

FAIRBANKS RESCUE MISSION

Making a Difference One Life at a Time

SERVING GOD AND THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1974

OCTOBER 2010



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Transition ~ By Rodney Gaskins

All the typical signs are here that announce the approach of winter. The kids are back in school, the birds have left Creamer's Field, the tourists are migrating south from their summer-time Wal-Mart nesting areas, and the numbers of people showing up at the Rescue Mission are increasing.



This summer has been very unusual for the Fairbanks Rescue Mission. Typically the number of people that stay at the shelter sharply decreases during warmer weather, but this summer was the exception. I don't know why, but I do know that many are first-time homeless (newcomers). We might reason that it's "the economy" or the high cost of rental housing or the lack of low income housing but I'm not sure.

This had me curious so I began to ask our case managers. There was an assortment of stories and none pointed to the one precise issue which could explain the number of newcomers we are seeing. I still have plenty of unanswered questions but I did find common threads running through the variety of circumstances. A commonality in all the stories was the theme of the "unexpected or unforeseen."

Many have had unpredictable circumstances in their lives that brought them here. Whether unexpected or not another commonality is "lack."

Lack of financial security. The lack of savings, adequate income, or the ability

to earn a livable wage. Like many others, they had been living paycheck to paycheck. Any unexpected expense becomes overwhelming. A layoff, extended illness, or major repair was the nudge that pushed them over the edge.

Lack of support network. They have no support group of friends or family to turn to in time of crisis. Often their group is in the same situation.

Lack of planning. Many have come to Fairbanks to escape the very thing that greeted them upon arrival...poverty. Hearing of all the jobs and income opportunities that Fairbanks possesses, they used the last of their finances as a sort of pump-primer to get them here.

These are factors for many that cross the threshold of the Rescue Mission. Some of our residents have been homeless for years, but they too started with lack and were unable to rise above it. One of our major goals is to prevent newcomers from becoming old-timers.

Because You Gave

AUGUST NUMBERS

5,723 MEALS were served

2,906 BED NIGHTS were provided

1,903 for MEN

700 for WOMEN

303 for CHILDREN

31 BIBLE STUDIES were held

27 CHAPEL SERVICES were held

Thanks to our VOLUNTEERS for 328 volunteer hours!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREETING

FROM THE DESK OF RODNEY GASKINS



While in the military I was required to teach many classes. I was instructed to start all of my classes with, "You will receive an **E x p l a n a t i o n**, **Demonstration**, and you will conduct **Practical Application**

on....." Within this framework I began to recognize my learning style. While going through the process of preparing to teach classes, I noticed how much deeper my understanding of the subject matter became. So, these days when I want to really learn a new subject, I go through the process of planning to teach it.

Here at the Rescue Mission, I talk with or teach people (staff, residents, and community members) regularly about how they can address life's problems, view circumstances, and depend on God. And wouldn't you know it...God uses the advice I give someone else to teach me. God gives me the opportunity to, "Receive the Practical Application" of the subject that I preached to someone else.

You would think that it would be easy to apply my own advice, but most of the times I don't make the connection. It's usually around hour three or four of my "temper-tantrum-fueled, woe-is-me, self-pity-party that I hear a voice (my own) giving the same great advice that I shared with someone else. This is when I start explaining to God why my situation is different. God typically, in His gentle way agrees that my situation is different and states,

"Rodney you know better...you just taught this subject."

"But God, why did I have to go through this?"

Again the whisper, "You taught it, but

hadn't actually learned it."

Oh my goodness, makes me glad I'm not a preacher.

I was once told a story about an instructor who told his audience to place their finger on their foreheads, while placing his on his cheek. To his amazement, 95% of the people responded by placing their finger on their cheek. As people here at the Mission seek our help it's simple to inform them what to do and how to do it, but if we aren't demonstrating it in our live, our words have no value.

Pretending we have it all together has no value either. We've all experienced that relief and hope that comes when someone we look up to is honest about their struggles. When people understand that you are truthful and they aren't the only one with problems, it takes you off the shelf and makes you functional.

I invite you to learn this lesson with me. Just telling what to do doesn't work. Pretending to be a good example doesn't work. Walking in faith and being transparent works. Letting God supply all your needs works. It's not an easy journey, but it is very worthwhile.

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We learned that the sooner you can move someone back into housing the better their probability is of staying housed. The pressing task that we have is to quickly help our newcomers to reestablish stability in their lives. We continually emphasize, "The Mission is not your home...you're just passing through!"

I know you're thinking, "So Rodney,

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what are we going to do about this?" And I'm so glad you asked. The Rescue Mission wants to launch a new **Transitional Program** to help families find and maintain permanent housing with the help of counseling, education and goal setting. Case Managers will help families experiencing homelessness take the often difficult steps toward self-sufficiency and a home of their own. The goal of the program is for clients to find safe, affordable housing, and keep it. They will receive from 6 to 12 months of housing supportive case management to help them maintain leases, be good tenants, and handle their money.

This program should be of special interest to landlords because of the assistance in finding renters as well as the case management provided by us that will help make the renter a long-term desirable tenant.



Becoming a partnering landlord does not in any way obligate you to rent to our clients, but only confirms that you are open to working with us. This partnership would allow us to add you to our list of local landlords and you can contact us when you have an unoccupied unit to fill. Your information is not given to the prospective tenants until you have been contacted by a Case Manager and have expressly agreed to work with their client.

If you are a landlord, please consider being a part of this win-win solution. With so many coming to our door, we need to keep them, "Just passing through!!"

Road to the Mission

It was a dream – a dream in which God spoke to her and told her to go to Alaska - and the timely personal ad of an Alaskan fisherman that brought her to Alaska ten years ago. The fisherman lived in Homer and the testimony of how he treated her was the number of times she was in and out of the women's shelter in Homer. Cosette did the cannery circuit, often in isolated places where there was nothing but a cannery. She liked it, the camaraderie, the working hard and fast. Then there was another man and working in the bar/restaurant he owned in Anchorage.

A lifetime ago she had been a medic in the military. Later, in her 40's and living in California, she had to face the reality of the problem she had with alcohol when she drove a Mercedes off a cliff. A witness said the car rolled so many times he lost count. Her awareness of the war alcohol and meth were waging against her began then, but knowing she was in a war didn't mean she knew how to win many of the battles.

The last two years have been a nightmare of blackouts and being in and out of detox. She spent the week before she came here in the hospital, her immune system shot,

having hallucinations, and so weak the airline had to board her with a wheelchair when she flew up to Fairbanks on April 28th to join our program.

Cosette came here broken, not trusting anyone, including God. She drew a palpable, isolating barricade around herself for her first few months here. The testimony of God's love



and healing is in the way she smiles now, the pink bloom in her cheeks, the way she looks younger than her 60 years. She has hope and a future and is making plans to find housing and a job and leave the Mission. She is so thankful for the Genesis Program. She says it's not judgmental and has given her the ability to set boundaries and to forgive. She asks that if you pray for her, please include asking God to bring the right people into her life. She doesn't want to be a victim anymore. She wants to live clean and alive in God.

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	Please remember to keep those who share	
	their journey with us in prayer.	
	"You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it."	
	Matthew 21:22 (NLT)	
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MISSION NEEDS THIS MONTH

Kitchen Needs

Sugar
Flour
Eggs
Butter
Mayo
Salad Dressings
Potatoes, Fresh and Instant
Breakfast Meats
Sandwich Bread
*Beef Base
*Chicken Base
*Garlic Powder
*Onion Powder
*Season-alls like Johnny's etc.
*Commercial Sized

Shelter Needs

Men's underwear
Towels
Feminine Hygiene Products
Diapers - Sizes 3, 4, and 5
Lysol Wipes
Disposable Razors
Deodorant, Men's
Backpacks
Journals
Christian Videos or CD's - One
hour in length or shorter

Other Needs

8-1/2 x 11 Copy Paper
Scotch tape (for dispensers)

The Dining Card

Golden Heart
Discount Card

Get discounts and savings at 12
area restaurants for only \$20.00
and a percentage goes to the
Fairbanks Rescue Mission.

Available for purchase at:

Fairbanks Rescue Mission
Boston's
Papa Murphy's
Speedy Subs

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:
WWW.FAIRBANKSRESCUEMISSION.ORG

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