

Milestones

Recovery happens in relationships.

SEPTEMBER 2024

Homeschooled to Homeless

FROM THE OUTSIDE, Amanda had the ideal life. She grew up learning about God, reading the Bible, and going to church on Sunday. She was homeschooled, got good grades, and had a bright, beautiful smile. But on the inside, something was very, very wrong.

"At a very young age I remember feeling this intense sadness and pain and disconnect from everyone, and I didn't know why," she says. "I tried to numb myself with any obsession to distract me from the horrible emptiness and paralyzing fear I felt."

Desperate for Relief

When her parents separated, Amanda dove headfirst into more unhealthy behaviors including cutting and disordered eating.

"I shut myself off from my family and God," she says.

On the outside, things still looked great. She graduated from high school and was accepted to Westmont College with an academic scholarship. But being on her own at college made her feel more alone than ever. Her mom pulled her out, and on Christmas Eve, Amanda took her first drink.

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Rescue Mission

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Homeschooled to Homeless

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"Immediately I felt relief. I could handle being around my family, and the pain and self-hatred disappeared."

It wasn't long before Amanda started using drugs. She ended up homeless, broke, and alone. Hunger, once something Amanda thought only people in far off countries dealt with, became a reality.

The Horror of Hunger

"It's hard to even put into words what being hungry is like. To have something so basic, so fundamental be so uncertain, was terrifying," she says. "I was unrecognizable and lost the will to live. I saw only one way out of the hell I was in, but as scared as I was of life, I was also scared of death. I was trapped. One night, I broke down crying and begged God to either help me or kill me, because I couldn't do either."

A few weeks later, she was arrested.

"I sat in jail for 3 months. I didn't think I could stay sober, but I knew I didn't want to be miserable anymore, so I started looking for programs. I applied to and was accepted to Bethel House at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission," Amanda says.

The Healing Power of Love

"During my year at Bethel House, I discovered my true self . . . I took off my masks and got real with people and discovered that they still loved me for me. I had a spiritual awakening, and I'm no longer controlled by fear. I'm present today and live and love as God intended."

After graduating from the Mission's Residential Treatment Program in 2018, Amanda went back to school and earned a bachelor's degree from UCSB. She just moved to London to attend graduate school and plans to pursue a PhD in psychology so she can help others.

The only reason transformations like Amanda's are possible is because of the kindness of generous friends like you.

"It blows my mind that these people are willing to invest so much in us, and it's a love, right? Loving us while we learn to love ourselves again. Thank you so much for that. It's beautiful," she says.

It certainly is.

Each \$2.65 meal you give today can help someone else find healing and transformation.

"Drinking, using drugs, being homeless, all these things are outward symptoms of what was going on inside of me, and I didn't realize that."
— Amanda



"The hardest parts were not having food and not knowing where or if I was going to be able to sleep at night. And there were some nights where it was rainy, cold, I hadn't eaten all day . . . I've never felt that kind of loneliness and fear and just exhaustion, constantly fighting for the most basic things."
— Amanda

"I especially want to thank all the donors who make this all possible and for giving me my life back."
— Amanda





A NOTE OF FRIENDSHIP FROM ROLF GEYLING

There is no “Us” vs. “Them”

AMANDA ISN'T SOMEONE you'd typically picture at a rescue mission, and that's why I wanted to share her story with you.

She doesn't fit the stereotype. And that's the danger of stereotypes. Not only does it limit our view of who might need help, it also limits our view of where someone can go after they recover.

But nothing is impossible with God.

When it comes down to it, we all need help. We all need Jesus.

Amanda knows that now. Even though she grew up in an upper-middle class home and went to church, she didn't know how to live out the life God had planned for her. The pain and brokenness — the sin present in our world — was too much for her.

The truth is, it's too much for everyone.

We all may not battle drug or alcohol addiction, but we all struggle. It's only when we realize — like Amanda did — that we can really become the people who God created us to be.

It can be easy to fall into an “us” vs. “them” mentality.

“They” are the addicts. “They” are the ones who can't get their lives together. “They” are the ones who need help.

But when it comes down to it, we all need help. We all need Jesus.

When we realize that and accept Him and the help He's offering through the community He's put us in, that's when walls come crumbling down, and we realize that anyone can go on to do incredible things.

Even a meth addict can go to grad school in London.

Rolf Geyling
President

Senior Citizen Becomes an Addict

Julie was in her 60s the first time she tried cocaine. She didn't like to drink, so she became her daughter's designated driver until one day her daughter encouraged her to try cocaine.

"Come on, mom, just a little bit," her daughter said while they were out one night. "It will make you talk more."

Julie tried it, and that was the beginning of her addiction.

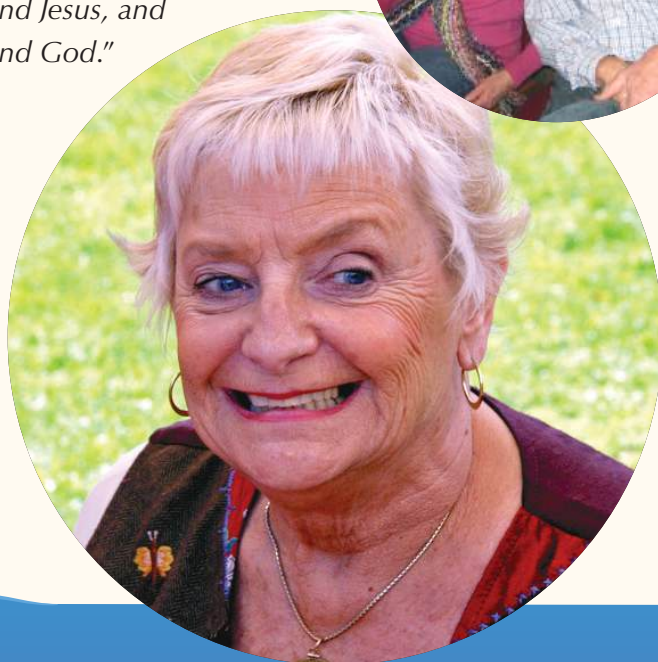
"The first time, it feels good," she says. But the good feeling never lasts, and people keep using just trying to get back to that first high. They never do.

Julie's son, Tommy, who is a pastor at Calvary Chapel across the street from the Mission, knew about our residential treatment program.

"He got me in there, and it was a whole new life for me," she says.

Julie, who just turned 88, graduated in 1997 and worked as our morning receptionist until she was 80. Knowing what guests were going through when they came in allowed her to meet them right where they were and connect them to the help they so desperately needed.

"It was a wonderful experience," she says. "People don't realize how enjoyable it was to work with these people that are struggling and see them turn around, find Jesus, and find God."



Today Julie is still connected to the Mission and the people she has come to know here over the years. We're also blessed to have Tommy (pictured with Julie above), who is still at Calvary Chapel, come to the Mission every Wednesday to lead devotions for the men in the program.



4th of July BBQ and Raffle Report

This year's 4th of July BBQ and raffle had a carnival feel that everyone loved.

Not only was the food incredible and the raffle prizes a huge hit – thank you Women's Auxiliary – but we had two tents full of carnival games, and we brought back the dunk tank!

Our guests felt seen, loved, appreciated, cared about, and were grateful to have somewhere to spend the day.

Thank you for helping make it possible!

People were so excited about the BBQ that they waited down the block for it to start! Many hadn't been to this kind of BBQ in years!



Thanks to the support of friends like you, everyone got plenty to eat and had a great time!



Prayer Requests

- Amanda (our cover story) just moved to London this month. Pray that as she settles in, she finds a supportive, loving, Christ-centered community to be a part of. Pray also for all the people she'll get to reach as she pursues her degree and works towards a career in psychology.
- As Julie nears 90, the fire, passion, and love in her are as vibrant as ever, but her health has started to decline. Pray for strength and energy for her as she continues to share God's love with everyone she encounters at the retirement home where she lives.
- With the holidays just around the corner, please pray for all the men and women who will come to the Mission for our special holiday events. Pray that the meals will bless them and that God uses the food to strengthen them and to show them that they are loved.



Each \$2.65 you give provides a meal for a neighbor in need!

Give a Meal. Change a Life.

Amanda knows hunger.

She lived through the uncertainty of wondering when she would eat again – if she would eat again.

Now, those fears have been erased because she is living a completely transformed life, and that was only possible because of God and the generosity of friends like you.

This fall, we'll see a lot of hungry men and women come to the Mission. Will you help us make sure we have what we need to feed them?

Each \$2.65 you give helps provide a full meal for a hungry neighbor. But what you provide will be more than food on a plate.

It will be a taste of kindness.
A whisper of love.
A flash of hope.

Those things are exactly what someone who is broken and hurting needs to begin building their life. And when they are ready, with your help, we'll be here to do that, too.

Together, we will transform more lives, starting with meals, starting this fall. Please help!



ONLY DAYS AWAY:

Passport to the Bayou

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 purchase tickets, please contact Rebecca at 805-966-1316 ext. 105 or rweber@sbrm.org or visit sbrm.org/bayou



Please give generously.
Every \$2.65 meal can help to change a life!

Give online
at: sbrm.org/hope



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535 East Yanonali Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
805-966-1316

sbrm.org

