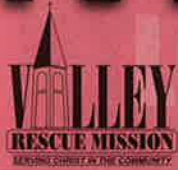


Mission Bell



Serving Christ in the Community

Helping the homeless and needy of the Chattahoochee Valley

Vo. 62 No. 1

February 2014

Valley Rescue Mission is a faith work supported by God's people.

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Columbus, Georgia 31902

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MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of Valley Rescue Mission is to exalt the name of the Lord Jesus Christ through spiritual, educational, and charitable means directed toward those in spiritual and economic need.

We do not receive government funds or any federal, state, county or city money. Your love gifts are one of our only means of support. Please become a "Partner in Ministry" with us!



IF I COULDN'T GET HELP FOR MY ADDICTION PROBLEM, I DIDN'T WANT TO LIVE- BUT THE LORD HAD OTHER PLANS

My name is Rick, and I grew up in the Atlanta area. As a curious middle schooler, I dabbled with inhalants and found I really liked the feeling of being high. This led to alcohol and I took my first of many rides in a police car at the age of 14 – but this did not deter me from the road I was starting down. Soon I experimented with pot, and in high school I discovered every drug I could ever want. I started selling drugs to maintain my habit and made the mistake of selling to an undercover agent. My parents sent me to a psychiatrist when I was 15, who found that I simply didn't care – I just wanted to get high.

After graduation, I worked in the construction field, where drugs and alcohol were very accepted. I was able to function at work and made good money, but was miserable. My drug and alcohol problem led to two suicide attempts, which were nearly successful. If I couldn't get help for my addiction problem, I didn't want to live - but the Lord had other plans. It also led to the failure of a business venture I started with my brothers and prevented me from making a career from my love of motocross racing, at which I was a semi-pro. I was introduced to meth during this time and did jail time for selling it.

I was in and out of rehab programs, going to nearly every single one in the metro Atlanta region. In one of them, something stuck and I was clean for ten good years. I rose in the Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous ranks, serving as an officer at the state level and working in a treatment center. I actually considered a career of helping others at this center. I attended a church during the period, saying to myself, "I don't know what these people have, but I want some of it." It was there that I gave my heart to Jesus Christ and became involved in the church. As a drummer in rock bands, I used that musical talent to play for churches. I

married, received a ten-year medallion for sobriety and thought I had a grip on my problem.

That lasted until I was injured on the job and made the mistake of not telling the doctors that I couldn't have narcotics. I was prescribed pain medicine and by the time those pills were gone, I had relapsed. This was even worse than the addiction time before. I manufactured meth, used heroin, and my life went into a downward spiral. I lost everything I had and nearly became homeless.



Then February 8, 2010 came – my "Divine Intervention" day. As I watched the blue lights from the police car show up outside my home, I knew God had decided it was time to remove me, His child, from the muck and the mire in which I was living. I was busted for forging pain medicine prescriptions and spent 13 months in jail. At a chapel service in the jail, I asked God to take the addictions from me,

not just help me with them. I knew from that moment on that drugs and alcohol were in my past. I was then offered drug court, which includes mandatory rehab. I filled out an application for Valley Rescue Mission's men's program, which was the tool God used to save my life. The intense Bible studies helped me build a good foundation for my future. I was never anxious during my time in the program, as I knew God had me where He wanted me to be. My wife stood beside me the whole time.

After graduation, I worked part-time and attended Columbus Technical College. I see now how God orchestrated me to be at Valley Rescue Mission at the time He did, as a position as Maintenance Technician opened up. I really wanted to be part of the Mission full-time and am so happy to be here. I also joined the Christian Motorcycle Association and am an officer in our local chapter. I'm an old biker who loves Jesus! I thank our donors and volunteers for making it possible for Valley Rescue Mission to exist. Life is grand now!

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It's that time of year again...you know – pink hearts, red roses, sentimental cards, and stuffed animals that sing love songs.

Store shelves overflow with symbols of love. They begin the day after New Year's getting ready for Valentine's Day. Statistics show more roses are sold for Valentine's Day than any other day in the year. All over the world, it is the day that people show their love for someone special.

Most hope to receive a loving memento or perhaps dinner in a nice restaurant. It is a great occasion to express love and appreciation to those you love, but it is just as important to show little acts of kindness all year long.

I can do without a dancing gorilla singing "Love Me Tender", but I sure would miss getting that hug or kiss from my grandchildren when they say, "I love you, Nothermama." When my daughter and son call they always say, "Bye, I love you." These are the best gifts, day after day, just to know that I am loved. It means a lot when family and friends want to spend time with you, share a meal, or just talk.

Flowers die. Candy is eaten. Balloons pop. Cards are lost or forgotten, but the love that is shared with one another, and God's love for us, will never pass away.

God tells us in His Word how much He loves us. He promises never to leave or forsake us, to answer us when we call, day or night. He never slumbers nor sleeps.

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor My covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. Isaiah 54:10

May you find little ways to show some acts of kindness to those you love before and after Valentine's Day this year.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10:24

Let Love be in the air all the time!



Florida J. Hekley

Warming Homes... and Hearts

January of 2014 brought record low temperatures to much of our region, including, sadly, the death by hypothermia of a local homeless man. For many of our low-income or low-wage-earning neighbors, this sort of weather extreme goes beyond an inconvenience; it can actually create a very unhealthy situation leading to illness and property damage.

Many people living in poverty are unable to pay what it takes to heat an entire home, and sometimes rental houses are poorly or erratically insulated. They will either turn the thermostat down to a teeth-chattering level to keep the utility bills down or turn it off altogether. Valley Rescue Mission's Family Services department is glad to be able to assist these families by providing electric heaters, as they are donated to us. By using an electric heater, a resident is able to keep a portion of a home or apartment at a comfortable temperature.

Priority is given to families with young or ill children, as well as the elderly, and records are kept to assure that no one is abusing the generosity of others. During the month of December, an unusually large donation of 20 heaters from one anonymous source enabled us to help warm the homes of 20 families. Thirty-one heaters were provided free of charge in 2012, and 21 in 2013. There's always a need for more! Why not consider a donation to Valley Rescue Mission of a heater to be shared with someone in financial need? You'll get a warm feeling in your heart that is sure to cut through the chilly temperature!

~ THE END OF AN ERA ~ Monthly Gospel Sings come to an end

Since 2001, monthly Gospel Sings have taken place at Camp JOY in Hamilton. Due to declining attendance, the decision has been made that this project has run its course and accomplished its purpose, so regular monthly Sings have been discontinued.

Hosted by the Southern Vision Quartet of Valley, AL, and Wayne Faircloth, the Sings were established for the purpose of raising awareness of the ministry and needs of Valley Rescue Mission. They truly accomplished this goal, as during its heyday over 150 people regularly came out to be blessed by Southern Gospel music, hear testimonies from Crossroads Men's Addiction Recovery participants, and learn about the Mission's many different outreaches.

Truett Pirkle, member of the Southern Vision Quartet and Gospel Sing coordinator, estimates that 70-80 different groups gave of their time and talent during the 12 years that the Sings took place. No one involved in the Gospel Sings ever received any financial reimbursement for their time – it was truly a donation of love. He states that many singers would return just to listen and support the endeavor, even when their group was not on the schedule. "We tried to make it a worship experience," states Pirkle, "and the Lord blessed it."

To all the leadership, musicians, audience members, and anyone else who played a role in the Gospel Sings, Valley Rescue Mission extends its deep appreciation and love. Only eternity will reveal all that was accomplished by those who, with a love for God and a concern for hurting people, gave freely of their abilities for such an extended period of time. God bless you all for this.



SPOTLIGHT ON...



Volunteerism



Each year, Valley Rescue Mission hosts hundreds of individuals and dozens of groups who volunteer in some area of the ministry here. During 2013, we had volunteers assist us with such varied activities as:

- Teaching classes to addiction recovery program members
- Receptionist duties
- Yard work
- Painting
- Organizing food donations
- Signing up families to receive holiday toys and food assistance
- Preparing, serving, and cleaning up a daily meal to community members and the homeless
- Serving in our large holiday community meal program at Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Helping impoverished families select Christmas toys for their children
- Deboning dozens of turkeys for a holiday meal
- Speaking in chapel services
- Homework assistance with school-aged kids

And many more!

Our volunteers come from many varied backgrounds. We've seen school groups, employees from local businesses, military groups, church groups, and sororities. We also have many individuals who volunteer, of all ages. Senior citizens and newcomers to the community enjoy the opportunity to have a

purpose for their day and the chance to socialize with others. Some students join us to fulfill a community service requirement for a class, and others just because they want to!

Volunteerism at Valley Rescue Mission is definitely a win-win situation, blessing both the volunteer and the Mission. Using volunteer labor helps the Mission keep staff costs and other expenses low, as volunteers perform important services that allow us to use our donation dollars for direct service to clients. Those who enter the doors of the Mission as volunteers return to the community as our ambassadors, more knowledgeable about the many services we offer. Clients of the Mission become aware and are encouraged by the sheer number of people who give of their time, showing them just what a generous, resourceful community surrounds them.

Volunteers who serve at the Mission get to exercise their spiritual muscles, acting on Jesus' command to care for the poor and needy as if caring for Him (Matthew 25:40). They rub shoulders with people from a different walk of life and get a new perspective on poverty, gaining a greater appreciation for their own situation. For some, it's a way to give back to a community that helped them when they were in a rough spot in life. For students, volunteering can be a great way to explore whether they really want to go into a ministry or social services field, as well as give a college application or resume a special edge. Groups that volunteer find this to be a great team-building exercise as they work together on a common goal.

If your appetite is whetted, here are a few things you should know. Individual female volunteers are urged to contact Damascus Way Home for Women and Children, as our experience has shown that adult women work best with other women and children. Minors who want to volunteer must be accompanied by an adult. Volunteer interest forms are available on our website (www.valleyrescuemission.org); just complete and send it, and you'll be contacted regarding a spot where YOU can get involved.

If you volunteered in 2013 at VRM, please watch your mail for an invitation to our annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet – our chance to tell our volunteers just what a difference you are making in our community.

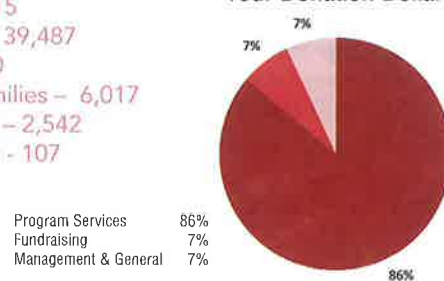
JANUARY – DECEMBER, 2013

Because You Gave...

2013 ACTIVITIES REPORT

Attendance in service – 30,455
 Professions of faith – 215
 Nights of safe shelter – 39,487
 Meals served – 125,820
 Food bags given to families – 6,017
 Families given clothing – 2,542
 Families given furniture – 107

Your Donation Dollar



Valley Rescue Mission depends on the generous contributions of people throughout the Chattahoochee Valley in order to provide the essential services described in this newsletter for hundreds of men, women, and children each year. Please use the enclosed reply form and envelope to send a donation. May God bless you.

Sincerely,
 The staff and volunteers of VRM



It's Shaping Up...

Our new Donation and Retail Center on North Veterans Parkway is progressing nicely. When completed, the new center will make it possible for our friends on the north side to make donations and shop for great bargains. Watch for Grand Opening information later this spring.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Secretary/Treasurer
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 Brenda Russell
 Ronnie Tharpe
 Patricia Weekley

EMERITUS MEMBERS:

Regina Bennett
 Don Breeden
 Gary Johnson
 J. Marvin Mills
 Dr. George Skipworth

most wanted

Food Service:

Sliced bread
 Hot dog & hamburger buns
 Food, especially meat & meat products
 Cafeteria plates (slotted trays)
 Non-breakable cups
 Coffee (for drip machine)
 Forks, knives & spoons
 Plastic serving trays

Client Services:

Blankets
 Electric heaters
 Men's coats, jackets, sweatshirts, gloves, hats and thermal underwear
 Jogging suits (for men, women & children)
 Diapers (all sizes but especially larger ones 3 - 5)
 Diaper wipes
 Washcloths
 Towels
 Twin size sheets
 Pillowcases
 Pillows
 Feminine hygiene products (all sizes)
 Deodorant
 Body wash
 Bars of soap
 Disposable razors
 Shaving cream
 Toothbrushes
 Toothpaste
 Shampoo
 Blow dryers
 Curling irons
 Composition notebooks
 Highlighters

Colored pencils
 Ink pens
 Dividers
 Manila folders
 AA batteries
 1" binders
 Blue folders with pockets & brads
 Various size ladies underwear
 Various size children's underwear (boys & girls)
 Alarm clock with no radio
 Umbrellas

Housekeeping:

Powder laundry detergent
 Fabric softener
 Bleach
 Windex
 Disinfecting spray
 Brooms
 Mops
 Dust pans
 Toilet brushes
 Bathroom cleaner
 "Fabuloso"
 Pine-Sol
 55-60 gallon large trash bags
 Toilet paper
 Paper towels



Maintenance:

Lawn mowers
 Yard equipment (bush axes, rakes, etc.)
 Deck brooms
 Garden hoses

Valley Rescue Mission is always in need of these essential items. Thank you for your loving support!

My Gift

Please bill my credit card:

Visa  Mastercard  Discover 

Account# _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone Number _____

YES, Rhonda, I consider it a privilege to help those in need. Here is my gift of:

- \$20.50 to provide 10 meals and other assistance
- \$30.75 to provide 15 meals and other assistance
- \$61.50 to provide 30 meals and other assistance
- \$102.50 to provide 50 meals & other assistance
- Help as many people as possible. \$ _____

REMEMBER – You can also donate safely online at www.valleyrescuemission.org.

Valley Rescue Mission
Rhonda J. Mobley
P.O. Box 1232
Columbus, GA 31902

Please mail this form with your donation. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.