

Rescue Portland

November 2011



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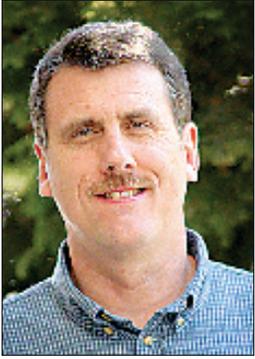
Life Without Direction But One Movie Gave Chris a *Story of Hope!*

If Chris' life were a movie, the first scene would show a young boy looking on as his step-father abused his mom. Jump ahead several years to a scene where Chris' step-brother introduces him to pot and alcohol. Chris was just 10 years old.

Fast-forward a few more years. Chris is in high school now, drinking on the weekends, but he believes he has his habit under control. After graduation, Chris joins the Army. Daily beer binges connect him to the closest group of friends he's ever had.

CONTINUES INSIDE

Retelling the Story



Our New Life Recovery Ministry dramatically changes residents from the inside out. Their lives get turned upside-down. They are new creations. Transformed. That's why we share their stories with you in *Rescue Portland*—so you can experience and celebrate their incredible journeys, too.

Sometimes recovery residents are reluctant to share their story through video or print. Some simply are more reserved by nature. But most say, “Me? Really?”

But there's nothing interesting about my story.”

When residents are in the middle of major life change, bravely facing the obstacles of every day of recovery, they can hardly see how great the big picture of their journey is. Chris' recovery story is so dense that we could only use single sentences to describe entire chapters of his life. Our homeless guests are in the thick of the fight with their intense struggles of homelessness. Many of our guests' and residents' histories are epic. The magnitude is obvious to an onlooker, but almost ordinary to the person who's going through it.

When residents do agree to be featured in a newsletter, they are always struck by hearing their own story told back to them in their own voice. It all becomes clear, and more real. They see the great distance they've traveled from their old lives—not just the little steps, but the vast journey God has carried them through to new life. They *get it*. And when that happens, I'm reminded to take a step back from the everyday details of my own life to remember God's greater purpose.

Thank you for the help you provide to help support Chris and others in their unique journeys. Through your prayers, your donations, your time spent volunteering and your gifts, you make possible the stories that turn lives around completely. You help point our guests and residents to Christ, the true author of our lives.

Praising God for your support,

Eric Bauer, Executive Director



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Mission Needs

It's cold outside! Please help us gather sweatshirts, hoodies, gloves, jeans and blankets to keep people warm.

We also need:

- Socks
- Sleeping bags
- Backpacks
- Deodorant (spray or solid)
- Disposable razors
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste
- Travel-size toiletries
- New undergarments
- Life Recovery Bibles (NLT)
- Yard equipment: mowers, weed-eaters, leaf blowers
- Digital video recorders for our Learning Centers

Your donations of practical items make relationships possible! Please bring donations to the Burnside Shelter at **111 W. Burnside, Portland**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Short-term street parking is available at our front door.

The Next Step for Men's Recovery



Next Step, our men's New Life Recovery Ministry center, will see a major renovation this spring. Once funding is in place, we will double our capacity for recovery residents and add office space for staff and volunteers. The renovated property will house up to 45 men (currently 16–18) and free up valuable space at the Burnside Shelter for increased services.

Thank you for your support of this critical renovation. Please pray for the funds and partners in this project, plus the additional renovations needed at our Burnside Shelter that would allow us to move more program activities to Next Step. God is at work at the Mission, and your support helps ensure that work is carried out!

Left: Residents enjoy dinner and fellowship each night at Next Step.

Life Without Direction

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

On assignment in Germany, Chris skips out on his Army duties to go to church one Sunday. Completely caught up in emotion, he makes the decision to accept Christ. But nothing else changes in Chris' life, he gets discharged because of his addiction, and his life story picks up speed in its downward spiral.

Chris returns home and goes through a hasty marriage, only to get divorced a few years later. When he gives up on life completely, Chris takes methamphetamine in a hotel bathroom while his two young sons watch TV in the next room.

"I prayed that God would kill me. Just let me die, God. Let me die."

Movies have always been part of Chris' life. It was the big screen that gave Chris his first escape from reality as a kid. When he was just 11 or 12, he'd take the bus down to the theater in Milwaukie, and he'd catch one or two shows, all by himself. "I got a lot of my morals and values off TV. I didn't get that type of upbringing from my parents."

After the epic climax of Chris' life—that sordid scene when he took drugs in the hotel room—Chris made a drastic step to change the course of his life's story. He watched another movie—one of the *Stories of Hope* videos on Portland Rescue Mission's website. Chris was comforted by the man's similar struggles. "So I left where I was and came downtown."

Today, the scenes of Chris' life play out quite differently. Most mornings offer Chris the opportunity to get up early, exercise with his fellow residents of New Life Recovery Ministry at the Mission and eat a healthy breakfast. He meets with recovery chaplains to face the negative habits he developed as a young man, digging deep to find the root causes of those addictions.

Chris reads the Bible more intently than he did when he first became a Christian, and he's learned that Bible study can be a rich and essential life habit. He experiences worship services each week, both in recovery and at church, and he's learning to play the guitar, too. He even experienced his first Class 4 rapid on the men's rafting and camping trip last summer. Today, Chris lives a full, satisfying life.



Chris healed in New Life Recovery. Now he's back in school, studying so that he can help others like him through their own addictions.

Chris has also learned that the morals he learned through movies as a kid don't always apply to real life. He grew up using humor to avoid intimacy and tear people down, but today, he is sensitive to people's struggles and encourages them when they're going through difficult circumstances. "I've really learned how to connect with people and find something positive about them to bring out."

Chris completed New Life Recovery Ministry this September, and he began taking college courses at Portland Community College to pursue social work. He wants to give back even more—to help people like the broken man he used to be. "There are so many people out there who are hurting. But there is a choice. You don't have to die. You can live. It's going to take time, patience and pain, but you work through it. I guarantee and promise that it will change."

With God in control of Chris' scenes from now on, the movie of his life will forever lead to a happy ending.



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RedLaser app
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QR code reader.

 It was a *Story of Hope* that led Chris to the Mission. Now he has his own at www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Chris

ReachOut

From the Feet to the Heart

Elaine walked to the Mission, exhausted. She looked forward to a warm meal in an encouraging environment, even if it only gave her relief from the street for an hour or so. As she settled into her seat to wait to go to the dining room, a young woman approached her.

**“Would you like to have your feet massaged before dinner?”
Callie, a volunteer, asked Elaine.**

“A foot massage? Right now?” Elaine hadn’t expected this. But she’d been on her feet all day. A massage certainly would relieve some pain. She nervously followed Callie to a room just beyond the busy Chapel.



Faithful volunteers serve the women each week at our Burnside Shelter evening meals, building relationships and praying for specific needs.

Elaine looked around the small room, lit by lamps and the sunset through open windows. There was a quiet buzz of conversation among other guests and volunteers. Elaine found a chair in the corner. She sat down, put her bags on the floor, took her shoes off and relaxed.

“Oh, I love that music,” Elaine said, closing her eyes. “It’s so peaceful.”

“Yeah, we try to make it feel relaxing in here.” Callie sat on a small stool, easing Elaine’s feet into a tub of warm water, colored pink with bath salts that gave off a peppermint aroma.

“How can I pray for you tonight?” Callie asked as she massaged Elaine’s calloused feet. She was never sure whether a woman would be open to prayer. She looked up at Elaine, hopefully. Elaine just sighed, blinking away tears.

“I’m so lonely,” she said. “I don’t even know how I got here—living on the streets on my own. But I feel ignored and worthless. It’s like people don’t even know I’m there.”

Callie rubbed the arches of Elaine’s feet as she listened. She was struck by the way Elaine described her feelings. Despite their different worlds, Callie understood what Elaine was going through.

“I feel like that sometimes, too.” Callie revealed. “I’ve never been homeless, but I do get lonely sometimes. It can be confusing and really painful.”

Elaine looked down at Callie, nodded and smiled through her tears. Callie dried Elaine’s feet and reached up to take her hand. “Lord, remind Elaine that she is your beautiful, valuable, special child. Walk with her through this time of loneliness, and put people in her life who will show her Your love.”

Every Tuesday, women like Elaine who come to the Burnside Shelter for dinner are invited to “ReachOut.” They receive a foot massage, homemade cookies, coffee and prayer. Some women are regulars, while others only visit once or twice. They experience a quiet, positive atmosphere, exclusively for women—drastically different from the rest of their lives on the streets.

Please pray for this ministry, knowing that God is truly at work in the lives of women in Portland. Your support of the Mission, especially during the winter season, is integral in providing services like ReachOut that offer comfort and hope to the hurting people of Portland.

This story is inspired by an evening at ReachOut. All names are fictional.



GIVE SOMETHING MORE

Meals, shelter and basic necessities, along with events like ReachOut, are often the first things people experience at the Mission. Your support helps lead them to total life recovery!