

# Milestones

Recovery happens in relationships.

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SUMMER 2024



## From Dumpster Diving to Tech Employee

IT'S HARD TO DENY that Santa Barbara is a beautiful place. Especially in the summer. But for Sean, who was homeless and battling a decades-long addiction, that beauty was a stumbling block.

*"It was such a beautiful place, such a nice place. I really didn't feel worthy,"* he remembers.

There were a lot of things Sean didn't feel worthy of back then. Showering, looking people in the eye, eating a decent meal.

### Degraded to Dumpster Diving

*"I was too ashamed to steal, and I was too ashamed to beg for food, anymore,"* Sean says. *"So acquiring food out of a dumpster was the next best thing. I could kind of hold my head low . . . It was the least shameful way to get food without resources."*

But one day, Sean was brave and desperate enough to come to the Mission for a meal. Thanks to friends like you, we were able to give him a healthy plate of food.

*"It was amazing. Everyone was so nice and so kind. It was a good experience,"* he says.

At the time, Sean didn't know we also had a 12-Month Residential Recovery Program, so after eating he went back to the streets — and the addiction that had started when he was just 13.

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Santa Barbara  
Rescue Mission

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# From Dumpster Diving to Tech Employee

Continued from cover

*"By 15, I was doing cocaine, ecstasy, acid, and shrooms. At 16 I was using ketamine, nitros, and pills, and by 17 I was onto meth and heroin. The progression for me was fast."*

For over a decade Sean spent his time high, bouncing between homelessness or jail. He tried a few recovery programs, but after getting out, he'd be back to using.

*"I didn't really know how to live in society. I never felt like I fit in," he says. "People would wrinkle their nose or shake their heads as they walked by me."*

It wasn't until he ended up in the hospital with a bone dissolving infection that Sean finally had time to think about his life and realized he didn't want to keep living this way. He connected with his dad, who told him about the Rescue Mission's Recovery Program. Sean agreed to give it a try — it was the first one he had ever been to that was a full 12 months long.

## Discovering His God-Given Worth

Here, because of the generosity of friends like you, Sean met Jesus and began to heal.

*"The Rescue Mission taught me about a solution to this problem," he says. "They said that through building a relationship with God, honest actions, and helping others I could stay sober and live a happy life. . . The graduates of the Mission would come in and share their stories with us. This gave me the most hope, that this solution actually worked in others who were like me."*

*"Being homeless can dehumanize you in so many ways. To go to a place that will give you that feeling of, 'Oh, I'm a person, and I'm worth something,' is a very valuable thing." – Sean*

**You make this possible! Your gifts help show people like Sean that God loves them, and they are worthy of living.**

Like those graduates, the program worked for Sean, too!

Today he's over three years sober — the longest in his adult life. He went back to school and got a great job in the tech industry, has reconnected with his family, and spends as much time as he can showing other people that they are worth being cared about. Last year, he volunteered at the 4th of July BBQ.

*"It was very fun. It was very rewarding," he says. "To have someone treat you like a human being when you're used to being treated less than human, in my opinion, that's the best thing about the Rescue Mission."*

**We're expecting 200 people at this year's BBQ, and your support will make it possible for us to show them their God-given worth, too.**



Santa Barbara  Rescue Mission





## A NOTE OF FRIENDSHIP FROM ROLF GEYLING

### The Most Beautiful Sound

**A**T THE 4TH OF JULY BBQ, one of my favorite things to do is to find a little corner and close my eyes.

Can you guess what I hear? Laughter. Pure, sweet, laughter.

It tells me that we're doing the right thing. We're giving our hurting neighbors the chance to have simple childhood fun.

Many of them haven't had the chance to do that in years – some never have. And it's amazing how receptive they are. Having fun, in some ways, gives them a break from the horror of their circumstances.

Even if it's just for an afternoon, it's a gift that they can take with them and

something that gives them a positive experience to remember.

Then, when they get to a point where they are ready to change their lives just like Sean was, they have a positive memory associated with the Mission.

And, they are more willing to come back here, because it was here that they laughed out loud and felt loved.

And to me, that's a priceless feeling. Don't you think it is, too?

Rolf Geyling  
President

## Have You Ever Wondered? Rolf Answers Your Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** *Why is providing meals so important?*

**Answer:** *Meals are foundational to this ministry for several reasons. I'll share two. First, when you are on the streets, like Sean says, getting a good meal can seem impossible. Without nourishment, not only are people's bodies broken down, but their*

*minds also can't function well, making it difficult to make different, healthier choices.*

*Secondly, meals are a simple but effective way for us to begin forming relationships with men and women experiencing homelessness. By providing healthy, delicious meals, we show people that we believe that they are worthy of being cared for*

*and loved. That's a feeling that many of them haven't had in years – if ever. And it can become the foundation of a whole new life. Because, if we're going to have any impact in people's lives, they need to feel loved and feel welcomed into our community, and meals are the beginning of that.*

**If you have questions for Rolf, send them to [newsletter@sbrm.org](mailto:newsletter@sbrm.org)**





## Celebrate the Next Generation of Graduates!


Join us either via live-stream online or in person as we celebrate what God has done in the lives of our next generation of graduates.

You'll hear incredible stories of transformation — like Sean's — and get to celebrate the new lives these men and women are stepping into.

**Saturday, July 13 at 5PM**

**Community Covenant Church of Goleta**  
5070 Cathedral Oaks Rd.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93111

Visit [sbrm.org](http://sbrm.org) for more information.

A collage of three people's faces, each framed by a white star shape. The top star contains a smiling Black man. The middle star contains a woman wearing patriotic glasses and a headband. The bottom star contains a man in a grey hoodie and a baseball cap. The background is a gradient of blue, green, and orange with scattered white stars.

Some of the "stars" of our previous BBQ!



# The 4th of July BBQ & Raffle

At first glance, the 4th of July BBQ just looks like a big, fun festival, but there's more to it than raffle tickets, hamburgers, and hotdogs.

The BBQ is a chance for our homeless neighbors to feel loved. It's a chance for them to begin getting to know us and see that we truly want to help them. And that happens best when there aren't any strings attached.

If you call your friends, family, and coworkers and invite them over for a BBQ, you likely aren't doing it to get something out of them, but rather just to spend time with them. It's relational. It shows you care about them.

**By hosting a special 4th of July event just for them, we can demonstrate that we care about them.**

The reality is, if someone doesn't feel loved and accepted, they aren't going to come back and get the support they need. So, by doing everything we can to help them feel valued, loved, and seen, we have the best chance of beginning a real, life-changing relationship with them.

And if that happens in the summer over BBQ hotdogs and hamburgers, well, we think it just makes it that much better!



**Above:** Staff members get soaked at the dunk tank by the guests.

**Below:** Everyone's a winner at the 4th of July BBQ!



**Above:** The Mission team and volunteers serve heaping plates of food and encouragement.





# Give \$2.65 Summer Meals!

Every \$2.65 meal you give shows someone that their life matters and can give them the hope and courage they need to begin transforming their lives.

When Sean was on the streets, he felt so worthless that sometimes going hungry seemed better than having to ask for help. Who would want to help him anyway, he wondered. Certainly not the people who stared, glared, or gave him looks of pity.

And so, he would either go hungry or find something he deemed edible in a dumpster.

It wasn't until he came to the Mission and experienced the generosity and compassion of friends like you, that he realized that his life wasn't just worth living for, it was worth fighting for.

**Right now, we have other neighbors who are desperate for the same thing.**

They are hungry.  
They feel hopeless.  
They feel like their life doesn't matter.

But by coming together this summer, we can change that. We can nourish them — body, heart, and soul. And it starts by making sure everyone who comes to us gets a good, hot meal. Will you help by sending a gift today?

**Each \$2.65 is enough to provide a full meal for a hungry neighbor!**

**We're expecting at least 200 people at our 4th of July BBQ. Will you help make sure there's enough for everyone by sending a gift today?**

## Give \$2.65 Summer Meals!

Yes, Rolf! I will help show men in women in need that they have value by sharing God's love and providing meals. I'm sending a gift of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

From:  
A Caring Neighbor



Santa Barbara  Rescue Mission

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)



You're invited to the 23rd Annual Benefit for the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission!

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**Saturday, October 5**  
**2:00 PM**

We are excited to invite you to join us for Santa Barbara Rescue Mission's 23rd annual benefit, Passport to the Bayou!

To receive an invitation, please contact Rebecca at 805-966-1316 ext. 105 or [rweber@sbrm.org](mailto:rweber@sbrm.org) or visit [sbrm.org/bayou](http://sbrm.org/bayou)

## Milestones

is a publication of



**Santa Barbara  
 Rescue Mission**

535 East Yanonali Street  
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**805-966-1316**

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