

REAL CHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSIONS

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CHRISTMAS 2024



No More Hungry Christmases

The worst Christmas Tammy ever had was when she was 12.

"I was in foster care and everybody's family came and picked them up, but not mine because my mom was a heroin addict. The foster mother had other plans. And so, I remember I spent Christmas on a hill in the trees, in the snow, behind a hospital all by myself."

Can you imagine what that does to a 12-year-old? It was that same year that she left the foster house and ended up homeless, hungry, addicted and alone on the streets.

"My addiction started at 12 and went until I was 43," Tammy says.

Most of that time she was homeless, and when she had kids, they were on the streets with her.

"It was draining. I was in survival mode with two kids hungry, doing criminal behavior. Just whatever it took to try to take care of them and try to take care of myself. It was a nightmare. A literal nightmare. A repeated nightmare stuck on loop."

The Turning Point

Tammy ended up going to jail and her kids were sent to CPS. She knew if she didn't get help, they'd be adopted, and she'd lose them forever.

"I would be sick for the rest of my life if I lost my kids," she says.

But God didn't let that happen.

Continues inside.

After decades of homelessness, the first holiday meal that Tammy and her family cooked in their own home came from a food basket that they got from the Mission.

**"We had everything.
It was everything." –Tammy**

No More Hungry Christmases

(Continued from cover...)

Tammy broke a 31 year long cycle of addiction and homelessness for her kids when her son was 12 – the same age she was when she first became homeless – and the age her daughter will be next year!

Instead, Tammy went to a recovery program and worked hard to get custody of her kids back. But in the transition, she and the kids ended up being without a place to live. Thankfully, someone told her about the Mission.

Love Changes Everything

Tammy and her kids moved into the Rose, our home for women and children. Having a roof over their heads and hot meals every day made an instant difference.

"I felt loved and accepted immediately and continuously," she says.

That love pointed Tammy and her children to Jesus. Not long after they arrived, she surrendered her life to Him.

Miracle After Miracle

"From there, God worked in my life in amazing ways, and my children, they got to witness miracle after miracle after miracle," she says.

One of those miracles was Tammy's children also giving their lives to Jesus!

"I felt loved and accepted immediately and continuously," Tammy says.

"I'm so grateful. One of the most crucial moments in my process was coming to the Mission," Tammy says. "It changed my whole life, changed the direction of my life, my faith and my family."

Because of the generosity of friends like you, we were able to provide food, shelter and support while Tammy saved money and found an apartment. They moved into it six years ago and that year was the first time they celebrated a Christmas in their own home!

"My children are thriving, and I have a really close relationship with my kids," Tammy says.

Each \$2.02 meal you give this Christmas can change someone else's life!



The Fullness of Time

Jeff Gilman
Executive Director



In Galatians 4:4, the Apostle Paul uses an interesting phrase when he says that Jesus is born in “the fullness of time.”

Those words may sound foreign to our ears, but basically Paul is saying that Jesus’ birth couldn’t have been any earlier because there were too many things that needed to be accomplished first.

Every one of them leading to the moment when our Savior could arrive.

From that perspective, I’ve come to really appreciate that phrase and how those words don’t only apply to the Christmas story but to all our stories.

Those of us who know Jesus have all had a “fullness of time” moment when we surrendered our lives and accepted His grace.

I wish that Tammy hadn’t suffered all the terrible things she went through. I don’t know why she did. But I do know that God used all those specific events to lead her to the place where she came to the Mission and met Jesus in the “fullness of time” for her.

That’s how good our God is. He turns our tragedies into the pathway to Him!

If there are people in your life who don’t yet know Jesus, don’t give up hope. Keep praying. Their “fullness of time” may just not have come . . . yet.

Merry Christmas!

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” – Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV)



The Joy of Serving

When Brian retired from 45 years in the catering industry, he didn't want all the knowledge he had to disappear with him. Instead, he wanted to find a way to share his expertise with people in a way that mattered.

And as a volunteer coach at the Mission, that's exactly what he is doing. Not only does he make a big difference in our kitchen, but his hands-on mentoring of the guys is helping them meet Jesus and transform their lives.

"I've seen men search for a future here at the Mission," Brian says. "I've seen men step away from the chaos and into the kingdom."

His wife, Teresa, who also has decades of catering experience, often volunteers at events with him. Together, they use their skills to teach others how to serve the hundreds of poor and needy neighbors that we have on holidays like Christmas.

And what they've gotten out of it has been more than they ever imagined.

"Jesus and the Redwood Gospel Missions have changed me for the better," Brian says. "I've been able to remove my mask and be who I believe God is pointing me to be."

Teresa and Brian love serving so much they find as many ways as they can – and they've done just about everything.

"I've seen men step away from the chaos and into the kingdom." Brian says.

"It's just showing up and doing whatever is needed to make it happen. Because every penny that is saved and every penny that comes in is a penny to help one of these men and women. And that's the bottom line. Whatever we can do to further the Mission's ability to help these men and women is what we're going to do." Teresa says.

This Christmas, Brian and Teresa will be helping prepare and serve the meals friends like you provide. They'd love to have you join them. You can find out more about volunteering on the next page.

Adopt a Stocking



As part of our Christmas celebration, we want to make sure that every one of our overnight guests and recovery program participants gets their very own stocking, and you can help!



Fill a stocking with the following items:

- Crew Socks (men's or women's)
- Winter Gloves
- Beanies (adult sizes)
- Hand and Feet Warmers
- Razor
- Lip Balm
- Shave Cream (men)
- Facial Tissue or Wipes
- Manicure Set (women)
- Deodorant
- Daily Bread Devotional
- Comb or Brush
- Candy
- Poncho
- Power Banks (for cell phones) or \$10 Gift Cards (fast food, coffee)

Drop off stockings by Monday, December 16th at either location.

Ukiah: 150 Luce Ave.

Monday–Friday, 7am-1pm or call Karla Brown at 707.234.8750

Santa Rosa: 1821 Piner Road

Monday-Friday, 8am-1pm & 2-5pm or call Leydian King at 707.578.1830 x 224



Can you imagine the joy on someone's face when they receive your stocking on Christmas morning?

Help Serve Christmas Meals!

We're holding Christmas feasts at all our locations and would love to have you join us to help serve meals!

Not only will you get to bless your poor and needy neighbors with the \$2.02 Christmas meals you give, but you'll also get to witness the joy on their faces as they enjoy a wonderful meal they wouldn't have gotten without friends like you.

To volunteer, contact Tina Karns at tkarns@rgm.org or 707.578.1830 x 314



The only thing better than changing a life by giving meals is getting to see it in person!



Give the Best Gift – A New Life



Think back to when you were 12.

Can you imagine going hungry and being all alone on the streets? That was Tammy's life. It's amazing that she survived. But praise God she did. And praise God that because of friends like you, after 31 years of homelessness and addiction, she's now 6 years sober!

But that's not the only good news. Tammy also now has a relationship with Jesus. She has full custody of her kids, and her kids have relationships with Jesus, too!

After years of struggling and barely getting by, they have more than enough to eat and a home of their own to celebrate in this Christmas – they are even planning to get a tree!

Friends like you helped make that possible. And each \$2.02 meal you give today can change another life.

The \$2.02 meals you give could be the BEST gift you give this Christmas because they can lead to new lives!



Give the Best Gift – A New Life PLEASE RESPOND BY DEC. 22ND.

Yes, Jeff! I will provide life-changing meals for my poor and needy neighbors this Christmas! I'm sending a key partner gift of: _____ to help as much as possible.

(Name)
Address
City, State ZIP

A key partner gift of \$202 this Christmas not only provides a hot meal, it can also be the start of a whole new life!

Redwood Gospel MISSIONS Giving by credit card? Fill out the back of this form, or use postage and proceeds by donating securely online at rgm.org/joy

To help in time for Christmas, please respond by Dec. 22nd!

You can also give securely online at: rgm.org/joy

The Gift that Keeps Giving



If you're looking for another way to continue sharing God's love this Christmas season, consider naming Redwood Gospel Missions in your will or estate plan. When you do, you'll know that you are giving the gift of new life not only today but into the future.

For more information on legacy giving, contact Jeff Gilman at 707.578.1830.



REAL CHANGE is the newsletter of Redwood Gospel Missions
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