



A NEW IDENTITY

Billy Freeman was on his way to becoming a professional baseball player, when a knee injury ended his career. This began a downward spiral that eventually brought him to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission.

Billy was raised by great parents and surrounded himself with positive influences. He was a baseball star in high school and a lot of people relied on his athletic abilities. He had a bright future ahead of him, but his dreams were shattered when he broke his knee cap.

"I wrapped my entire identity around baseball. When it was over I had nothing. I was nobody," said Billy.

With his life in a different direction, Billy started working for PG&E. Throughout his three years there, he was addicted to methamphetamine. "There was something missing in my life," he said.

Billy knew he couldn't continue living this way, and his father encouraged him to join the military. Billy stayed stateside during his eight years in the Army Reserves, which meant he continued using drugs. When he met his now ex-wife and her son, his life started to change.

Billy coached his stepson throughout his whole life. Though he continued his drug addiction, he had found a purpose in life again. But after his daughter was born, his injuries kept him from having a steady job.

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It's tax time!

This time of year means tax time for most Americans. However, 2018 brings a new tax code with many changes. One concern that you are hearing and reading about is that the higher standard deduction in 2018 will decrease individual giving to charities. Here are my thoughts on this concern and this year's filing in general.

1. In January's issue of *The Vision*, one of our 2017 key accomplishments listed was our growth from 20% to 40% self-funding towards our total annual operating budget. We define *self-funding* as micro-enterprises, fee for service, and cause-related marketing revenue. In short, I believe that regardless of the tax laws or giving climate, the Gospel Center Rescue Mission must continue to work towards a 100% self-funding goal in order to decrease our dependence on fundraising.
2. The Bible tells us in Exodus 34:26a (NIV), "Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God." I hope that no matter how the tax code affects each of us that we honor God's Word and support efficient Christian charities.
3. If you are reading this and are in a low-income tax bracket, please come visit our free Clothing Plus Ministry where you can get clothing, furniture, and household items. Simply call (209) 466-2138 to obtain the Clothing Plus hours of operation.
4. And finally, should your tax filing result in a refund, please consider blessing the Gospel Center Rescue Mission.

Wayne G. Richardson

Continued from cover

Divorce left Billy with nowhere to go, so he called multiple places in the area. The only place that had a bed for him was the Gospel Center Rescue Mission. He stayed in the Recuperative Care Program for six months, rehabbing his foot, before leaving to take care of his mother.

One injury after another kept coming, and Billy broke his neck. He healed in the Recuperative Care Program a second time, while seeing other men's successes in various programs. This time he was determined to change his life and moved on to the New Life Program. Billy's neck healed and he was admitted into the program last February. "I knew that when I came here that I was changing my life," said Billy. "I was tired of not working and tired of not being a good dad."

Billy hit the ground running and quickly got involved in many aspects of the program. He completed the

Learning Center curriculum in three months and began tutoring. "The day I got here I told [COO] Britton that in six months I'd be at his door wanting a job. I did that every day and with 13 days left in my program, he offered me a job."

"The Mission gave me the opportunity to get my life back."

~ Billy

Billy currently works as the Learning Center Coordinator and a New Life Program Counselor. At his graduation in September, he got engaged. "My fiancé was there for me every step of the way. I have five strong women in my life – my mother, sister, daughter, niece, and fiancé who are all proud of me," said Billy.

Billy lives on campus and plans to work there as long as he can. Through all the trials and setbacks, he is proud of his accomplishments. "Right now I'm happy here. The Mission gave me the opportunity to get my life back. They don't do the work for you, but they give you the tools you need. I wake up every morning content."

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



Over 30 Health Net employees served on our campus on December 19, installing a healing garden in the Recuperative Care area. Health Net also blessed us with over \$100,000 in Recuperative Care funds.

Part of our mission is to improve lives through spiritual restoration; therefore, it is crucial to have relationships with churches in our community. First Baptist of Stockton has supported the Mission in many ways.



Church has designed specifically for them. First Baptist also supported GCRM throughout the holiday season, holding a toy drive benefiting the children of the Mission.

We have also been blessed by Health Net, who paid off the Recuperative Care building purchase loan and funded a bed for a year. Health Net employees worked on our campus, installing planter boxes and spreading rock in our Recuperative Care area, so that our occupants can have a nicer place to heal.

Some of our students not only attend church at First Baptist, but they also attend its Celebrate Recovery program and a special Sunday School class that the

Thank you, First Baptist of Stockton and Health Net, for working with us towards our mission!

2018 Gala

Celebrating Restored Lives through Scholarships

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

5:30pm RECEPTION

6:00pm DINNER

STOCKTON GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Keynote Speaker

TORI VERBER SALAZAR

San Joaquin County District Attorney

CALL 209.957.7277 TO PURCHASE TICKETS

This event is designed to raise money for the students and celebrate their accomplishments, as well as bring awareness to the issue of homelessness in the community. Sponsors of this event provide scholarships for students to complete the New Life Program.

"We are in need of every possible opportunity to be more aware, educated, and encouraged regarding the homeless as all of us continue to work towards solutions to create a healthy community," states CEO Wayne Richardson.

GOSPEL CENTER RESCUE MISSION

over 75 years of restoring lives

445 S. San Joaquin Street
Stockton, CA 95203
(209) 320-2310
www.gcrms.org

Your donation to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission, via the attached envelope, can help people like Billy find their identities, restore relationships, and transform their lives through the love of Jesus.



DONATIONS NEEDED

We are always in need of items for our Men's and Women's Emergency Lodging, such as socks, blankets, toiletries, and other basic everyday necessities. Please drop off items at 445 S. San Joaquin Street in Stockton.

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

We are blessed to have people serve our students and campus, who generously give their time and talents to further the Mission. Two volunteers stood out over the past year – Peggy Clifton and Robert Maldonado.

Peggy has been volunteering for over five years in the Payee Services department, helping the staff serve nearly 600 clients with their Social Security benefits. When not at the Mission, she spends time with family and friends traveling and helping out at her church.

Robert is an alumnus of the New Life Program and now volunteers his time at the Mission, helping in the kitchen and giving haircuts to the men in the New Life Program. Robert is currently employed at Podesto's Market & Deli in Lincoln Center as a butcher in the meat department.

Congratulations to Peggy and Robert for being honored as the 2017 Volunteers of the Year!

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