

THE CROSSING

Sharing and Caring in Northern Nevada since 1963

“I FELT SO WORTHLESS” by Angi

was ready to end my life.

That’s how I felt before coming to the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. I was in trouble with the law because of my meth addiction, and authorities had taken my 5-year-old daughter away. The idea of living without my daughter was the hardest thing ever. *Ever.*

The judge in drug court gave me a choice: Go to jail, or come to the Mission. I didn’t know anything about the Mission, so I chose jail. I felt so worthless, like such a loser and a failure, I didn’t think I deserved a second chance.

But at the last minute, I changed my mind. I’m not sure why, but sitting there in that courtroom with my shackles on, I made a decision that I wouldn’t give up on myself.

When I first came here, I resisted. I didn’t unpack for two weeks; I was ready to run. But then I thought, *Okay, I’m here, I’m not going to deny it anymore. I’m going to make this work.*

Literally Saved My Life

I never intended to become a drug addict. I was only 18 when I had my first child, and I didn’t always make the best choices. After I started using meth, I got into selling.

I had another child and was mostly a “functioning addict.” I was a good mom during the day, but at night, I turned to my drugs and dealing.

I’d have spans of sobriety, but then start using again. The guilt and shame of being a bad mom would keep me there, and then that guilt and shame would make me quit. It was a vicious cycle.

Years later, I met another man; we married and had a daughter. But she was taken away when I got arrested. I hope to get her back someday, but it’s really hard for now.

But no matter what, I’m a better person now, thanks to the Mission. This place literally saved my life; there’s no doubt in my mind that if I hadn’t come here, I wouldn’t be breathing today. I had that much guilt and shame.

“My drug addictions drove me to the brink of suicide.”

But now, I’ve forgiven myself. Now, I’m a child of God. Forgiven. Redeemed. Made new. *Thank you!*

*Because of your kindness,
Angi is now a new person.*

FEBRUARY
ISSUE 2017

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**Reno-Sparks
Gospel Mission**

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THERE'S STILL TIME TO PLAN on attending our annual "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" event set for 9 a.m. Feb. 25, 2017, at Wingfield Park in downtown Reno.

About 600 people — from kids to grandpas — will make the annual, mile-long walk in support of our services to the area's homeless and hurting. The walk ends at the Mission, where walkers can have a tour of the facility and learn more about our operations.

Vans will be available to transport participants back to Wingfield Park.

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

Registration is \$25 per adult (12 and older) or **\$20 per adult for groups of 20 or more.** We highly encourage registration prior to the walk to avoid lines on the day of the event.

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

To join us, please contact **Mark Giuliano** at **775-323-0386, ext. 16**, or just show up at the park before 9 a.m. on Feb. 25.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Stunned and Excited

Dear Friend of the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission,

"The pastures in the wilderness are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches . . . rejoice in the LORD your God . . . because he sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before."
— Joel 2:22-23



"We're thankful for spring's arrival. Stunned at its beauty. Excited at its freshness. It's the same with Jesus."

Spring.

In warmer areas, spring doesn't get the welcome it deserves. But in places like Reno, we always seem to be thankful at its arrival. Stunned at its beauty. Excited at its freshness.

It's the same with Jesus, isn't it?

Some people don't give Jesus the welcome he deserves. But others always seem thankful at his arrival. Stunned at his beauty. Excited at his freshness.

At Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, we deal with the homeless. Drug addicts. Alcoholics. Gang members. Prostitutes.

The hurting.

When Jesus comes into their lives, it's something like spring as described in the verse above. Pastures are becoming green. Trees are bearing fruit. Vines are yielding their riches.

Things are becoming new.

It's much like that first Easter. People spring back to life. They're different. New. *Alive.*

As I think about your support of our work with the homeless and hurting, I want to thank you for helping these precious men and women walk out of their graves and into light.

That's Jesus. That's spring. And that's your compassion.

I'm always thankful. Always stunned. Always excited. Happy Easter!

Your servant,

Rick Redding

Struggling Neighbors Need

Spring is springing, and new life is coming to many at the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. That's exciting news!

But for the many men and women trying to survive on the streets, life holds little excitement — but lots of dangers, toils, and snares. *When will I eat? Will I be safe tonight? Will I ever sleep in a real bed again?*

It's hard to imagine what it must be like to live like that, day to day, just trying to survive. The hope of thriving or flourishing? It's almost a foreign concept to hungry and homeless people just trying to make it through the day and through another night. *Some of them go to bed wondering if they'll even wake up the next morning.*

“I Got Tired of Doing Dumb Stuff”

Donyea knew he needed help, but he didn’t know where to turn, so he figured he’d just get himself arrested. He picked up a big stick and smashed the window of a parked car. Alarms went off, but the cops never came. But once he tried it, he was hooked.

Donyea just dropped the stick and walked away. But he couldn’t walk away from a devastating childhood. He was sexually abused by a neighbor when he was four years old. When his father, who lived elsewhere, “rescued” Donyea, things got no better.

“He beat me all the time,” Donyea says. “He would throw me in the bathtub and beat me with a cable till I passed out. So meth was my way of getting away from everything.”

Donyea started using when he was 12 and was addicted for a decade. It might have helped him to cope, but there were other issues. He had four children, by two different women, by the time he was in his mid-20s. And he was committing petty crimes along the way. And though he never got caught, he knew it was wrong.

“Finally, I just got tired of getting high and doing dumb stuff,” he says. “So I just walked in here, at the Mission.”

He is now a transformed man.

“I’m just finally growing up,” he says. “I’ve found the Lord and peace and joy in my life. My morals have changed. *I’ve* changed. I was never happy before. But I am now.”

Donyea’s oldest two kids have moved elsewhere with their mother, but he hopes to be reunited with his youngest two, who are staying with relatives,

“I’ve found the Lord and peace and joy in my life. My morals have changed. I’ve changed.”

when he completes the recovery program.

“When I look in the mirror now, I still see my old self, the person who was abused and in so much pain,” he says. “But I also see God’s child. I see a man who is destined for something. I see a new person.”

Donyea is now a new man, thanks to your support!

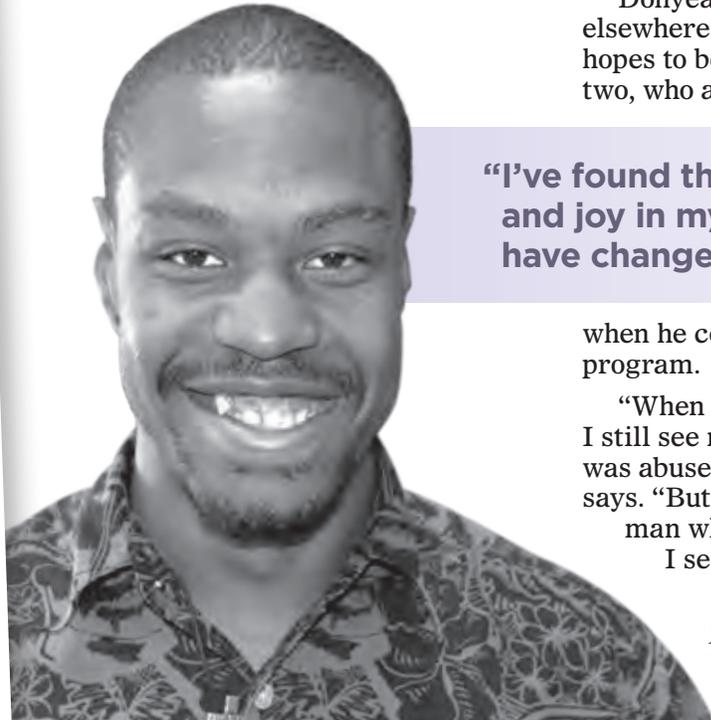


CONGRATULATIONS to the 30 graduates who completed our free, yearlong, life-change program in 2016!

We help people overcome their past to live productive lives today. From substance abuse recovery classes to vocational training to healthy relationships, we’re here to help.

If you or someone you love needs help, call us 24/7 at **775-329-0485**.

For more information, please visit our website at **www.rsgm.org** and our Facebook page at **www.facebook.com/renomission**.



Help bring new life to hurting people



“It’s hard to imagine what it must be like to live day to day, just trying to survive. Your gift can change that.”

Your Help More Than Ever!

Your support will help ease their fears

Your gift today will help alleviate those fears by providing a safe haven — and meals and clothes and a variety of services — for these struggling neighbors. Just read through this newsletter to see how much good your support can do!

To send your generous gift today, please use the reply slip enclosed, or make your donation online at **www.rsgm.org**. You may also call us at **775-323-0386**. Thank you for being a compassionate friend to men, women, and children who need your help.

Holiday Wrap Up

Another busy holiday season is in the books!



STREET TREATS

Cold temperatures and rain couldn't stop our lively annual Halloween "Street Treats" event, which attracted about **450 homeless and less-fortunate men, women, and children**. More than 100 volunteers gave away hundreds of needed items, such as hygiene products, food, gloves, socks, and other goodies. In their own special "kids zone" area, children played games, and received sweet goodies.

THANKSGIVING

Our generous donors helped us provide delicious turkey meals to more than 500 men, women, and children on Thanksgiving Day, while **giving away more than 400 winter coats** to those in need.



CHRISTMAS

Mission staff and volunteers made Christmas Day a special one for our hurting brothers and sisters (and their children) on the streets. Hot meals, toys for the children, and hygiene gifts for the adults provided wonderful holiday cheer **for over 600 people** attending the Mission's Christmas dinner.



VETERANS DAY PARADE

About **125 Mission staff and friends** marched in the **Reno Veterans Day Parade** to honor homeless veterans. The Mission supports veterans in crisis and in need by providing shelter, resources, and services.



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

More than 200 residents in low-income neighborhoods were greeted with turkeys, bags of groceries, baked goodies, and Christmas wreaths during our annual **"Random Acts of Kindness"** event. **Three teams of volunteers and staff traveled to two neighborhoods and a senior center** to bring the joy of Christmas to those in less-fortunate circumstances.

2016

For the entire 2016 year, we set a Mission record with about **438,000 meals** served to the homeless and needy. Another **55,000 beds** were available for shelter or addiction recovery services.

My Easter Gift

YES, Rick, please use my donation to bring the hope of Easter — fresh starts and new life — to men and women in desperate need.

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 _____

Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, Inc.
P.O. Box 5956
Reno, NV 89513-6956

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

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