

WINTER 2014

hope

MISSION

“My whole way of looking at
life has changed!”

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GARY'S STORY

REENERGIIZED FOR LIFE

I've gone through so much in this program. I've been reenergized." Across the table, alert and at ease, Gary speaks with open resolve: "My outlook has completely changed...it's new and it's bright!"

Gary has been clean and sober for over 16 months. He has graduated from Breakout—Hope Mission's year-long recovery program—and is setting his sights on a future that a couple years ago was not available to him.

Gary's story shares elements of other recovery stories, but his arrival at Hope Mission is less typical. In the past Gary and his wife owned and operated a travel agency that catered to corporate clients. While the business was still viable, in the climate of ever increasing online competition, its future looked

uncertain. Gary decided to sell, but what he did with the money—including his line of credit—was his undoing.

"For 7 years or so, before coming to Hope Mission, I was in the midst of a spending spree. There was a lot of showing off, buying things I didn't need. I got into some drug use, but my big addiction was alcohol."

"It's different here, you work with a team, within community...the recovery community and the Breakout team are here for you."

The money ran out. Options narrowed. Gary decided to check himself into treatment. Over the following months, with varied success, he moved through three separate facilities. "When I finished the program out at Gunn, I came to Edmonton and lived on my own for six months. It didn't last. Again, I started back with my addiction. That's when I heard about Hope Mission."

"It's different here, you work with a team, within community...the recovery community and the Breakout team are here for you. People care, we check up on each other. It's a group effort, not just a staff effort."

"And things just feel different." Gary leans forward and smiles, "My energy is back. This energy feels permanent. I don't feel the need to drink any longer...the program has given me a focus. Before, I had no idea where I was going. So when I lost it all, I thought: that's it! But really...I lost things I really didn't need in the first place. Today, I'm happy—I was never happy before."

When asked about his beliefs, Gary is circumspect. He lives his Christian faith quietly, but recognizes that the





emphasis on faith is what has made the difference concerning his recovery. “I’m in touch with things that matter, the spiritual part of the program is what has helped me keep my sobriety, absolutely.” He acknowledges that it’s what will sustain him in the years to come.

What’s down the road? Gary is planning—and has taken initial steps—to start a commercial cleaning company. “I’ve done it before, and I can do it again. But with a difference, with a new purpose. If it works out, I’d like to hire some of the people who come through the recovery program.”

Here Gary describes another change he’s undergone: a change of mind and heart concerning people on the street. It’s a perspective gained through his time at Hope Mission that he’d like to pass on. “When I was successful, financially that is, I used to walk by homeless people and think, ‘Just get a job, get off the street.’ But I had no clue. There are people here, who from the outset had no chance.”

“What’s happened is that my whole way of looking at life has changed!”

Glancing out the window, Gary explains how he’s often amazed—considering the abusive backgrounds and upbringing many people on the street have had—that they survive. “I have a totally different outlook now, I have compassion for them. That’s new to me.”

In a few minutes Gary will leave to go to his job with Hope Mission. But before he leaves, he adds, “What’s happened is that my whole way of looking at life has changed! I wasn’t happy, my heart wasn’t happy, but all that’s changed. I have Hope Mission to thank.”



A BOY WE’LL CALL ZACK THE BIGGEST SMILE

Christmas is family—gathering in a spirit of celebration of Christ’s birth, sharing food, gifts, memories and laughter. Of course we know that this ideal is not wholly shared. There are families in our city that are wounded, kids who are hurting and lonely, living in impoverished conditions, coping through withdrawal and anger.

A boy we’ll call Zack found out about Hope Mission’s Kids Café and began attending. While he often arrived frustrated and angry, and his behaviour was disruptive, there were always signs he wanted to stay.

His shield of anger and frustration fell away...

Often, mealtime is when we make connections. Zack was no exception. In fact, mealtime was when he perked up and began to engage. We discovered that Zack was the youngest of four siblings, living in a home with a single mom who was trying desperately to make ends meet. It made sense that Zack came for second and third helpings—at times even taking food home with him.

As Zack continued to hang out with us he gained confidence and composure. His shield of anger and frustration fell away and he began paying attention during the programs. Before long he was helping with clean-up, even assisting other kids. Today when Zack comes through the doors, he wears the biggest smile.



MEET MEGHAN REGIER

HOPE MISSION INTERN

Should you meet Meghan, you will quickly conclude that she has the heart of someone keenly concerned about people—especially hurting people. It's this heart, this disposition, that drew her, while attending Trinity Western University, to serve people in the notorious East Hastings district; and later, after backpacking through Europe, to apply to Hope Mission's Internship Program; and recently, having completed internship, to join our staff as an Intake Worker at the Herb Jamieson Centre.

Why this path? "Because the people are real. Yes they're broken—we're all broken—but they don't hide it, and I love that." Meghan sees this form of authenticity as at the core of the Gospel. It's an authenticity she takes to heart.

She now sees that for her, personally, the early enthusiasm she carried to East Hastings Street was clouded by a kind of cursory association with street people—nothing approaching true connection. "It was almost like I was taking advantage of people...because going down there was the cool thing to do." It was a revelation that compelled Meghan to stop and consider her motivations. The last thing she wanted was to distance herself from the very people she desired to serve.

"Internship has given me community"

This, for Meghan, is what is invaluable about Hope Mission's Internship Program. It obliterates any purely self-serving agenda. "If you're looking for a really raw growing experience, it's the perfect place. It's great, you're given a lot of responsibility—in many different areas of service—you get in, get messy, and grow...with awesome leadership there to support you."

And there have been other benefits: "Internship has given me community," says Meghan. "It's a blessing to live with other interns and learn how to support one another." Hope Mission Interns come from all over, representing various cultures and backgrounds. For Meghan, learning to live and thrive in this personal and social diversity, "...reinforces God's presence in community."

Meghan's long term plan is to serve God through serving the deeper needs of people. The specifics, she's sure, will be revealed. In the meantime, Meghan appears to be already carrying out her calling.



*Give
yourself
a Warm
Fuzzy
this
Holiday Season.*

You know how good it feels to give. And your gift to a person in need through Hope Mission this Christmas will spread that good feeling around. \$54 provides meals and care to 20 people. hopemission.com #warmfuzzy

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful... – 1 Corinthians 13:7

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the one who loves without condition, I'm reminded, and humbled, by the faithful love and compassion of our community of supporters. I wish that I could meet each and every friend of Hope Mission to personally say thank you!

We are entering our 85th year of serving the needs of destitute people, young and old. And as we continue to expand our outreach and our footprint, while working to meet even more diverse needs, it's so gratifying to know that we are not alone. Your open hands and hearts sustain us, even as the enduring love of God keeps us all.

Because of your prayers, because of your loving care, the hungry are being fed, the homeless are finding safe shelter, men and women are overcoming addictions, families are reunited, hearts are being healed, and lives are being transformed.



God bless you and have a joyful Christmas! And do feel free to call!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Reith".

Bruce Reith | Executive Director

MORE WAYS TO GIVE

GIVE \$2.70 This small amount makes a big impact: it gives more than a hot meal to a hungry person, it gives hope.

GIVE MONTHLY Your continued support helps us respond effectively just as the need arises.

VOLUNTEER We are always seeking passionate, dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers to join us. Email volunteer.services@hopemission.com to get started.

LEAVE A LEGACY Remember Hope Mission in your will. Call (780) 453-3877 to find out how a planned gift will uplift people in need for years to come.

DONATE GOODS As winter cold sets in, we are in need of warm clothing, especially jackets, ski gloves, underwear and socks, toques, boots, hoodies and jeans.

HOPE BARGAIN SHOPPE Our thrift store is full of great finds, just in time for Christmas. All proceeds go directly to Hope Mission programs and services. Visit the southside store at 2403 Ellwood Drive.

BE AN ADVOCATE Hope Mission relies on word of mouth to extend our reach. Share the mission of Hope with friends, family and co-workers.

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