



Lighthouse

Portland Rescue Mission | Fall 2024

Safe at Last

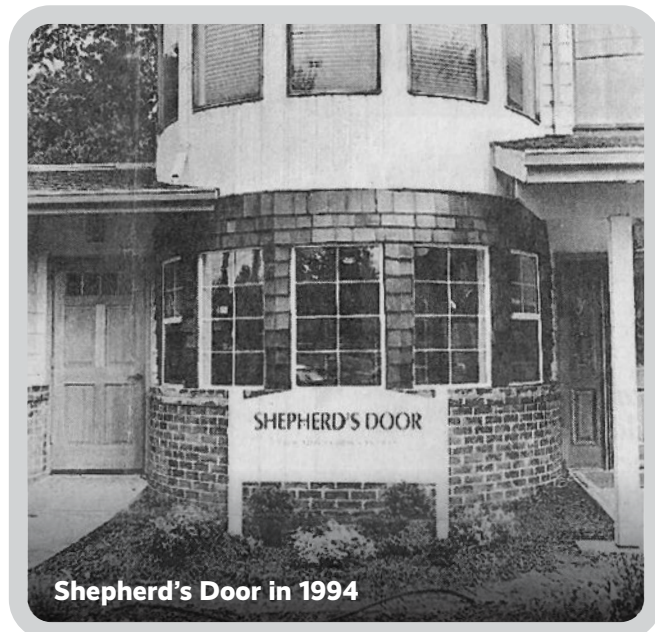
**Cassie Embraces
Safety, Community,
and Hope**

Giving Hope. Restoring Life.

Portland Rescue Mission Celebrates 75 Years of Bringing Hope to the Marginalized...

For 75 years, Portland Rescue Mission has been a beacon of compassion, love, and grace for people suffering from homelessness, hunger, and addiction on the streets of Portland. Through the years, as the conditions surrounding homelessness and addictions evolved, we have been nimble to pivot and address many hurdles while staying true to our commitment to give hope and restoring life.

During the early years of the Mission, the homeless demographic in America was almost primarily male. In fact, in 1980, only about 5% of those experiencing homelessness were women and children. By 2000, that number swelled to 42%. As we saw an influx of women needing care and support in the mid 1980s, we knew we needed to help. The emerging demographic of homeless women needed a safe place to restore their lives.



Shepherd's Door in 1994

We answered the call to support women and women with children by diving into the deep end of the pool to invest in this great need. Our goal was to stop the cycle of poverty and addiction, and transform the family dynamic for good. In 1994, we opened Shepherd's Door which served women in Northeast Portland as they found healing through addiction recovery, vocational training, spiritual encouragement, and transitional support in a safe, retreatlike setting. However, the need continued to rise and in 2003 we expanded Shepherd's Door to serve up to 41 women and 25 children.

Recovery affects more than just the women in our program at Shepherd's Door; recovery is also about their children.



Shepherd's Door today in 2024

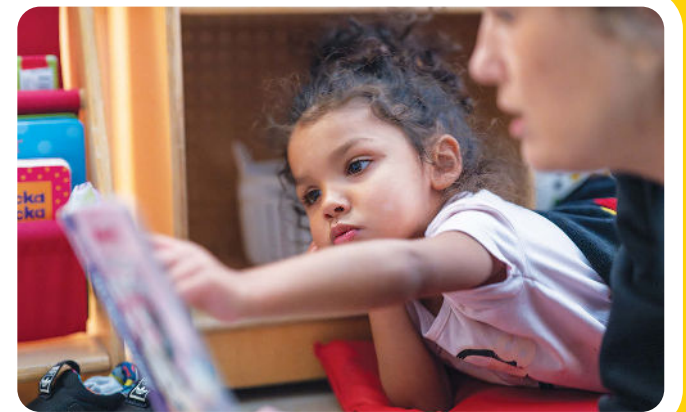
A core feature of Shepherd's Door is the Children's Center, which offers services to help the children of the mothers in our program to heal from traumatic events as well as grow through educational and social skills development, group play, and Bible lessons. Our dedicated and trauma-informed staff find unique ways to serve the Mission's littlest residents daily while also providing training to mothers through parenting classes. The fully integrated offerings enable the children to be onsite with their mothers as they both move to a path of healing and transformation, and into a life of hope and love.

Lives are changed daily at Shepherd's Door and through our Children's Center.

I am privileged to witness the transformation of lives and the reunification of families. The impact of the Mission on this community, especially the women we serve, is evident in stories like Cassie's on page 4 of this newsletter. Cassie's transformation would not have happened without dedicated community members like you supporting Portland Rescue Mission.

Thank you for supporting the Mission's first 75 years. We look forward to serving Portland, in partnership with you, for many years to come.


Eric Bauer,
Executive Director



Safe at Last

Cassie Finds Safety, Community, and Hope

When Cassie came to Shepherd's Door, our transformative New Life Ministry for women and women with children, she was broken and in deep despair. Crippled by years of abuse combined with her addiction, Cassie considered herself a functioning addict. She was in complete denial about her desperation.

"My motto was I could do it myself – I don't need anyone," expressed Cassie. "My life was miserable." Having found herself in an abusive marriage, walking on eggshells daily, Cassie trusted no one.

She chased happiness, trying to capture a feeling of contentment with each next drink or high, and she spiraled out of control.

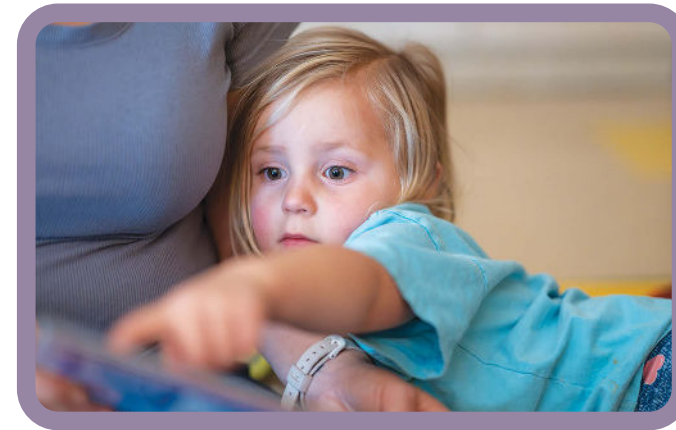
"I didn't think I deserved better. I treated my body like how I thought others viewed me - a garbage bag. I just dumped alcohol and drugs into my body to numb the pain," she conveyed.

As Cassie lost herself in her addiction, she threw away self-care, her hygiene diminished, and she became extremely unkempt. She didn't shower or brush her teeth, and her face became raw and scabbed. She was embarrassed by her appearance. And worse? Her kids became embarrassed of her. "I was unrecognizable. My addiction had taken me to new lows. Lows and losses ruled my life," expressed Cassie. "I was an empty shell in total darkness – I had lost everything."

She stayed in her relationship, not thinking she had any hope. One day, in the pit of her despair, she dropped to her knees on the kitchen floor and begged God to save her and her kids.



"Shepherd's Door is a healing oasis for women."



"I remember crying out: God, please save me from myself. Save my kids and take them to safety," she recalled. "I had rejected God all these years, but He met me right where I was at. In the depths of my addiction, He comforted me."

Cassie was accepted into the Shepherd's Door program shortly after this revelation. She arrived with her daughter, Ellie, shell-shocked, desperate, and thankfully, finally safe. Initially, Cassie anticipated staying for five weeks to complete the Discovery Program and hurry home to her older children. "I wanted to get sober and get my older kids back right away," Cassie explained.

"Yet, God had another plan. He knew my way wasn't working, and I needed to surrender, let Him lead, and do the necessary work."

Cassie decided to join our year-long New Life program. She faced the truth of her choices and the reality of her situation. Through the guidance of the staff and volunteers at Shepherd's Door, she began to take accountability for healing from generational harm. In trusting in the healing process, she learned that being a good mom meant accepting the truth of her life and taking care of herself so that she could love her children to the fullest.

In turn, Cassie's daughter Ellie thrived in the Children's Center at Shepherd's Door. At two and a half years of age, Ellie was not potty trained when she arrived at the Mission, and she was almost completely nonverbal. The staff at the Children's Center potty trained Ellie in three days. Weekly, Ellie began to blossom. She grew through educational and social skills development provided by the loving and highly trained staff. Ellie became an energized and feisty child full of love and smiles.

"Shepherd's Door is a healing oasis for women," Cassie declared. "Women who enter this place find committed people full of grace and love."

We are pleased to share that Cassie recently graduated from the New Life Program in April. Like so many in our community, her struggles and revelations were real, and her accomplishments over the last year have been remarkable. We all need safety, community, and most importantly, hope.



www.PortlandRescueMission.org/FallNL



BRIGHTER

THAN EVER

Celebrating Recent Graduations

at Shepherd's Door and The Harbor



In addition to Cassie's graduation, we are honored to share three additional graduations from Shepherd's Door: Emily, April, and Theresa!

Congratulations, Paul and Kyle! The Harbor's newest graduates from our New Life Program.

"I got the help I desperately needed to become the mom my son deserved. Thank you to everyone at Shepherd's Door."

"When we live true to ourselves, we can live life to the fullest. I'm beyond grateful for the women at Shepherd's Door and excited for what the Lord has planned for me next!"

"As long as I stay close to God, I know I will continue to grow into the woman He wants me to be. I'm forever grateful for the staff and volunteers who poured into me."

"It would have been completely impossible to rebuild my life without the support of a community of men. As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

"I was on the streets for over a year, and The Harbor program helped me get my life straight again. We need more places like this in America."

- EMILY

- APRIL

- THERESA

- KYLE

- PAUL



CATCHING UP

with Alumni, Kari, and Her Adventures with Fresh Start Catering

When Kari was a participant at Shepherd's Door, she was active in food service, learning how to plan, prepare, and serve various healthy menu options. As she gained confidence with her skillset, Kari began to work with Fresh Start Catering, the Mission's vocational program that provides on-the-job training to program participants while also serving the community with a delicious array of catering options.

Today, Kari is an employee of Fresh Start Catering where she works alongside our team of caterers and uses her talents to serve others in our community.

“Working with Fresh Start Catering elevated my job skills and boosted my confidence,” said Kari. **“It has brought me back into the community, in a healthy way with a lot of integrity, knowing I am preparing and serving amazing, high-quality food.”**

Simply put, Fresh Start Catering is here to partner with our program participants to gain on-the-job skills needed to serve you and your friends delectable seasonal menus made from fresh ingredients, backed by years of experience, and crafted with a generous portion of culinary care.

Fresh Start Catering is actively taking Fall 2024 reservations from the community. Visit them at www.FreshStart.Catering or call **503-746-9685**.



Scan the QR code or visit the link below to give to the Mission today:

www.PortlandRescueMission.org/FallNL

