

# MILESTONES

Recovery happens in relationships.

EASTER 2021

## Beauty out of Brokenness

When Melissa was a child, it was hard for her to believe her life would ever be beautiful.

*"Some of my earliest memories are of my parents using me as a weapon in the war that they had created between themselves," she says. "The majority of my early childhood was spent going back and forth between the two, always feeling like I had to choose sides."*

Melissa hated choosing. She longed for freedom from the constant turmoil she felt. The only thing that came close was how she felt when she had her first drink.

*"I remember this feeling of pure relief come over me. I no longer felt the pain I had been carrying around with me."*

### A False Hope

While that first drink seemed to help Melissa escape the trauma of her childhood, it soon took control of her life.

*"I was 15 years old when I came face to face with crystal meth, and at the time did not know the destruction this drug would cause," Melissa says.*

*Continued inside*

*"Who would have thought that going to jail and looking at 7 years of prison time would be my ticket to freedom?"*  
– Melissa

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# Beauty out of Brokenness Continued from cover

She partied all night and slept all day, skipping school and becoming a regular in juvenile hall until she became a teen mom. For the first few months after giving birth, Melissa stayed sober. But the old trauma, anxiety, and pain found a way to tighten their grip.

She sent her son to live with a family member and started using again.

*"I found myself living on the streets, lost and alone, dealing drugs to survive. When I realized I had reached my lowest point, I was sitting alone in the bathroom of an apartment with the lights off, with nothing but my alcohol and drugs to comfort me. The dark hole of depression I found myself in I will never forget."*

## A Glimpse of Beauty

Her turning point came when the police arrived with guns drawn and marched Melissa to jail.

*"The strange sense of relief I felt when I was handcuffed and put in the back of the police car that day is something that I cannot adequately describe."*

While in jail, Melissa applied to our 12-Month Residential Recovery Program at the Mission. When she was released, she came straight here.

*"During my time at the Rescue Mission, it was clear that I was changing for the better, but I didn't realize that those changes would continue to blossom even after my time there."*

## A Beautiful Future

Melissa met Jesus here at the Mission, and for the first time felt real freedom, lasting hope, and

unshakable peace. She graduated from the recovery program in 2015, and since then has lived a life she could have only dreamed of years ago.

She finished her associate's degree, moved into her own apartment, became an attentive mom, and was hired at a luxury hotel she once thought she'd never be good enough to set foot in. None of that could have happened without the generosity of Mission partners like you.

***"Santa Barbara Rescue Mission helped me take the dull, broken pieces of my life and put them back together by introducing me to a God that loves me unconditionally, and by helping me to realize that I am important, I am worthy, and most importantly, my past and my trauma are not my identity."***



*"The girl who spent her high school years in a drug-induced fog with no hope for the future is now a 32-year-old woman about to embark on a new journey as a communication major at UCSB. My smiles today are genuine, my heart is full, and I have finally found peace." – Melissa*





## Something Beautiful is Coming

Over the past year – with the pandemic and wide-spread shutdowns – did you ever feel trapped in darkness?

That's what addiction can feel like. It can feel like the crushing despair of Good Friday.

But the Easter story doesn't stop with the crucifixion. Even as Jesus breathed his last, when the earth shook and the sun stopped shining, beauty was still on the way.

Easter Sunday was coming.

We encourage people in our recovery program to wake up every day and look for something beautiful. If they can't see it, we tell them to look again tomorrow. Because the truth is, because of Easter, because of Jesus, even in the most challenging circumstances, beauty is still on the way.

That truth has helped me a lot this year, and I hope by reminding you of the beauty of Easter, it encourages you too.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Geyling'.

Rolf Geyling  
President





# 2020: A Year in Review

Since Easter last year, we've all had one of the most exhausting and challenging years we could have imagined. And yet, beautiful things have still happened. Hungry people have been fed. Homeless men and women have found safe shelter. Broken lives have been restored. Here's a look at what God, and the support of friends like you, allowed to happen in spite of the pandemic, economic struggles, state-wide shutdowns, job losses, and more!



**EASTER FEAST:** The Easter Feast looked a little different last year because all the meals were served in compostable to-go boxes. But thanks to the support of friends like you, we were still able to feed over 300 hungry people. Plus, because of other agency shutdowns, in April we were serving 33 more meals every day. Most of those individuals had nowhere else to get food.



**GRADUATIONS:** Not even a pandemic can stop people from experiencing new life and stepping into a brighter future. Although we weren't able to hold all of our graduation ceremonies in public, we still held family-only and virtual ceremonies, heard incredible testimonies, and celebrated the transformation of all our graduates!



**4TH OF JULY BBQ:** While we weren't able to have the full spectrum of carnival games and activities usually offered at our annual 4th of July celebration, everyone enjoyed a delicious BBQ dinner and the Women's Auxiliary provided plenty of raffle prizes to have our homeless guests smiling and feeling the love of our community.



**THE BAYOU DERBY:** Our annual benefit and auction were moved online, with hosted watch parties having smaller groups on their patios rather than gathering everyone at Rancho Dos Pueblos. It was a huge success, where Melissa shared her story, and we honored Chief of Police Lori Luhnnow. The event included a derby-style hat contest, catered meals, and incredibly generous friends of the Mission who matched donations and allowed us to exceed our fundraising goal to help transform the lives of even more desperate individuals in Santa Barbara! Thank you to the Women's Auxiliary for putting on this event.

\*Some photos were taken pre-COVID and social distancing restrictions.

## And because of your ongoing support,



## Here's What's Ahead:

Watch our website at [sbrm.org](http://sbrm.org) or find us on Facebook for dates of upcoming events:

- Spring Graduation
- Easter Feast
- 4th of July BBQ and Raffle
- Summer Graduation
- 20th Anniv. Bayou Fundraiser
- Fall Graduation
- Thanksgiving Feast
- Christmas Feast



## Sunshine for Every Season

The sun will rise 365 times this year. Some of those days will be holidays. Some, birthdays. Others will be work or vacation days. Every day will be different, yet it is always the same sun rising, shining and setting.

As predictable as the sun, a good estate plan is there for you every day, ready for whatever happens. A well-thought-out, current plan allows you to:

- Provide for your spouse, family and loved ones.
- Manage your hard-earned assets rather than them managing you.
- Maximize tax savings so you can direct more to those you love.

Best of all, when you have a plan, you have one thing that is as dependable as the sun climbing on the horizon: peace of mind.

We have a free planning guide to give you a great start on creating or revising your plan. To get started, contact Rebecca Weber at 805-966-1316 or visit [sbrmgift.org](http://sbrmgift.org).



**THANKSGIVING FEAST:** We rented round tables so that our guests could be safely spaced out and served a traditional and delicious Thanksgiving dinner in our dining room. Food was served restaurant-style with social distancing to minimize contact and keep everyone healthy.



**CHRISTMAS FEAST:** Christmas looked a lot different this year due to COVID. The ladies staying with us in our homeless shelter made gingerbread houses that we used as centerpieces on the tables set for their Christmas dinner! Thanks to our generous donors, there were Christmas gifts for all of our homeless guests, including gift cards to local restaurants.



# beautiful things are still happening.



**This is what new life looks like!** Each \$70 you give can help someone like Melissa go from being homeless, full of despair, and entrenched in addiction to becoming an upstanding member of our community who loves her family, works hard, and is giving back.

## Give an Easter Gift: *Share Hope and Offer New Life!*

As Jesus' followers watched Him die, the pain of Good Friday was so suffocating it was hard to imagine anything good or beautiful would ever come of His crucifixion. They walked away not realizing that in just a few days, something beautiful was going to happen.

Likewise, when individuals like Melissa first come to the Mission, their agony runs so deep, they can't imagine ever escaping.

**But Easter reminds us that even on the darkest nights, beauty and new life are just around the corner.**

At the Mission, we believe that. We believe that Jesus can change anyone. And while it's not instant, it's real, lasting, and transformational.

**That's why we can't give up. And to keep sharing that message and providing food, shelter, counseling, addiction recovery, and Christ-centered care, we need your help.**

Will you give an Easter gift so that someone like Melissa can get through today, so that tomorrow they can experience new life?



## Celebrating Kevin

Kevin Walz, a walking miracle who served on our staff for 12 years, has gone home to the Lord. A brief eulogy to him, along with a list of other people we're honoring this month, is included on your "In Recognition" page.

### My Easter Gift

A gift of \$70 will provide a full day of food, shelter, counseling, addiction recovery, hope, and Christ-centered care for someone like Melissa.

Yes, Rolf! I want to offer new life to someone in desperate need!  
I'm giving an Easter gift of:

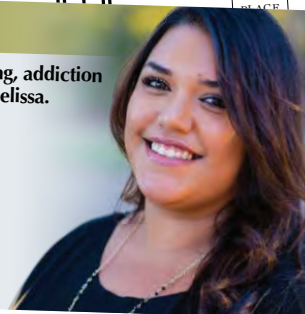
☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

From:

A Caring Neighbor



If you would like to charge your gift by credit card, please use reverse side or give via our secure website at [sbrm.org/hope](http://sbrm.org/hope)  
**Santa Barbara Rescue Mission** 535 East Yanonali St. | Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3254 | 805-966-1316 | [sbrm.org](http://sbrm.org)



**Your Easter gift of any amount will provide food, shelter, counseling, addiction recovery, hope, Christ-centered care, and more!**  
**You can also give simply and securely online at [sbrm.org/hope](http://sbrm.org/hope)**

**MILESTONES**  
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