

FROM BEING HOMELESS TO SERVING THE HOMELESS

Andrea Mountjoy went from being homeless and addicted to working directly with the homeless and addicted. Her story shows how God turns despair into prosperity, and she continues to live out her testimony at the Gospel Center Rescue Mission.

Andrea grew up with divorced parents, including an uninvolved father and an abusive mother. She and her siblings were often in the care of a babysitter who had sons. She was frequently molested during this time. Her childhood made her feel unworthy and unloved.

Because of these incidences, Andrea started getting involved with prostitution at a young age. She got into an abusive relationship and had her first child at the age of 17. She has had six children – all from abusive relationships. She was introduced to drugs at 18 to keep up with her busy life of raising children, going to school, and working.

Since 2015, Andrea has not had a consistent place to stay, so she would rent hotel rooms – a set up for prostitution. She was in and out of jail and her drug and alcohol addiction became worse.

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Ways to Give

Andrea Mountjoy's testimony is simply amazing! I am blessed because every day I get to work alongside Andrea, our Donor Relations Manager, in our administrative offices. Her last name truly describes "the mountain of joy" she radiates 24/7! The topic of this month's CEO Message, "Ways to Give" to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission (GCRM) greatly involves Andrea. So in summary, here are some ways to give:

1. Responding to **The Vision** monthly appeal via the enclosed envelope as the Lord leads you. Andrea is actually our point person running The Vision with her counterpart at SASS! Public Relations, Katie Kishi.
2. If you are looking for **volunteer opportunities** at GCRM as an individual or group, your first step would be to call Andrea at **(209) 320-2310**. You can also get more volunteer information on our website link: gcrms.org/Ways-To-Give/Volunteer
3. Our **Clothing Plus** ministry seeks to provide **FREE** clothing, household goods, furniture, and other necessities to the needy and homeless of San Joaquin County as well as to GCRM's New Life Program students and their children. Your in-kind donations and financial support of GCRM funds our Clothing Plus ministry. Note that we also accept **vehicle donations**. Again, contact Andrea to schedule a donation pick-up.

4. A fourth way to support us is to go to gcrms.org/Ways-To-Give. Here you will find resources such as Credit Card, Stock, Wire Transfers, Transformational, Planned and Corporate Giving, "Need Statement" summaries of programs and project funding requirements, and so much more donation information. Feel free to call me at **(209) 320-2312** for more information.

Your support translates into **transformed people** like Andrea Mountjoy, who now works full-time in the Lord's service. For readers who support the Rescue Mission and are contemplating any of the four areas above – Thank You! Hebrews 6:10 reminds me that you will be remembered by your support of the Lord's Gospel Center Rescue Mission: ***God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.***

Wayne G. Richardson

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



We receive generous funding from San Joaquin County Public Health Services to go towards our Recuperative Care program. This "Whole Person Care" program houses those who have recently been discharged from the hospital and have nowhere to go. Recuperative Care gives them a place to recover from sickness or injury while

providing them with caretakers. Many Recuperative Care residents transition into our New Life Program, where they become even healthier individuals. We'd like to thank San Joaquin County Public Health Services for this amazing partnership that will allow us to continue this wonderful program.

At this point her absent father became involved, along with her stepmother, a recovering addict, who recognized the signs of addiction. They took Andrea's children in 2015. That's when Andrea started to rekindle her relationship with her father and stepmother.

While Andrea was homeless, she was attacked by another homeless man who tried to rob her for drug money. When she resisted, he kicked her with his steel-toed boots, which put her in the hospital for five months.

Andrea had nowhere to go after being discharged from the hospital and continued her lifestyle. One day Andrea went back to the hospital, where she felt safe, and a security guard put her on the path of hope. "He saw my anguish and desolation and looked me in the eyes and said, 'Ask for what you need,'" said Andrea. He told the nurses to take care of her, and she was then put in a mental health facility for one month. There, she got help from psychiatrists and drug counselors.

The mental health facility referred her to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission, and she began her journey there on October 13, 2017. During the first six months of the New Life Program, Andrea greatly focused on her work and did all she needed to be successful. She graduated from the first phase last May, acquired a volunteer position in the SSI Payee Services department shortly after, and graduated from the second phase last November.

In November Andrea was hired as the Mission's Donor Relations Manager – an esteemed administrative position. She also became certified in

“They believed in me. They gave me a chance when nobody else wanted me.”

ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Training and currently teaches a weekly Human Trafficking Class.

Since graduating, she has reconnected with her children and family, including her sister, whom she hadn't seen in years. Andrea's new life has filled her with a joy that radiates through her to others. "I don't walk with my head down anymore. When problems come up in life now, I pray about it and trust that if I stay faithful anything is possible," she said.

Andrea is grateful for the Mission and those who helped her along the way. "Being honest with myself was the hardest. I had to accept my past and recognize what I needed to fix," said Andrea. "They believed in me. They gave me a chance when nobody else wanted me."

Moving forward Andrea plans to save up for a place of her own and continue working at the Mission as long as she can. She is passionate about her job and helping the homeless, to whom she can directly relate. "My faith is still strong; my recovery is strong, but I want to stay accountable. I believe this is God's plan for my life."

2018 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



2018 Volunteers of the Year, Martha Robles & Rachel Mac Naught

One organization and two individuals were named the 2018 Volunteers of the Year for their outstanding commitment to the Mission.

RB Environmental, led by Ron Barber, took on the renovation of the former Alustiza Hotel's initial work and agreed to serve as a pro-bono general contractor for the project.

Martha Robles volunteered as a case manager and addiction counselor in the women's shelter.

Rachel Mac Naught continually volunteered in and supported the needs of the women's shelter.

Congratulations to these dedicated volunteers!



Ron Barber, Founder of RB Environmental

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gcrms.org

We ♥ Volunteers!

G C R M H A P P E N I N G S

This past holiday season we were incredibly blessed by many organizations and individuals who donated gifts to about 35-40 of our children. The joy on their faces seeing Santa and opening up presents was priceless! Thank you to all who made Christmas special for these children.



MLK 2018 Organization of the Year

Gospel Center Rescue Mission has been selected as the 2018 Martin Luther King, Jr. Organization of the Year! This award is given by Ministers and Community United Inc., whose mission is to improve the quality of life through various programs throughout San Joaquin County.

The awards ceremony was held January 20 at the Stockton Civic Auditorium. Wayne Richardson, CEO, and Karen Douglas, board member, accepted the award. We are honored to hold this title and be associated with Ministers and Community United.