that night, my phone rang. It was someone from the police station. They had found Kristen wandering the streets, alone. She had told them to, “Call my friend, Jodi,” and gave them my number. She wanted to stay with me, and as much as I wish I could have said yes, I knew that wasn’t what was best for her. But I did

call the local rescue mission. They welcomed Kristen with open arms and that became her temporary home for a few months.

It was the support she needed to get back on her feet. The rescue mission was an answer to her prayers and mine, as I didn’t know how to

*“We are all on a journey, we all fall down and need someone to catch us from time to time.”*

give her the care she needed. Kristen and I have remained friends. She is now the manager of a CVS and has a strong support system around her. It’s amazing what a smile and a helping hand can do to change someone’s reality.

When Chris and I moved to Nashville, we intentionally chose an apartment in the heart of the city. We began walking and biking everywhere, and became part of a community called “church in the yard” that feeds people living in homelessness in

Nashville. Many of the people we meet call Nashville Rescue Mission their home.

Over time, we have discovered that the face of homelessness is not what you might think; most have been dealt a bad hand or made a few poor choices. We are all on a journey; we

all fall down and need someone to catch us from time to time. Nashville Rescue Mission is helping people take the next step on their journey. I think God’s love looks like that—a hand to hold as we walk through the journey of life.

**LOVE AND THE OUTCOME**, Jodi King and her husband, bass player Chris Rademaker have come a long way since selling all their possessions and hitting the road to pursue their dream. Their debut album released by Word Records in 2013 has seen their song “He Is With Us” steadily climb the charts.





*“I think God brought me to Nashville Rescue Mission,” says Sylvain.*

“I’d never been to the Mission and didn’t know anything about the city. But after my bicycle broke down in Nashville, I didn’t have the money to get a new bike. I’m so thankful someone pointed me to the Mission and said I could get a hot meal, take a shower and have a safe place to sleep.”

**GROWING UP** in Montreal, Canada, Sylvain’s life was anything but normal. “I lived in an orphanage,” says Sylvain. “I don’t have any family that I know of. I’ve been on my own since I was 14 years old, when I left the orphanage and started working.” Since that time, Sylvain has traveled around

Canada and the United States, mostly by bicycle.

“I would find a job and work until I felt it was time to move on,” recalls Sylvain. “In the early 80s I moved to British Columbia because I wanted to learn English. It took about six months to learn the language. I ended up staying there three years.”

Sylvain isn’t afraid of hard work, but he’s never stayed in one place for long. “Moving from place to place, with no family makes it easy to move around,” says Sylvain. “But it’s hard to put down roots. I never married and don’t have any children. So when the jobs dried up, I would move on.”

**FOLLOWING A DREAM** to travel across the United States, Sylvain embarked upon a journey by bicycle that took him almost two months to complete, traveling from Canada to Panama City Beach. “It was a dream I had, and when the opportunity presented itself, I jumped at it,” he says. “I ended up staying in Florida for three years. One day I just knew it was time to go, so I got on my bike and headed north.”

When his bicycle broke down in Nashville and he discovered it was beyond repair, Sylvain started looking for shelter, a place to shower and food to eat. A kind stranger pointed him to Nashville Rescue Mission. “This isn’t the first time I’ve stayed in a shelter,” says Sylvain. “After Hurricane Katrina, I went to New Orleans for two months. I lived at a shelter and helped them rebuild the third floor of their building. After that I went back to Florida.”



“I’M SO GLAD someone showed me the way to the Mission,” says Sylvain. “Not only did I have my basic needs met, like food, clothing and shelter, but I made a lot of friends and learned so much in the process.” Sylvain’s stay at Nashville Rescue Mission lasted exactly 226 days.

“Sylvain is a perfect example of what we like to see with helping someone out of homelessness and into a home,” says Jay McDougal, Case Manager at the Mission. “When he arrived, he immediately wanted to give back and started helping in our Guest Volunteer Program. When he wasn’t volunteering at the Mission, he would get up at 5:00 a.m. and leave on foot to look for a job. He would walk over 30 miles round trip each day looking for a job.”

**IN LESS THAN** a month, Sylvain found a job working with a moving company. It didn’t take long for him to save up enough money to buy himself a new bicycle. This time, instead of hitting the road again, Sylvain decided to enroll in the Mission’s Pathways to Work program—a program that allowed Sylvain the time and

*“I can’t tell you how excited I was to move into my own apartment,” says Sylvain. “I could not have done it without the help I received from Nashville Rescue Mission... I’ve been so blessed by this outpouring of generosity.”*

opportunity to work, save money and make plans to move into his own place.

“I can’t tell you how excited I was to move into my own apartment,” says Sylvain. “I could not have done it without the help I received from the Mission. I was able to save money, get a new bicycle, find a job, have a safe place to sleep, food to eat, a place to shower... I’ve been so blessed by this outpouring of generosity.”

Sylvain moved into his apartment in March. Since then, he’s found a better job working security at Bridgestone Arena. He still rides his bicycle from his apartment in West Nashville to work and wherever he needs to go. From time to time he stops by the Mission to visit with friends and say hello.

“I’M SO GRATEFUL,” says Sylvain. “I’m not sure what I would have done or where I would have gone had someone not pointed me to the Mission. Staying at the Mission was a wonderful experience for me. Nashville is starting to feel a little bit like home.”

It is because of your generosity, Sylvain and others like him have found their way out of homelessness and into a home. Through your gifts, Nashville Rescue Mission has been able to offer case management to over 600 men each month. From January to May of this year, 58 men were able to leave the Mission and transition into independent housing. Another 22 were reunited with their families. Your gifts change lives every day. Thank you!



# Beyond My COMFORT ZONE

SERVING THROUGH THE  
EYES OF A VOLUNTEER

By Stephen Nelson

As I walked into the room, I broke into a cold sweat. The air was hot and thick and had a distinctive smell. The room was large, the size of a small auditorium, and more wide than deep, like a large rectangle.



We were at Nashville Rescue Mission to conduct a Wednesday evening worship service. We would sing, preach and pray with those who came forward during the invitation.

Moving along the back wall, I felt the weight of many eyes on me. Some turned back to what they were doing, as if our presence was a nuisance. Others held their gaze, and in the brief moment my eyes met theirs, I could see the wear and tear of many difficult years. Others smiled ... welcoming, hopeful smiles.

Over the next hour (and next four years), I met many of those men and heard their stories. Some had been through great difficulty brought on by circumstances beyond their control. Others were seeking help to overcome addictions and dealing with the results of bad choices.

I even met one man who had made it his ministry to travel from city-to-city to witness to people on the streets, in low-income housing projects and in homeless shelters like the Mission. (Believe me, that was a convicting conversation.) All were related in that they had a need, and that need was being met by the tireless, loving work of Nashville Rescue Mission.

**WHEN I THINK** back on those years, the Wednesday night services at the Mission hold a special place in my heart. I made friends with men at the shelter who, through their own life experiences, offered advice and warnings that carried a great deal of weight coming from those who had learned the hard way.

But the greatest takeaway was the chance to serve while putting

into practice what I was learning in school. These opportunities became vital “spurts” to my spiritual growth. As a registered introvert, I had the uncomfortable privilege of reaching out and interacting with others I had never met. As a Christian school kid who grew up in the Bible Belt and in church every time the doors were open, I got to spend at least an hour a week in the larger world beyond my comfort zone.

**IN THOSE MOMENTS**, I learned vital lessons I could not have fully understood in any other context. I learned I have been blessed far beyond what I had realized to that point in my life. This was never more clear to me than when, as a 20-year-old college student, I met men my age and younger who had no family and

*“One of the lessons I try to keep foremost in my heart and mind is that people rarely walk into your comfort zone. You must go to them.”*

nowhere else to go. I also learned choices have consequences. Even decisions that seem trivial cost a great deal more than imagined in the long run. I learned that appearances can be deceiving, and that God’s love and grace can reach into the hardest and most broken hearts.

**OF COURSE**, there were nights I didn’t feel like dressing up and going downtown to the Mission. On those Wednesday nights when I had a bad day, homework and tests had piled up, or I hadn’t slept particularly well, it

would have been easy to justify staying in my dorm room with the intention of doing better the next week. But it was on those nights I often received the greatest blessing.

While I was the one going to the Mission to minister, I was often the one ministered to by men, young and old, who came from more difficult circumstances than I. Yet, they worshiped with us, listened intently and responded to the messages brought by student preachers. It was an experience unlike any other for me, and I am forever grateful.

**I AM THANKFUL** for the ministry of Nashville Rescue Mission and their willingness to allow us to be a small part of the work they are doing. I’m still thankful for the lessons I learned in those Wednesday night services. One of the lessons I try to keep foremost in my heart and mind is that people rarely walk into your comfort zone. You must go to them. Reaching out involves risk and discomfort; but the rewards are great, and the effects, eternal.

**GETTING INVOLVED IS EASY**  
Visit [nashvillerescuemission.org/volunteer](http://nashvillerescuemission.org/volunteer)



## BACK TO SCHOOL THE INVISIBLE HOMELESS



As kids head back to school, many are filled with excitement over seeing their friends and making new ones. But there’s also a group who are filled with fear, anxiety and worry ... wondering, what if someone knows I’m homeless? What if they find out I’m living in a shelter? What will they think of me?

Last year, Metro Nashville Public School’s HERO program served over 2,500 homeless children—a number that continues to rise.

Nashville Rescue Mission shelters 20 to 70 children a night—most of them are school-aged.

*If you have a heart for children, will you consider volunteering to help these kids with their homework?*

**LEARN MORE AT**  
[nashvillerescuemission.org](http://nashvillerescuemission.org)



## KID'S PRAYERS

THEY NEED YOUR  
PRAYERS THIS FALL

We invite you to join with us in praying for the children who call the Mission their home as they head back to school.

Dear God I pray for  
my mom and dad  
to move back together  
and have a happy  
family again.



Dear god,  
I want to make it  
to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I  
want my mom to get her  
place. I know sometimes  
we fail but I know you will not.

Amen



Our father  
God give us a  
house some time

## LIVES **YOU** HAVE TOUCHED

**JUNE 2014**

**51,064**

Meals Served

**23,543**

Nights of Lodging

**13,912**

Chapel Attendance

**3,315**

Education Hours

**993**

Bible Class Attendance

**1,054**

Decisions and Prayers

**6,232**

Volunteer Hours

**45**

Travel Assistance

**8**

Program Graduates



**DONATE**

.....

a meal can  
change a life



**VOLUNTEER**

.....

sign up  
online today



**EMAIL**

.....

stay up-to-date on  
Mission news



**CONNECT**

.....

connect with the  
Mission online



**NASHVILLE**  
RESCUE MISSION

639 Lafayette Street, Nashville, TN 37203  
615-255-2475 [www.nashvillerescuemission.org](http://www.nashvillerescuemission.org)