

THE CROSSING

Sharing and Caring in Northern Nevada since 1963

I've always been addicted to something

Since she was 16, Cassie has been stuck in a self-destructive cycle that goes something like this:

Commit to staying sober. Hang out with the "wrong" friends. Get high "just this once." Stay high. Go on the run. Get caught and arrested. Do some jail time. Get out. Go to rehab. Commit to staying sober . . . And then . . . start it all over again.

She's been through that routine about six times in the past 10-12 years.

"I've always been addicted to something," says Cassie. "I'd always get hooked. I would think, *I'm just having fun. No big deal.* The drugs made me not even care about the consequences. I just kept doing it over and over."

Escaping the cycle

Cassie started using drugs when her parents were going through a divorce. She believed their split was her fault (it wasn't), and the drugs helped her forget. But it soon became an addiction, and the cycle had begun.

Earlier this year, Cassie reached rock bottom. She says she was actually relieved when arrested "because I just can't help myself

when I'm out there." When it came time for sentencing, Cassie begged the judge to send her to Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. The judge agreed, and she enrolled in a 13-month program.

She's been escaping the cycle ever since.

"It actually would've been easier to go to prison, because it would've been a much shorter amount of time," she says. "But I really wanted help. I want to recover, whatever it takes.

"Now I can see the changes happening inside me. I can see the change of not wanting to do drugs any more. And now that I have God in my life, and I'm praying every day, I know I'm going to be clean!"

Cassie



"The drugs made me not even care about the consequences. I just kept doing it over and over."

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Reno-Sparks
Gospel Mission

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HOLIDAY VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS NEEDED!

Winter is the busiest time of the year at the Mission, as we strive to ease the burden of the homeless and those less fortunate out on the street.

Our community dinners at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and our traditional "Random Acts of Kindness" event, where staff and residents pass out hundreds of turkey and ham meals to local residents, require many of the following items:

- *Warm clothing* (gloves, scarves, knit hats, thick socks, thermal undergarments, boots, etc.)
- *Winter coats* (all sizes, especially men's large and extra large)
- *Blankets*
- *Hygiene kits*
- *Wrapped new toys* (Labeled with age and gender. We have a need for older children and pre-teen gifts, like art supplies, etc.)
- *Turkeys and hams* (fresh or frozen)
- *Nonperishable canned food*
- *Coffee*
- *Baked goods for "Random Acts of Kindness" on Dec. 18*

SOMETHING FUN TO HELP:

"Stuff a Sock!"

1. Get a new pair of tube socks — place one inside the other.
2. Stuff the sock with travel-sized items, such as toothpaste, a toothbrush, deodorant, soap, lip balm, mittens, gloves, etc.
3. Tie the end with a ribbon (pink or red for women, blue or green for men).
4. Bring them to us and we'll make sure they get into the hands, of homeless people!

→ If you can help in any of these areas, please call us at **775-323-7999**.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Stirring the Waters This Holiday Season

Dear Friend of Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, I think of the holidays as a season of hope, a time of expectations. I think that's true for all of us, including those who come to the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. They're all expecting something. They may not know exactly what, but they're being drawn with the hope that something good will happen.

It reminds me of the story of the Pool of Bethesda in John 5. The sick, lame, and paralyzed would come there, waiting for an angel to stir the waters. Legend had it that once the waters were stirred, the first person to get into the pool would be healed.

It's sort of like that here. People gather around the Mission, day after day, waiting for something to happen. They may be expecting just a meal or something more. They may even have some clue that it's going to be about God.

And it is about God. They begin to see that even though there are still consequences for their choices and actions, they have hope that God will get them through it. That they're not alone anymore. That God is real, that He's personal, and that He wants a relationship.

When they come to the Mission, they meet Jesus. Christmas is all about Jesus being born and entering into human history. The Baby Jesus becomes a Man with a mission — to show us the real God and ultimately to be the sacrifice for us. And we get to show people that!

That's when I think about friends like you, and all of our donors who make it possible. I think you're incredible, the way you give and support the Mission. You give us the gift of being able to help others, and I can't thank you enough.

Your servant,

Rick Redding



"People gather around the Mission, day after day, waiting for something to happen."

Please remember our homeless and hun

With the seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas just weeks away, please remember all those in need here in Reno-Sparks — especially those who are homeless, hungry, sick, and lonely. For them, the holidays can be the most painful time of the year.

Your gift today will bring gratitude and Christmas joy to so many hurting men, women, and children who will come to the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission seeking hope and another chance at life. As a faithful friend of this ministry, you already know how much your support really means to these precious souls.

I've been angry my whole life

I've been angry pretty much my whole life, because I had a brutal childhood.

My parents were physically abusive. I was taken away from them when I was 2, and I went to live with my grandparents. At 7, I was kidnapped and sexually abused. I got away from the guy, but the horrible things he did stayed with me.

After that, I wasn't a kid anymore. Something snapped in my brain, and I never felt right ever again. I always had an empty pit in my stomach, and I never trusted anyone.

I got drunk for the first time when I was 14, and I loved it. Before long, I was drinking all the time, and getting in a lot of fights. It was a constant downward spiral for the next 24 years.

I did some rehabs. I got arrested several times. I've been to jail, and I've lost jobs. I ruined my first marriage, and almost ruined my second. All because of my alcoholism.

A year ago, I was sitting in a detox facility downtown, planning to get out and then go drink myself to death. But

some guys from Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission convinced me to try their rehab program. They came at just the right time and probably saved my life.

I've now been sober for more than a year. I've forgiven my abusers from my childhood. It wasn't easy, but I decided to let God take care of it — and take it off of me. It's freeing.

Best of all, my wife, who wanted a divorce, has seen the changes in my life and we're working to reconcile. Now I just want to build my relationship with God, heal my marriage, and help others.

Thank you for giving me a second chance!

Bart

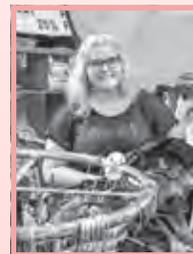
Thanks to the Mission and your help, I'm a new man today!



“After detox, I was planning to go drink myself to death.”

Every year, hundreds of students, families and others volunteer at the Mission. What do they do?

You name it! They teach art classes; organize and hang clothing at our thrift stores; serve food; spend a week helping others; work inside our giant warehouse; work outside our giant warehouse; and help wherever they're needed.



→ If you'd like to volunteer, please call Mark Giuliano at 775-323-0386, ext. 16.

We'll get you plugged in!

Help hungry neighbors this holiday season

Thank you for being a special friend to those in need

Thanks to you, hungry and homeless guests at the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission enjoy nutritious meals, safe shelter, counseling, spiritual nurture, love, and other tangible care that provides them with the real help they need to turn their lives around today and for eternity.

In the spirit of this holy season of giving, we encourage you once again to give a donation of any amount to help lessen the suffering and pain of those who come through our doors. For your convenience, please use the response slip in this newsletter to give your donation. You may also donate on our secure website at www.rsgm.org. Thank you for all you do on behalf of hurting people!

“Your gift today will bring gratitude and Christmas joy to so many hurting men, women, and children.”

WALK A MILE



It's time to pull out those walking shoes for the Mission's annual "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" event set for 9 a.m., Feb. 20, 2016, at Wingfield Park in downtown Reno.

More than 500 people annually show up for the walk, which provides a small glimpse of street life as they walk through back streets from the park to the Mission. Rain or shine, walkers pass out hygiene kits to the needy along the way.

The walk has turned into friendly competition among local businesses vying for the coveted "Golden Shoe" awarded to the largest group. Reigning champ Walmart bested the likes of Best Buy, Triad Plastics, Pepsi, and Grocery Outlet at the last four walks.



"We see what a difference the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission makes in the community, and we want to help out in whatever way we can," Walmart store director Scott Yoder said of his 100 employees who participated.

The event is also perfect for student groups, families, and moms with little ones in strollers.

Early registration is \$25 per adult (12 and older) or \$20 per adult for groups of 20 or more. Early registration ends Feb. 17. At the event, registration is \$30 per adult.

All proceeds directly help the homeless and needy in Northern Nevada.

If you, your group or your company want to become involved, please contact Mark Giuliano at 775-323-0386, ext. 16 or visit www.rsgm.org and download a flyer.

To learn more about the walk, check out our video at: <http://tinyurl.com/pj6kroo>

TAX DEDUCTION

There's still time to make your 2015 tax-deductible gift to the Mission!

We rely solely on the generosity of donors like you! And our pledge to you is that every donation stays in Northern Nevada to directly help the hungry, homeless, addicted, and abused.

The need is great. This year alone, we've served over 425,000 meals and provided 55,000 beds for emergency shelter. Thousands of others received free clothing or groceries. And hundreds more were helped through our free year-long substance abuse recovery program.

Your gift ensures that no one is ever turned away from the hope they find at the Mission!

HOW CAN YOU GIVE?

• Cash/check/credit card donations.

All transactions are securely handled, but please note that your gift must be received or post-marked by Dec. 31 to count for 2015.

• Personal property.

Items such as appliances, cars, jewelry, coins, electronics, etc. All items are sold in our thrift stores and used to help needy people.

• Real estate/stocks/life insurance/bequests.

Contact your financial advisor to see how your gift can keep giving for years! If you do not have one, the Mission recommends **Chris Abts of Cornerstone Retirement at 775-853-9033.**

We thank you for your generosity and want you to know that we professionally secure and protect your donation and personal information. We never sell, lend, or otherwise share your information with any outside agency.

Thank you for your support of the Mission. You make a difference!

Happy New Year!



MY HOLIDAY GIFT

RM_45-1104_B03RE

YES, Rick, please use my gift to help reach struggling neighbors during the holidays.

Here is my donation of:

- \$20.50 to provide 10 meals and other assistance
- \$30.75 to provide 15 meals and other assistance
- \$61.50 to provide 30 meals and other assistance
- \$_____ to provide as many meals and care as possible

Please bill my credit card: (please print) VISA MC

ACCOUNT NO. _____ EXP. DATE _____

NAME ON ACCOUNT _____ SIGNATURE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

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Please mail this completed form and return it with your generous Holiday donation. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law. You may also give online at www.rsgm.org. You will receive a receipt.