



eugene mission 
 Rescue + Revitalize + Restore

The Eugene Mission is celebrating a season of gifts and blessings in the Lord.

The Gift of Faith Through Transformation



Guests who come to the Eugene Mission must ask themselves the same question: What am I willing to give up to gain a greater gift? Some people give up drugs or alcohol while others let go of isolation or an inability to accept help. No matter what we are called to release, God is offering us something better if we have eyes to see the gift.

In this Christmas season, I am reminded of the story of Jesus' earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, and everything they had to surrender to properly steward a gift of incalculable value – their infant child, and our Savior.

Mary had to let go of control of her own body and agree to carry a child before she was even married, a social risk in those days that could have cost her life. Joseph had to release his fears that Mary had been unfaithful to him and the vows of their betrothal. Even more, he had to release his doubts that her child was conceived by the Holy Spirit (a wild tale to even the most faithful believer) and agree to parent a baby that was not his own.

As the story progresses, we see God reassuring them in miraculous ways that they made the correct choice to believe Him and follow the path of faith. The angel who prophesied Mary's conception also told her that her relative, Elizabeth, who had struggled with infertility, would become pregnant, and she did.

"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!'" [Luke 1:40-42]

Imagine such confirmation! Joseph also received a powerful word of encouragement from an angel who appeared to him in a dream.

"...Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." [Matthew 1:20-21]

In this season of miracles, we are celebrating miracles in our guests' lives, like the moment a judge released a guest in the R³ Program from his probation because of his willingness to let go of prison life and prison mentality to receive the better gift of God's bounty.

We know we are on the right path when our shackles are removed, and we can walk freely again. There is no greater gift than the liberty we receive in Christ, and we use that gift to pay it forward through service and in gratitude.

It is not a sacrifice to let go of the past when we know we have such blessings coming to us. As we look back on 2023, we are thankful for a year filled with both struggle and triumph, undergirded by a faith that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" [Philippians 1:6].

May this season be filled with the Lord's love, peace and joy!

In gratitude,

Sheryl Balthrop

Executive Director



R³ program guest Clifford Koot is following a new path to health and freedom in Christ.

The Gift of Freedom to Follow God's Plan

Clifford Koot loves to run.

When he first entered the Eugene Mission's R³ Program, he could be seen, head down and determined, running up and down 1st Avenue in the early morning fog. He would have run beyond 1st Avenue except for one problem: his ankle monitor would not let him.

Clifford was on probation, and his ankle monitor was a potent and constant reminder of the bonds that had kept him tethered to his past and its consequences. He had been experiencing the results of his bad choices and bad luck for decades and worried the trend would continue, but an encounter with a judge during a recent status hearing altered the course of his future.

At the hearing, Clifford began to share about the changes he has made in his life since entering the R³ Program, including the classes and meetings he has been attending, how he has re-connected with faith in God and how he is diligently applying everything he is learning.

"The judge liked everything I said, and then he did something shocking – he handed me his business card and said, 'I'm killing your probation,'" Clifford shares. The promise came with one condition – Clifford had to call him once a month to arrange a coffee date. "I was crying like a baby."

Clifford comes from a loving family with strong bonds of affection, but the early losses of his best friend and childhood love caused him deep pain that he tried to bury. He attempted to fill the void with drinking and drugs, and that led to trouble and an eventual prison sentence.

These days, Clifford's true personality is beginning to shine through. He wakes up early and can't stop smiling and his goofy side is coming out. He says he does not have to worry about projecting a tough image like he did in prison – he can be himself. Not everyone understands why he is so joyful when he is brushing his teeth or doing ordinary tasks around the Mission, but he is nurturing a new gift that is bringing him hope.

"God has downloaded this map in my heart; I'm on a new path," Clifford says. "I can't really explain what it is about this place, but there's hope here."

A More Meaningful Gift

The issues that drive homelessness are longstanding and complex, including addiction, family trauma and disconnection from community. While transactional resourcing, such as giving people clothing and food, are seen as helpful blessings, they do nothing to address the deeper challenges in people's lives.

The Eugene Mission's R³ Program uniquely recognizes that meaningful change and progress in guests' lives starts with a relationship and includes education and resources to help guests on the road to independence and rejoining healthy community.

Like every gift, whether transformation or sobriety, you have to want it, Clifford says. That desire lives in your heart and in your mind. Very often, the desire to receive more abundant life and healing conflicts with destructive desires that have held sway for decades and require deeper healing.

Tyler Spooner, who recently graduated from the Men's



Men's Life Change guest Tyler Spooner has overcome anger and is finding purpose through fellowship with men in the program.

Life Change Program, came to the Eugene Mission with a substance abuse problem, intense anger and a desire to fight.

“As a man, you don’t want to admit defeat, but it takes strength to reach out for help,” Tyler says.

A series of encounters with God are showing him the miraculous power of a savior who can cut through barriers to give us what we need exactly when we need it.

The Miracle of Life Change

Tyler came to the Eugene Mission after getting kicked out of his parents’ home and relapsing. He says God directed him to attend a local Celebrate Recovery meeting, and it was there, surrounded by other participants in the Men’s Life Change Program, that he says the Holy Spirit encouraged him that Life Change was a good option for him.

He says his anger began to dissolve through the love he was shown by others.

“I didn’t know why I was so angry, mostly at God, but people in the program kept loving me,” he says. “I



R³ program Director Matt Erdmann is joined by a guest in celebrating the gift of a bus to the Eugene Mission.



Guests in a Eugene Mission baking class proudly show off their creations.

overcame such intense anger – it’s the biggest way the program helped me.”

Tyler says he still has worries, but he understands his triggers and has a lot more knowledge and hope these days. He is attending Lane Community College with dreams of becoming a physical therapy assistant and feels a deepening sense of gratitude for all he has overcome.

“I absolutely made an effort this time, and I had the tools and resources to do it,” he says.

Gifts are often as much about what we release as what we gain. As we walk the path to redemption, we release buried pain, anger and frustration and cultivate a spaciousness that allows grace to enter lightly, like a gift on Christmas morning.

“God’s map and plan are right there,” Clifford says. “I know he has something good for me.”

“Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” [James 1:17]

A Path Off the Streets: By the Numbers

Please consider supporting our guests as they walk the path to transformational change!

\$1,000



Support one guest in the Rescue Shelter for two weeks

The first step in a permanent path off the streets for Mission guests is the Rescue Shelter, and one of the first faces a new guest might see belongs to Denis Piazza, an R³ participant who spends his afternoons greeting newcomers.

Denis says one of the most important things he can do for new guests is take them by the hand and make them feel welcome and safe. Denis' supportive attitude reflects the Mission's relational culture and programming, designed to help guests foster close and loving bonds with the community.

Those bonds begin in the Rescue Shelter, where guests find security and stability, often for the first time in their lives.

\$5,000



Provide nine months of skill building and Navigator relational support.

Carla Baird, who graduated from the R³ program this summer, first came to the Eugene Mission needing to rest and begin her journey of restoring her physical,

mental and spiritual health.

When she entered the R³ program, she knew she needed to reconnect with her sense of self-worth and ability to achieve a better future. With the help of Navigators and volunteers, she was able to put her finances in order, improve her physical health and, most importantly, gain confidence.

She said she knows now she has the ability to meet her needs, pursue her dreams and connect with things that sustain her. "Coming to the Eugene Mission is probably the best decision I've ever made," Carla said. "Everyone here played a part in where I am today, which is independent and self-sufficient."

\$250



Support a guest through 12 weeks of R³ Program classes and activities

Desaree Clark was enrolled in a 12-week origami course offered to guests in the R³ Program, which addresses barriers that stand in the way of people living healthy, independent lives.

Guests co-create plans with staff to help them grow in areas of wellness, including physical and mental health along with learning social, vocational and life skills through classes and activities.

Desaree says she learned important lessons throughout the class, including how to better work with others as a team, set goals and finish difficult projects.

\$400



Connect a guest with resources to successfully transition to housing.

At the end of their time with the Eugene Mission, guests have grown and changed in ways that often surprise them. They have received more than a job or a roof over their heads – they have

learned self-respect, healthy coping mechanisms, and to face the pain of their pasts and so much more.

Army veteran Matthew Tift arrived at the Eugene Mission after a family living situation became unworkable. He said Navigator Kai Batalona helped him move forward, stay sober and work with Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF administered by St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County). Prior to moving out, Matthew collected everything he would need for his new home in the warehouse.

"I've accomplished more here in months than I have in years," Matthew shares. "I'm really happy I came here."

Last Month's Notable Numbers



67.6% of program benchmarks met by R³ guests.



52,515 meals served to unhoused individuals.



8,797 class, vocational training & life skill hours.



1,678 volunteer relational engagement hours with guests.



100's

of men, women and children received Hope, a healthy temporary living environment, all necessities, and relational engagement, programming and navigation services.