



Lighthouse

Portland Rescue Mission | Spring 2024

Springing
Forward

April's
Journey to
Recovery

Giving Hope. Restoring Life.

BRIGHTER THAN EVER



Eric Bauer, Executive Director

“Because of the Lord’s
great love we are not
consumed, for his
compassions never fail.
They are new every
morning; great is your
faithfulness.”

Lamentations
3:22-23



For 75 years, Portland Rescue Mission has been a beacon of God’s love and grace, providing compassionate care for our neighbors facing hunger, homelessness, and addiction. It all began in 1949 with a simple act of kindness when John Van Diest, Sr., and his wife, Tress, brought a big pot of soup and a warm smile to West Burnside to serve those in need on the streets of Portland. **From that initial pot of soup to the comprehensive services offered today, our commitment to transforming lives remains steadfast.**

My wife, Ruth, and I joined Portland Rescue Mission in 2006, with our children attending the same elementary school as several children at Shepherd’s Door, our women and women with children program in NE Portland. **As we watched our family grow up serving in the Mission, we’ve had the privilege of witnessing first-hand the impact of the programs offered by the Portland Rescue Mission in our community.** It’s the same impact of hope first sparked by John and Tress in 1949.

Today, Portland faces a critical inflection point in its homeless crisis, marked by a convergence of economic obstacles, the pervasive threat of highly potent and dangerous drugs, mental health challenges, and housing shortages.

In 2023 alone, we served and cared for over 6,000 people, providing each person hope-giving support and, for many, a new start in life.

We continue to adapt our services to the changing landscape while enriching our grace-based community with care and transforming lives. The services provided by Portland Rescue Mission are made possible by community members – like YOU. Everything we do at the Mission is free to those in need and 100% funded by the Portland community. **We take zero government funding.**

As you read April’s story, pages 4-5, about her journey from despair to hope, I invite you to pray for her and all who need the love and support of Portland Rescue Mission. **Your ongoing partnership is invaluable, allowing us to extend grace and hope to hundreds of individuals daily.** We are deeply thankful for friends like you who continue to build upon our 75-year legacy of hope and restoration.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Bauer".

Eric Bauer Executive Director,
Portland Rescue Mission

Portland Rescue Mission

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF GIVING HOPE AND RESTORING LIFE



1949

Portland Rescue Mission is founded by John and Tress Van Diest.

1951

The Burnside Shelter opens in Portland's Old Town district.



1998

Drive Away Hunger vocational and donation program launches.



2003

Shepherd's Door opens in NE Portland serving women and mothers with children.



2013

The Harbor opens in East Portland, where men are supported in healing and recovery.



2020

Mobile outreach services begin operation.



2021

Fresh Start Catering begins serving the community.



Springing Forward

April's Journey to Recovery

April sat in quiet anguish at a local bar on a dreary Spring morning. It was 10 am, and April was drowning her sorrows in vodka. **The immense weight from the years of addiction bore down on her. In a moment of clarity, April reached out to every detox center she could find.** Desperate for help, her pleas fell on deaf ears. That is until she called Shepherd's Door, a haven provided by Portland Rescue Mission for women and their children in search of recovery and a new life.

Fueled by your generosity, Shepherd's Door met April in her darkest days. She entered Shepherd's Door's New Life Program broken and lost with a deep yearning for change.


"Shepherd's Door became my refuge when the world turned me away. It's not just a recovery program; it's a place that mends souls."

"I had lost my home, my kids went to live with their dad, and I found myself on the streets. I had destroyed my life," she explained. **"I was bankrupt - spiritually and emotionally."**

As she embraced recovery, April discovered her worth was not found in a bottle or a string of failed relationships. **"For years, I tried to find validation in the bottom of a glass or through the next high. Shepherd's Door helped me to find my worth in Jesus. It brought me hope and accountability,"** April reflected.

Your generous partnership has transformed April's life through the incredible work of Portland Rescue Mission's Shepherd's Door.





With the offerings at Shepherd's Door, April discovered a renewed sense of purpose. She developed the tools and vocational skills to rebuild her life.

“If I could go back to that woman drinking vodka at 10 am, I would tell her that it’s not too late to ask for help and she is worthy of hope,” said April. **“I would say addiction is not your identity, but do the work to surrender your life to Jesus.”**

Thank you for providing April and many other men and women the opportunity to find healing, regain confidence, and walk into a brighter future.

Learn more about how Shepherd's Door's New Life Program meets the needs of those in our community by visiting:

www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Women



Shepherd's Door is breaking generational cycles of trauma and addiction in the lives of those we serve.

A large photograph of three women smiling. The woman on the right is wearing an orange top, the woman in the middle has blonde hair, and the woman on the left is wearing a dark top with a teal scarf.

Your support provides relational care and life restoration programs.
Give today at: www.PortlandRescueMission.org/SpringNL

SHINING COMPASSION

CATCHING UP WITH NEW LIFE PROGRAM ALUMNI

“ You come to a place like this where this place shatters the word ‘impossible’. **Every place that I went to, and there are handfuls of them, can never do what this place has done.** It took the Harbor, the hearts, the love, the encouragement. ”

“ I just praise God for the generous donors and people who volunteer to do these things because if it wasn't for them, without them – **it's just amazing how God works through people's generous hearts.** ”



INTO OUR COMMUNITY

“ **Every life has an opportunity to come out of darkness and into the light and experience the transformation that Shepherd’s Door brings through Jesus Christ,** and everything that he’s rooting and cheering you on to do and be for Him and His Kingdom. ”

“ Surrendering doesn’t mean you’re losing; it’s just going over to the winning side and it’s a powerful thing. **They’re not just trying to help us figure out life for the year while we’re here, they’re trying to set us up to thrive for the rest of our lives.** ”



CHRISTYL



AVERY

DISCOVERING CHANGE

THROUGH PORTLAND RESCUE MISSION'S DRIVE AWAY HUNGER VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Launched in 1998, Drive Away Hunger is a pillar of the vocational services Portland Rescue Mission offers to empower individuals to reclaim their independence and drive towards a brighter future. The program provides participants with opportunities to engage in the process of refurbishing and selling donated vehicles offering hands-on experience and practical skills training.

The vocational training that one of our alumni, Jeff, experienced enabled him to become a tow-truck driver by equipping him with the tools needed to rebuild his career. **“As a tow truck driver, I’ve learned the ropes,”** explained Jeff. **“With the support from Drive Away Hunger’s training, I now understand the value of perseverance, compassion, and the power of a second chance. Now, every tow I make is not just a job; it’s a symbol of hope for someone else who might need a lift in life.”**

As part of our holistic support to those in need, vocational training opportunities allow participants to gain valuable expertise and confidence, which can empower them to pursue sustainable employment and economic independence, thus fostering long-term stability and self-sufficiency within the community.

We encourage you to learn more about the Drive Away Hunger program and discover how you can donate a tax-deductible vehicle or purchase a safety-checked used vehicle while providing food, shelter, and vocational training to the men and women we serve.



To donate, scan the QR Code or visit us online at:
www.DriveAwayHunger.org



Portland
Rescue Mission