

FAIRBANKS RESCUE MISSION

Making a Difference One Life at a Time

SERVING GOD AND THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1974

NOVEMBER 2011



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ISSUE

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WHEN THE COMMUNITY PREPARES A MEAL ~ By Rodney Gaskins

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."
Luke 14:12-14 (NIV)

Thanksgiving is typically the time we invite family, friends, and neighbors over to share a meal. However, Jesus told us to do something different. This scripture from Luke comes to mind when I think of Thanksgiving Day at the Rescue Mission and a group of people that follows the latter half of this scripture.

On Thanksgiving Day, the Mission is transformed into a truly miraculous place. Groups of volunteers show up with their favorite recipes, dishes, desserts, all to contribute to the banquet being prepared for our guests . . . those who can't repay. It's amazing to watch the kitchen transformed into a food preparation factory. The men's chapel is converted into an up-scale dining establishment. The tables are decorated, live music plays in the background, and an army of hosts wait to serve our guests.

On Thanksgiving Day, the Fairbanks community merges on the Rescue Mission ... like a flash mob. O.K . . . for everyone over 40, a flash mob is "a group of strangers who organize themselves, using electronic media such as cell phones or the Internet, to gather together in a public place, behave in a

predetermined manner for a predetermined amount of time, and then quickly disperse."

I love to watch how the volunteers scamper about the building preparing the place for the arrival of our guests. It is incredible to watch the volunteers all go in different directions at the same time, like members of a well-choreographed musical. It's as if they are hurrying to do the last minute details before the curtain is drawn. Then there's



ALL READY - THANKSGIVING - 2009

show time... our guests arrive. Some of our guests live here, while other families show up from all around, some with kids in tow. It is refreshing to witness the apprehension on the faces of our guests dissolve into smiles as they are welcomed at the doors by community volunteers. It is a joy seeing their astonished looks as they take in the sights, sounds, and smells of this banquet prepared in their honor.

Although the volunteers have provided, prepared and served the food, we encourage them to sit down and share the meal with our guests. In fact, sitting down to eat the meal together is significant, because this helps our guests to reconnect with the community. Witnessing what takes place

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 - MEAL

Because
You
Gave

**OCTOBER
NUMBERS**

*7,986 MEALS
were served*

*3,257 BED NIGHTS
were provided*

1,678 for MEN

946 for WOMEN

430 for CHILDREN

*22 BIBLE STUDIES
were held*

*31 CHAPEL
SERVICES were
held*

*Thanks to our
VOLUNTEERS
for 59
volunteer hours!*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREETING
FROM THE DESK OF RODNEY GASKINS



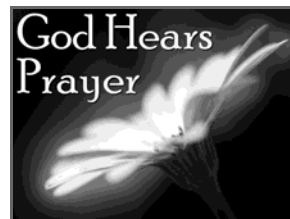
I want this Thanksgiving Season, it to be a real time of giving thanks. Yeah, I know this is not an original thought, but it is for me... this year. Usually when I think of Thanksgiving, I think of the 4-F's: Family, food, football, and falling-a-sleep. We gather and enjoy the day's festivities, but it's not really about being thankful. My idea of giving thanks has been praying over our food . . . at half time.

Thanksgiving is about thanking God for all the things He gave me this past year. Unfortunately, I don't always give thanks for all the things I have... although I try. It is not because I'm unappreciative, just forgetful. This year I want to do something different. I want to include the things God did not give me or bring into my life.

I've been learning the meaning of true gratitude by listening to the prayers in our circle each morning. I listen to young men and women who are thankful for one more day of sobriety, shelter, food, and their basic needs being met. They ask God to help them not be the person they were the day before. They thank God that they made it through the night and that others, who they call by name, have made it also.

I hear people thanking God for family members who are not well, but who they fully expect to get better. They thank God for the new family they've

found in the shelter. Every morning, we hear their selfless prayers and compassion for others in their same situation. They also pray for you, our donors. It is because of your contributions that they are now in a place of hope. Listening to the prayers of people who could be embittered by their circumstances, but are grateful instead, is changing me. It is truly humbling to have someone, who has recently lost everything, pray for me just because I'm having a rough day.



I want to begin looking at my world and those in it in the new way I'm learning in our circle of prayer. Our staff and residents come together for prayer every Mon-Fri at 10:00 AM and we would love for you to join us. Also, members of the Board gather to pray over the prayer requests that come in through the donation slips. So, if you can't make it at 10:00 to pray with us, by filling out those slips you can give us the opportunity to pray for you.

Prayer doesn't always change our circumstances . . . sometime it changes us.

next is something extraordinary. There is another transformation and it takes place in the volunteers. They realize that the people they came to serve are no different than them and this puts the help they are providing into a different perspective. What a wonderful day!

When the day's activities are over, our guests are gone, and clean-up is completed, the Mission returns to its former state. Our volunteers begin to slowly leave, musicians are packed up, and the food is wrapped and stored away, yet the building is still resonating from all the day's activity. While I try to absorb all that has taken place that day, the understanding of the scripture is made clearer. *"But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed."*

We have indeed been blessed.



HOLIDAY DINNER NEEDS

- Hams
- Celery
- Onions
- Green Beans - Canned
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Potatoes - Fresh
- Potatoes - Instant
- Sweet Potatoes
- Rolls
- Butter
- Desserts and Pies
- Whipped Topping

MISSION NEEDS for November

Shelter Needs

- Bath Towels
- Diapers - Sizes 3-5
- Disposable Razors
- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes
- Reading Glasses
- 1/2" and 1" Binders

Kitchen Needs

- Cold Cereal
- Butter
- Eggs
- Sugar
- Brown Sugar
- Flour
- Hamburger
- Bacon
- BBQ Sauce
- Carrots
- Noodles
- Lemonade Mix
- Iced Tea Mix
- Kool-Aid
- Napkins

Other Needs

- American Flag - 6' x 10' (for our flagpole)
- Scotch Tape for Dispensers
- Kleenex
- Copy Paper 8-1/2 x 11
- Copy Paper 11 x 17
- Paper Towels
- Pens
- Lysol Wipes

Christmas Needs at the Mission

Adopt-A-Family: Call Becki at 452-5343 x106 for more information.

Gifts

- Gloves, men's and women's
- Socks, men's and women's
- Winter hats
- Men's and women's underwear - All sizes including 1X, 2X, and 3X
- New shirts and tops - all sizes
- Hoodies - all sizes
- Thermal underwear
- Movie gift cards
- Other gift cards
- Bus tokens
- Journals
- Watches
- Costume jewelry

Toiletries

- Razors
- Shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Gift sets
- Feminine hygiene (no bar soap please)

Other

- Wrapping paper
- Tape for dispensers
- Ribbon
- Homemade Goodies

ROAD TO THE MISSION ~ by Michelle Harpole

A tall rangy man who keeps shifting his weight because his knees give him trouble, Will Ludwig's face is worn. Not worn old but worn like he's seen a lot of hard life. A variety of tattoos cover his arms and shoulders. He hasn't stayed at the Mission in years but he stopped by today to let us know how he's doing.

He came to Fairbanks as a boy in a military family. He graduated from high school here and enlisted in the Army in 1997. While in the Army he began drinking and at the end of his Army career the Army had diagnosed him as a Stage Four alcoholic – someone whose life has basically stopped because of alcohol. It's a very hard place to come back from and Will's battle was complicated by bi-polar disorder and seizures.



Will first came to the Mission in 2000 for court ordered treatment. Nothing came of that except the beginning of trust and respect for Austin Brown, our Recovery Program Director. Between 2000 and 2006, Will led a chaotic, violent life. He was in and out of relationships, jail, prison, parole.

In 2006, out of jail again and with nowhere else to go, he came to the Mission. He lived here a week and then decided to join the Genesis Program. Will was here 8 months and has maintained his sobriety since then. He wanted to tell us about finding out about his son, getting in contact with the boy's mother, reestablishing a relationship, marrying her in March and being able to move her and his son back to Fairbanks in April of this year. He has come a very long way from his stalled life of years ago.

I asked him what had made the difference in his being able to get and stay sober when he was at the Mission. I guess I was expecting something more complicated but he said, "It was just knowing that people cared." He mentioned especially Austin and Rodney and said that without their pushing, challenge and encouragement he'd be in a gutter or dead.

Please remember to pray for those who share their journey with us.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

WWW.FAIRBANKSRESCUEMISSION.ORG

REQUESTED

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