

MILESTONES

Recovery happens in relationships.

CHRISTMAS 2021

No More Stolen Strawberries or Dumpster Donuts

"If nobody ever teaches you how to swim, if you find yourself in the ocean, it's not going to matter how badly you don't want to drown. . . That was me in my life. That's every struggling alcoholic and addict who isn't given a chance at being taught what it is that's fueling their behavior." —Sarah

FOR YEARS, Sarah survived on two things: stolen strawberries from a farm near the bridge she lived under and donuts from a bakery dumpster.

"You could jump in the donut dumpster, and you'd have to get in and out before the trash compactor smashed you to death," she says.

The Pull of Addiction

At the time, Sarah thought risking death just to get something to eat was the best option. That's how far down addiction had dragged this intelligent young woman who had gone to college and had a bright future ahead of her.

"My brother shared the same struggle. His addiction took over faster, caused more wreckage and got more attention, so for a very long time I was able to elude any suspicion of my own secret using," Sarah says.

Like so many young people, Sarah's addiction began with opioids – prescription pills. But after a while, they weren't enough, so she began using heroin. There was no way to hide anymore.

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"My regret for the person I used to be and the things I used to do and all the people I hurt are often battles I still fight. But because of the knowledge of who I am in Christ, and because of all the love and support I was given from everyone at the Mission and from amazing people like you, I can fight those battles." – Sarah

No More Stolen Strawberries or Dumpster Donuts

Continued from cover

"Over the early months of my heroin use, I lost my career and was never able to hold any job to follow. I lost my home, the car, my family. Everything. My brother and I both were put into multiple rehabs and given every opportunity to escape the hell we created."

Even after her brother died of an overdose, Sarah's addiction told her she didn't need to escape.

"My consequence ended up saving my life."

"I told my mom I would kill myself before I'd go to prison," she says. "It meant that I wouldn't be able to do drugs at my leisure."

Eventually, Sarah's addiction and the crimes that helped to fuel it caught up with her, and she was arrested. While behind bars, she found out about our 12-Month Residential Recovery Program and applied. When she was released, she came straight to our door.

"I arrived there three months clean and sober, scared out of my mind, and literally without anything, even shoes," Sarah says. "The twelve months that followed were the best, most educational, influential, and enriching months of my life."

Amazing Grace

The #1 reason that time was so good: Sarah met Jesus.

"My long overdue reunion with Him was just the beginning," she says. "God kept showering me with gifts during my time at the Mission. Through art therapy, yoga, time to hike or enjoy the beach, process groups, individual counseling, and especially, mandated involvement in twelve step fellowship and church, He unearthed the darkest parts of what had always been so sick in my soul. I grew up in my year there . . . I finally healed."

Today Sarah is a new person. She's been sober for over 3 years, volunteers weekly at the Mission, and manages a sober living house here in Santa Barbara.

"The words to "Amazing Grace" ring so very true for me, because I was in fact lost, but am now found, my chains of addiction are forever gone. Thank you so much for making it possible for me to be set free!"

Your Christmas gift today will help free someone else from the chains of addiction and a past full of regret.



It Really is Amazing

JUST LIKE SARAH, I love the song “Amazing Grace.”

The words truly embody our ministry. We’re all about breaking chains and allowing people to experience the freedom that God has for them. And I believe you are about freeing people, too. That’s why I’m so thankful for your partnership. You understand that life is broken, messy, and hard. You know that we all need Jesus, and we all need the grace He so freely offers.

The same grace that saved Sarah saves you, and it’s saving me. That’s the beauty of it. It puts us all on the same level playing field. It helps us remember that none of us is perfect. Jesus didn’t come to earth to pat us on the back and tell us we are good. He came to save us – all of us – through His grace.

He is so good that He showers grace upon us again and again and again. And he’ll never run out. Ever.

It really is amazing. And it’s an honor to get to partner with people like you to share that amazing grace with so many hurting people in our community.

One more thing – an invitation really. Even though “Amazing Grace” isn’t a Christmas carol, I hope you’ll play it at least once this Christmas season. When you do, slow down and listen to the words. And if it brings a tear to your eye, don’t worry, I feel the same way.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Rolf Geyling in white ink.

Rolf Geyling
President

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Cor. 12:9 NIV





Announcing Our New Resource Center

During the pandemic, with libraries closed, many of our homeless guests had nowhere to access computers. That meant they couldn't apply for replacement IDs, search for jobs, work on their resumes, apply for housing, get social security cards, and more.

So, seeing the need, we decided to create and open a Resource Center.

"Guests have felt stuck, and the Resource Center offers hope to move forward in life. It's a space to focus on the future. It gives staff time to sit down and have one-on-one conversations with the guests so they can ask for specific help," says Jeri, Operations Assistant for Homeless Guest Services.

The Resource Center is held in the chapel every Thursday afternoon, giving men and women not only access to computers, but a time to sit down with staff

one-on-one to create a personalized plan for escaping homelessness. Each week there are new guests and guests who are coming back to work on their exit plans.

This new center wouldn't have been possible without the support of people like you!

The Resource Center is held in the Chapel every Thursday from 12 – 3 PM. Here guests can use computers to:

- Get their social security cards
 - Apply for housing
 - Obtain birth certificates
 - Get their identification cards
 - Create resumes
 - Apply for jobs
 - Check their emails (most do not have smartphones)
- And more!

Christmas Giveaway Items Needed

As part of our Christmas celebration, our Women's Auxiliary hosts a giveaway where every man and woman at the Mission receives at least one brand new item. Many guests not only haven't received something new in years, but they come to us, like Sarah, with nothing. She treasured the pair of shoes she was given so much that even when she could afford a new pair, she wore them until they got holes in the soles!

We especially need:

- Shoes (all types and sizes, especially work boots)
- Sweatshirts
- Sweatpants
- Hats
- Winter coats
- Backpacks

You can either make a financial gift so that the Women's Auxiliary can purchase gift cards, or drop off brand new items to the Mission up until December 17. Contact Rebecca Weber at 805-966-1316 ext. 105 or at rweber@sbrm.org for more information.

Will you help make sure we have enough gifts for everyone?



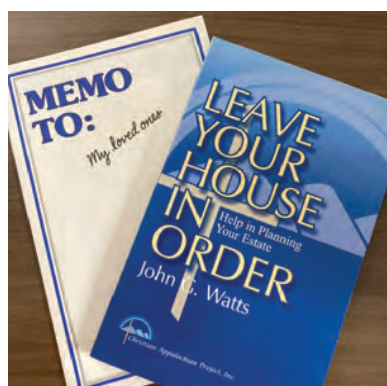
Leaving a Legacy of Love

The Mission's library was recently dedicated to an incredible couple, John and Patty Watts. Patty worked here for 12 years, and John served as our volunteer consultant dedicated to planned giving.

"I came to the Rescue Mission with Rolf's predecessor, thinking I would just stay there for a few weeks or a couple of months at the most to help him get organized and feeling comfortable. And because I fell in love with the work, I ended up staying on the whole time he was there. Then when Rolf came was when I thought I would leave, and they asked me if I'd stay a couple months with Rolf and I ended up staying another several years," Patty says.

"Because of working at the Mission, I fell in love with the work there. And so obviously we wanted to remember the Mission in our will," she says.

Together John and Patty wrote *Memo to: My Loved Ones*, a book that they used to plan their legacy.



"We filled it out for our family, and thought we would just give it to other people and say, 'This is what's really important. So when you're gone, your family doesn't wonder what you wanted to do with what money you had.'"

And today, Patty wants to give the book – and another one that John wrote, *Leave Your House in Order* – to you.

There are a limited number of these wonderful books available. If you'd like one or would like more information about making a legacy gift to the Mission, contact Rebecca Weber at 805-966-1316 ext. 105 or at rweber@sbrm.org.

"If you have a real interest in the Rescue Mission, planned giving is a wonderful way to go because when you're gone, some of your money can go to the Rescue Mission," Patty says. "There are ways that it can go there and still not deprive your family in any way – and actually help them in many of the plans that they have. So hopefully people who love the Rescue Mission should consider the Mission in their estate plan."



Patty is still deeply involved with the Mission. She gives generously of her time, volunteers to help with the Bayou fundraiser every year, and is a member of our Women's Auxiliary.





Each \$70 you give this Christmas provides a day of food, shelter, hope, recovery, and grace for someone like Sarah.

Give The Best Christmas Gift

You can't go to a fast-food restaurant without shoes on, but as Sarah's story shows, you can come to the Mission exactly as you are. In fact, you can come with absolutely nothing – and that's the point. When we bring nothing to the table, we give God the space to meet all our needs and save us.

With the help of friends like you, here men and women who have nothing left –who are broken beyond belief – find what they need most to heal: grace.

Amazing, undeserved, unearned grace.

Grace is free. But running the Mission's 12-month recovery program, where

people like Sarah discover that grace, isn't. The only reason we can even turn the lights on, put sheets on the beds, provide nourishing food, and employ professional counselors is through the generosity of people like you.

This Christmas you have an opportunity to be a part of changing more lives like Sarah's. Each \$70 you give provides a full day of care for one person in our recovery program. For the person whose life you change, it could very well be the best Christmas gift they've ever received.



Please include your personalized form along with your gift.

Please send your gift by Dec. 20 to help in time for Christmas! You can also give instantly online at: sbrm.org/hope

Camp Out on the Bayou Update

The 20th Annual Bayou fundraising event was an incredible success!

This year we gathered in person at Rancho Dos Pueblos and also held a virtual event with watch parties throughout the community. God allowed us to raise \$580,000 to transform the lives of more individuals like Sarah's.

A big thank you to everyone who participated, and special thanks goes to our hardworking Women's Auxiliary, staff, volunteers, and watch party hosts.



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