

# Sunshine Ministries NEWS

Sunshine Rescue Mission Inc. - Hope Cottage - Dorsey Manor - Harper House



According to Scotus, Beauty was not first of all an aesthetic concept but a fully ethical concept. Beauty is what we experience whenever the harmony of goodness, truth, and integrity show themselves, despite any contrary evidence (which is always there!). We can even recognize Beauty in a leper if we see him through His eyes. This was an amazing rediscovery for me on my walk-about at Sunshine Rescue Mission in Flagstaff and its surrounding community (including Hope Cottage and Dorsey).

To begin with, I had forgotten how beautiful the drive along Highway 40 from Needles to Flagstaff is – desert colors with shadows and skies of purple, blue, orange, and pink. Sand tones with Joshua trees and scrub brush to red rock and evergreens. Mountains, hills, and valleys shaped into extraordinary contortions, curves and landscapes of intrigue and wonder. And, once in awhile a rushing train loaded with a long stream of cargo moving commerce from coast-to-coast and cutting across this beautiful setting or climbing a pass; seemingly oblivious of its surroundings. America is truly beautiful from sea to shining sea!

Arriving after dark with little sense of direction, I found my way to the dimly lit downtown of Flagstaff where SRM was located. Blake and a board member's husband were hanging out with the guests as preparations were being made for evening chapel. The main hall on ground level is a multi-purpose room where guests congregate, eat meals, hold chapel service, and sleep. Activities begin each day at 6am when all rise. Morning chapel begins at 6:30am. Breakfast follows at 7am. And, all guests leave by 9am. Before leaving the room is cleaned and set-up for the Disciple's Bible class. Doors open for lunch and at 4pm, guests return, take showers, get a snack, and help set-up the room for dinner. Dinner starts at 5:30pm. Then the room is cleaned and set-up for evening chapel. Chapel begins at 7pm. Once chapel ends, the room is readied for mats and sleep. The regimented schedule stays pretty much the same daily, with the exception that on Sunday folks go to church.

Blake and Stephanie have been loving on the homeless of Flagstaff for many years. Love is what the homeless (all of us) need more than anything, despite how unlovable they (we) may appear. This was my next opportunity to see Beauty live.

## There are three groups of people at SRM.

**The Staff** manage the day-to-day operations - breakfast and dinner, providing clothing, giving assistance in anyway they can, keeping order and maintaining peace at night. But, more importantly they set the tone for whatever happens.

**The Guests** (or homeless) come to SRM to eat, sleep, wash themselves and their clothes. And, they receive care and love that brings hope. Hope for more than basic survival despite the fact they are mostly in a cycle of basic survival. All are welcome as long as they aren't drunk, drugged or unwilling to take a shower each evening.

**The Disciples** are homeless in transition or formerly homeless. They stay at SRM all of the time; taking on tasks and responsibilities that keep things going – performing repairs, washing clothes and bedding, cooking food and whatever else is needed. And, they attend a rigorous study of the Bible – classes with homework and other disciplines of faith.

It's pretty remarkable how orderly it is at SRM and how well all get along as each day flows through its routine, especially considering these homeless men do not form a homogeneous group. As I scan the main hall I see a complete spectrum of men: different colored skin, height, shape, personality, intellect, emotion, and faith. Each comes with a different history, different story, different path. Homelessness is not a disease, although there are a few common symptoms, there is no consistent diagnosis nor prognosis.

Most people say, "Homelessness is a choice." OK, how does one come upon this decision? This is the discriminator to me. Homeless men choose homelessness for a variety of reasons and circumstances. And, their choice to take shelter at SRM also varies. (They could choose the public shelter on the other side of town or choose to camp somewhere or not choose anything other than roaming free without giving it any thought.)

Most people steer clear of the homeless, and rarely interact with them. I wanted to confront this in me. I chose to spend my time getting next to them 1-on-1 to hear each man's story, to get to know him individually, and to develop the beginnings of a friendship. I feel I accomplished this with success (both in my own understanding and in sharing theirs), and will continue to pursue friendships and understanding. By doing so, I feel I'm gaining a better understanding of myself, as I get to know my homeless brothers and sisters.

So, what have I learned from them? As I think back through my interactions with the myriad of personalities and reflect upon their life stories, I see how I've gained a deeper, richer, clearer vision of Beauty!

## Peter Schleppenbach

Life-long family friends of the Boardman's

## *A New Boiler and Water Heater for the Mission*

Years of use had taken its toll on our boiler and water heater at the mission. Some days the mission provided over 100 showers and washed dishes for even more. The boiler had provided a safe warm place to get out of the cold for over 50 years. A few weeks ago the boiler stopped heating and the water heater began leaking. The only heat we had was a couple of large space heaters that we rented. The pipes in the mission were at risk of freezing and causing a major disaster.

That's when we reached out and told the community of our urgent need. Within hours of our first Facebook post and email, donations began to come in. An anonymous donor called and pledged \$6,000 in matching funds. A local non-profit (Full Circle Trade and Thrift) donated \$3,500. Individuals in our community donated the rest. Within two weeks we raised over \$13,000 for this project.

We want to thank all who donated to this project. The heat is back on and the water heater is here, ready to be installed. THANK YOU for responding so quickly and helping us to continue to provide a warm, safe, healthy environment for Flagstaff's homeless community.



## Michael's Story



My name is Michael J. I came to Flagstaff in January. I was homeless, no money, no job. My world was crumbling around me. I ended up at Sunshine Rescue Mission seeking shelter and a hot meal. To my surprise, I found much more than I expected.

My background is not unique. It's a lot like other peoples. For 30 years I've battles addictions to drugs, alcohol and pornography. Whatever you had, I wanted it.

Coming to the mission was a life-saver. I was treated with respect and dignity. The wealth of resources was almost overwhelming: job programs, veteran resources, and counselling, if needed.

Sitting in chapel on Jan. 10th, a gentleman shared his testimony and how God saved him and pulled him out of his despair. It was my story almost to the letter. I gave my life to God and received Jesus into my heart and my life that night and haven't looked back since.

I began to read God's Word, pray, and ask for His direction. Today I have a hunger for God, His Word. Out of that I now have a home church, a job, and yes, a warm place to rest my head at night.

I thank God for the answered prayers and blessings He has given me in such a short period of time.

Each day I thank God for bringing me to Sunshine Rescue Mission. I pray that God blesses each staff member, the community for their donations, and the love and caring hearts they have.

I believe God is speaking to us all to give our hearts and our lives to Him, thru Jesus Christ, His Son.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will flood our lives, and we all diligently seek Him (Jesus Christ) with everything we have.

May God bless you beyond your wildest dreams.

Your Brother in Christ,

**Michael J.**

## STATISTICS July - December 2013

### New Intakes

29 Moms with 48 children  
160 single women  
518 men

18,758 Bed Nights (all facilities)  
39,858 Meals (SRM & HC)  
345 Chapel Speakers  
14,200 Chapel Attendance  
107 Salvations/Recommitments  
1,629 Bible Studies  
1,298 Class Attendance at HC  
534 Food Boxes  
(feeding 1000+ Family Members)  
44 Guests left with jobs  
74 Guests left with housing  
429 Non-Guests had showers  
3446 items of clothing distributed

## Finances July - December 2013

Income (all sources) \$531,471.00  
Operating Expenses \$449,708.00  
Net Income(Loss) \$81,763.00

Bob & Sherry Oberhardt -  
James & Jeanne K Van Houten  
gave gifts in honor of  
John & Vivian Van Houten

Mary Victor gave a gift in honor  
of Sharon Rose Wilcox

Mary Jo Roberts gave a gift in  
memory of Melvin Roberts

Jean West gave gifts in memory  
of Douglas West