

# MILESTONES

*Recovery happens in relationships.*

**CHRISTMAS 2022**

## 16 Years of Transformation

*"I'm very grateful for the beautiful big life that I get to have because it all started at the Mission." – Ira*

**IRA STARTED USING** drugs when he was 13. It was a secret he kept hidden and "managed" until he was 54 years old. At 54, his mom passed way, and his marriage ended. Things began to unravel for him.

*"I didn't have a spiritual connection with anything other than my ego and my work, and all the things that I thought defined me," he remembers.*

So to blow off some steam and try to cope with the shattered pieces of his life, Ira started going to the casino. He was a regular there, until the cops showed up at the casino.

### **His Double Life Revealed**

Ira was arrested for possession, sale, and transportation of drugs.

*Continued inside*

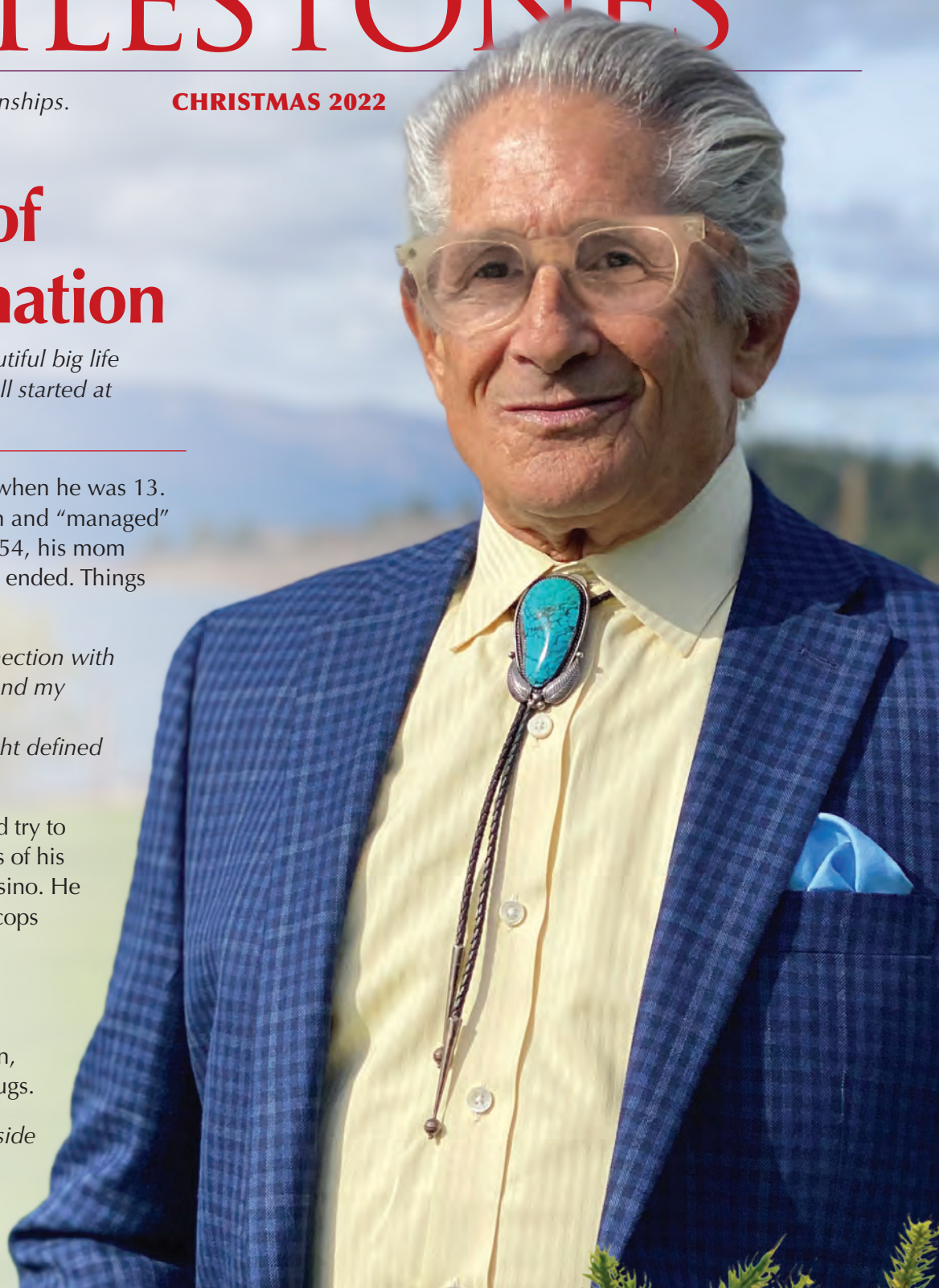
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# 16 Years of Transformations

Continued from cover

*"I was handcuffed, and in that moment, I felt like I was falling out of an airplane with all these thoughts that all these years that I lived this very clever double life," he says. "It was just demoralizing. However, I knew that wow, somehow this is God doing for me what I couldn't do for myself."*

## The Saddest Moment of His Life

*"My son was 17," Ira remembers. "I had my friend bring him to the Santa Barbara County Jail. And on the telephones, like in the movies with the glass in between us, I told my son who I really was."*

*"Both of us crying and me telling him that I was a drug addict and that I had been using cocaine his entire life, and for 17 years before he was born."*

Ira knew he had to change, and he knew he couldn't do it alone. He heard about the Mission and interviewed while he was still in jail. When he got out, in November of 2006, one of our staff members picked him up and brought him to the Mission.

*"It really helped me to understand that I had abandonment issues. My father got sick when I was 12, and he was in and out of the hospital and passed when I was 15."*

## Spiritual Healing Leads to Helping Others

Being at the Mission also helped Ira connect to God in new ways and find a new trajectory for his life. He went back to school and earned his credentials as a drug and alcohol counselor. Since he graduated, he's been helping other people find healing, restoration, and transformation.

*"I opened a sober living home at the end of 2007, early 2008," Ira says. "I started my own business that I call The Recovery Lane . . . I work with people of all ages that have a challenging time with drugs and alcohol."*

## Only God Knows the Number

Over the last 16 years, Ira has helped to transform more lives than he can count.

*"What a remarkable life that I never knew existed and I get to have today. I'm building a business and I'll be 70 in a couple months."*



Ira's children both battled addictions, but now they are both sober, too! *"Thankfully, my son will have eight years clean and sober in September, which is all God," he says. "My daughter is sober, which is amazing. It's all because of the path that I've been able to walk and embrace."*

**Your Christmas gift today  
will help restore and  
transform more lives!**





## A NOTE OF FRIENDSHIP FROM ROLF GEYLING

# Just One Thing

**T**O ME, CHRISTMAS HAS always been — and will always be — about just one thing: *transformation*.

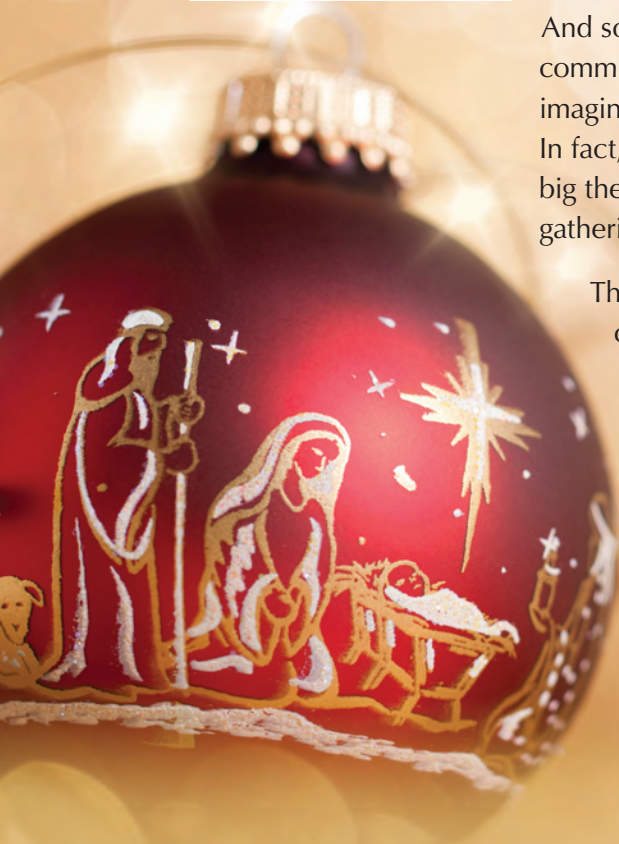
How could it be any other way? Jesus himself was born to rescue us all from ourselves, from our pain, or sin, our brokenness and to transform us into new beings — into the people we were originally created to be.

And so many people need that, especially right now in our community. You don't have to be an expert on addiction to imagine that drug and alcohol use increases during the holidays. In fact, it's often during this time of year that people realize how big their problem is because they can't seem to cope with family gatherings without an extra drink — or two, or three.

That's why your support right now is so important. As people come to us, desperate for help and ready to do the brave, hard work of recovery, we don't just *want* to be able to meet them in that; we *need* to.

Because if we don't, where else will they go? Where else will they find the transformation that their bodies and souls are longing for?

Rolf Geyling  
President



## Have you ever wondered? Rolf Answers Your Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** *What's the best way to help my homeless neighbors during the holiday season? Do I give them money? Invite them into my home for a meal?*

**Answer:** *When you see someone in need, it's common to want to help them. But often people aren't sure how — especially during the holiday season. One of the most practical things you can do is invite them to a meal at the Mission.*

*Here we have the expertise and services that can help someone transform their lives in a long-term way. We know how to help in ways that really do help. You could even make some "Homeless Helper" bags and keep them in your car like Lorette does. It's an easy way to make a big difference.*

**We look forward to your questions. If you've "ever wondered," please email Rolf at [newsletter@sbrm.org](mailto:newsletter@sbrm.org)**





# Alumni BBQ

Even though summer was a few months ago, we couldn't resist the chance to share photos from our Alumni BBQ.

Over 80 alumni from all different years came – Ira being one of the longest-term graduates. Everyone arrived with a smile on their face. These men are grateful and proud of the lives they now live. They are proud to be a part of the Mission's family, and many of them are still connected to one another, keeping the community that began here going.

We can't wait to do it again.





# A New Generation of Helpers

*Homeless Helper bags are a great thing to keep in your car to hand out when you see someone in need on the streets. Yours don't have to have the same items that Lorette's family provides, but their list is a good place to start.*

Lorette and her grandchildren recently put together 30 "Homeless Helper" bags. The quart size bags, which Lorette and several other family members keep in their cars, were created as an easy way to reach out to homeless neighbors and help direct them to the Mission.

*"Inside is a bus token for a ride to the Rescue Mission, a map to the Mission, Chapstick, Kleenex, a protein bar, a bottle of water, and maybe a few other things," Lorette says.*

Each bag has a hand-drawn label on it, created by one of Lorette's grandchildren, giving the package a sweet, personal touch.

Lorette, along with the other members of our Women's Auxiliary, are always finding fun and unique ways to get more people involved with caring for those in need. She plans to share the project with a grade school next.



## Christmas Giveaway Items Needed

As part of our Christmas celebration, our Women's Auxiliary hosts a giveaway where every guest receives at least one brand new item. Many guests not only haven't received something new in years, but they come to us with nothing but the clothes on their backs. And even those have seen better days. Something as simple as a sweatshirt can become a treasured gift!

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

**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 items, or drop off brand new items to the Mission up until December 9. Contact Rebecca Weber at [rweber@sbrm.org](mailto:rweber@sbrm.org) for more information.



Each \$93.15 you give this Christmas provides a day of food, shelter, hope, recovery, and long-term transformation for someone like Ira.

## This Christmas, Give Restoration and Transformation

Christmas is a difficult time for people living on the streets. Memories of happier times flood back. It's nearly impossible to hide from the loss you've experienced. As others rush to buy more and do more, you realize how little you have. In fact, many of the people your gift will help can't even afford healthy food on a regular basis.

**It's no wonder that addiction is often worse for people this time of year! People are in such despair they are doing anything to get some sort of relief. They don't believe that there is another way.**

But your gift can give them hope — hope for this Christmas and all the

ones after that — because your gift can change lives in lasting ways. Ira graduated from the Mission 16 years ago, and not only is he still sober, but his kids are sober. He's helped more people than he can count get sober, too.

Ira wouldn't be the man that he is — or have helped so many others — if it weren't for the gifts of friends like you.

**When you give a gift today, not only will you help transform a life, but you'll also restore it, making it even better than before!**

**Aren't restoration and transformation what Christmas is all about?**



## ROAD TRIP TO THE BAYOU UPDATE

The 21st Annual Bayou fundraising event, Road Trip to the Bayou, was a great success thanks to people like you!

This year we were at a new location at the historic Rancho Dos Pueblos — the beach! It was a wonderful time of community, connection, and celebrating the transformation of people like Eric Duncan. God allowed us to raise over \$661,000 to offer lasting transforming to help even more of our hurting neighbors. We are so grateful!

A big thank you to everyone who participated, and special thanks go to our hardworking Women's Auxiliary.



Please send your gift by Dec. 21 to help in time for Christmas! You can also give instantly online at: [sbrm.org/hope](http://sbrm.org/hope)

## MILESTONES

is a publication of



**Santa Barbara  
Rescue Mission**

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