

## A Changed Man

A man with short brown hair and a goatee, wearing a red, white, and blue plaid short-sleeved shirt, is sitting on a blue-painted wooden bench. He is smiling warmly at the camera. His hands are clasped in his lap. He is wearing a watch on his left wrist and a ring on his right hand. The background shows a brick wall and a blue door.

**Y**oung and healthy, Chris Hooks had many opportunities during his high school years as a standout athlete at Tokay High School in Lodi. A wide receiver and running back, he had aspirations of moving away and playing college football after graduation. Although raised in a Christian home and very active in his church, he chose to run around with a pretty rough crowd. He had one foot in his church life, and the other in a local gang. After graduation he enrolled at Northern Virginia Community College and was excited to play football. Unfortunately, he couldn't keep his grades up and his dream soon fell apart, and so did his life. He dropped out of school and returned to his old stomping grounds and the gang in Stockton.

Struggling with his footing and looking for direction in life, he asked himself, "Where do I go from here?" Dealing with the reality that he didn't finish college, he needed to find a new path. Instead of choosing the security of his church friends, he chose to associate with his old circle of 'friends' and continued gang activity and selling drugs.

Soon, Chris was stealing cars, selling and abusing drugs, and gaining an addiction to alcohol – all by the influence of the gang. It is a miracle he is even alive, because one evening he was involved in a gang war. A rival gang opened fire and Chris's car was riddled with gunshots. Thankfully, no one was killed.

During this tumultuous time, Chris met his first wife and they had two daughters, Katelin and Viviana. As he continued running from the law, he did his best to stay away from the gang activity. He kept



# Seeking Cause-Related Marketing Corporate Partners!

**A**s we continue to tell the story of how the Gospel Center Rescue Mission is growing and touching the lives of our students, you may have heard me speak about our goal to be 100% operationally self-funded. This can be done through Micro-enterprises, Fee for Services, and Cause Related Marketing (CRM). As we come out of COVID-19 – an area where we took the lead as the nonprofit organization providing homeless solutions in San Joaquin County – I would like to enlist you, our readers, to help us grow our CRM Partnerships.

A Cause Related Marketing Corporate partnership, in short, is a multi-year agreement with a business partner where the nonprofit – such as GCRM – benefits via funding, and/or in-kind gifts of product, services or free publicity. The corporate partner benefits via a new marketing tool towards increasing sales and/or customer affinity. This differs from a single event dinner/gala, or golf tournament sponsorship – even if the corporation sponsors a one-time event every year.

**A CRM relationship with Gospel Center would include:**

1. funding homeless solutions – arguably San Joaquin County's #1 priority – which is normally tied to scholarships for the homeless entering our New Life Program,
2. being the exclusive partner in your industry category,
3. getting exposure to our entire donor support network via The Vision, our monthly newsletter read by approximately 5,000 San Joaquin residents,
4. increasing your employee morale via partnership perks & volunteer opportunities,
5. having product sales incentives tied to the partnership, and
6. receiving VIP recognition at all of our scheduled events such as graduations, galas, ribbon cutting events & more.

## Our Current Partners



My request to you, and all of our amazing supporters reading this message: please share this opportunity with a person from just one (1) corporate/business entity that you have a relationship with. Then, please ask them to contact me at [wrichardson@gcrms.org](mailto:wrichardson@gcrms.org) to set up a meeting to talk about the many benefits they can receive with a customized CRM agreement. With the homeless issue being the #1 issue of concern in our county, this is an opportunity to be a community leader, funding faith-based homeless solutions, in partnership with Gospel Center Rescue Mission.

Wayne G. Richardson

attempting to turn his life around, build his family, leave the gang scene and be a family man. However, after 13 years his marriage fell apart.

Now divorced, Chris entered the Mission for the first of two attempts to get clean and sober. Staying for only two months, he quickly left to live with his grandmother and immediately continued his drug use. Little did he know that he would meet Erica, a beautiful woman who lived down the street from his grandmother's house. Now motivated to get clean for her, he retreated from his 'friends', but again his lifestyle kept pulling at him. He continued drinking and using drugs. Once again, his lifestyle was disrupting his intentions of creating a healthy life.

"I lost my job and the house we were living in went up for sale," said Chris. "I finally made the choice to go



Chris's daughters Katelin (17) and Viviana (12), who were in school at the time of the family photoshoot.

back to the Gospel Center and give it everything I had. I wanted to be a new man, a changed man. That was September 23rd, 2020—my clean and sober date." By the grace of God, he has finally been able to see continued positive results and progress in his life.

"My dedication and devotion to the [New Life] Program brought me closer to God. I asked for a change of heart and God did that. I am committed to being the man, father, and

husband God created me to be," Chris said. Now engaged, Erica and Chris have two children of their own, Caleb (3) and Jacob (3 weeks old). Chris is clean and sober, and his life is on the right track.



Chris with his two son's, Caleb (3) and Jacob (3 weeks old).

Two key principles that Chris has embraced throughout his journey in the New Life Program at the Mission, which took him from his old behavior to a strong member of society:

- Self-efficacy is the belief in the ability to affect change in a person's behavior. It is demonstrated in the person who says, "I can change. I can become someone different than what I have been."
- Self-regulation is the ability to control one's behavior by taking control of their external environment, self-observation, goal setting and self-reflection.

With a goal to become a Substance Abuse Counselor, Chris is currently working as a Case Manager with the Mission's New Life Program students. With the help and guidance from Billy Freeman – Men's New Life Program Director, Chris has moved back with his parents. Together, Chris and Billy spoke with Chris's parents to rebuild their strained relationship and explain how God has worked in Chris's life. Moving forward and taking the next steps following his Mission graduation, Chris knows that Gospel Center is where God wants him to be – building a life he can be proud of, including watching Erica walk down the aisle as his future bride.

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Thank you to the Stockton Ports for continuing to be a valued Cause-Related Marketing corporate partner of our organization.



## 2021 Upcoming Graduation Schedule

SUNDAY  
JULY 11

**Phyllis Grupe**  
Community Activist

FRIDAY  
SEPT. 11

**Dennis Barrett**  
2021 Distinguished Graduate

SUNDAY  
NOV. 14

**Miguel Villapudua**  
San Joaquin County Supervisor

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gcrms.org

————— *Happy Father's Day!* —————

## SUMMER KIDS PROGRAM



Please support one (or more) of our Mission Kids for the upcoming Mission Summer Program. A donation of \$500 will give one Mission Kid and their mom funding for field trips, art projects, swim parties and other fun activities to keep them engaged and active!

## Renovation Update

Our kitchen renovation is well underway and our General Contractor, Simile, says we are ahead of schedule. Stay tuned for the July Vision for a campus-wide renovation update!

## GCRM HAPPENINGS



*Wayne Richardson, County Supervisor Robert Rickman – Representative of District 5, and Britton Kimball during the Supervisor's visit to our campus in April.*

