

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

22 years after they met, Milton and Naomi Sells got married at the Gospel Center Rescue Mission – the place that restored their family.

Milton and Naomi met in 1997 while doing drugs on the streets. They have stayed together throughout their journey towards sobriety. Their drug addictions left them homeless for much of their early relationship. In 2000 they had a daughter, who passed away at just six weeks old. That's when the drug use spiraled out of control.

While Milton was in and out of prison multiple times, Naomi continued doing drugs and had a son in 2003. "I wasn't adequate to be a mom," she said. Their son moved to Louisiana with Milton's mother to ensure he would be cared for properly.

As Milton began getting sober, Naomi then began getting into trouble. She too was in and out of jail. During this time, Milton was diagnosed with diabetes.

The couple was able to find a place to live, but lost this privilege shortly after and were left to live with a friend. Their youngest son was then born in 2014.

Naomi was able to overcome her addiction in the years following, but Milton's health became worse. In 2017, he acquired an infection in his back and was told

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San Joaquin County's Homeless Point in Time Count

This month, I wanted to pass on some information and results that came out of the 2019 "Homeless Point In Time Count" for San Joaquin County as reported by Adam Cheshire, the County's Program Manager for Homeless Initiatives.

During the last ten days of January 2019, through a massive volunteer effort including 401 people representing 91 organizations, the San Joaquin Continuum of Care counted 1,533 unsheltered homeless individuals living within the geographic region of San Joaquin County. Of those, 60% were in Stockton, 14% in Manteca, 10% in Tracy, 9% in Lodi, with the rest scattered around Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon. 100 individuals were found living in the unincorporated parts of San Joaquin County.

Other key findings:

- 65% of those counted were male and 35% were female.
- 69% were of Caucasian descent, 20% of African descent, 2% of Asian descent, with 4% identifying as multi-racial and 5% identifying as "other."
- 28% were of Hispanic/Latino descent.
- 39% identified as "chronically homeless."
- 87% reported being continuously homeless in San Joaquin County for longer than three months, with 72% reporting one year or more.
- 37% reported having regular income, with all qualifying as "extremely low income."
- 59% reported a problem with substance abuse.
- 34% reported a mental health issue.
- 30% had a pet.



- 3% were between the ages of 18 and 24.
- 25% were over age 55.
- 9% identified as military veterans.
- 6 children under age 18 were identified, 1 under age 5, from two households surveyed around Lathrop.

This census occurs every other year in California. One key outcome is that our County receives HUD funding proportionally to other Counties' similar efforts based on the Point In Time Count. The photo above shows our Gospel Center Rescue Mission volunteer team of staff and New Life Program students who were joined by Tammy Shaff of St. Joseph's Medical Center. Our team was assigned a census area of about 5 blocks surrounding the Mission's campus.

I hope this provides some insight of just one aspect of the complex work associated with our homeless population.

Wayne G. Richardson

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

We have just renewed our cause-related marketing agreement with the Stockton Ports for the 2019 season! This will allow the Ports to use their platform to promote the Mission in several ways. GCRM will be highlighted in each home game program and will have its very own GCRM Night on June 22. At this game, a GCRM representative will throw out the first pitch and Mission staff will have an informational booth. In addition to this



special night, a GCRM representative will also throw out the first pitch at Faith Night on August 3.

Please consider going to GCRM Night and Faith Night this summer! You can purchase discounted tickets by visiting <http://bit.ly/PortsGroupPortal> and using the promotional codes "rescue" for June 22 and "mission" for August 3. *Promo codes are case sensitive.*

Annual Gala Celebrating Restored Lives Through Scholarships



Abofo Moreno, Carol & Wayne Richardson, Zoyla Moreno, & Peggy Clifton



Dave Midura, GCRM Board member; Greg Traverso; John & Lynette Zeiter; & Susan Traverso



Elva Garcia, GCRM Representative Payee Director; Sandra Deaver, GCRM Recuperative Care Director; & Yvonne Ferrell, GCRM Representative Payee Employee

The Gospel Center Rescue Mission held its 4th Annual Gala on April 4 at the Stockton Golf and Country Club. Tom Phillips, Vice President of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, gave the keynote speech and nearly 300 guests enjoyed dinner and a formal program.

GCRM Chief Operations Officer Britton Kimball and New Hope Family Shelter Director Carrie Williams gave their testimonies that inspired a room full of community leaders and GCRM staff, students, and supporters.



Tom Phillips, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Vice President & Gala Keynote Speaker, with Phil Johnson, Lincoln Center President



Celia Beanland, GCRM student; Andrea Mountjoy, GCRM Donor Relations Manager; & Monica Kimball, GCRM New Hope Family Shelter Case Manager

The Mission would like to thank everyone who sponsored the Gala and those who continue to support us financially, emotionally, and spiritually.



GCRM student Ashley Wilson with her sponsors, Judy & Fred Weibel



Jaime Morris, GCRM Director of Major Gifts; Robin Dempsey, Lacyne Lucero, & Naomi Sells, GCRM students

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Memorial Day - Pray for families who have lost heroes!

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he had just hours to live. "By the grace of God," Naomi said, Milton survived.

Milton relapsed after leaving the hospital, but at that time, Naomi had been sober for several years. Milton got another infection in his foot, which ultimately led him to Recuperative Care at the Mission last May. With their two sons, Naomi joined him and began the New Life Program.

After healing in Recuperative Care for two months, Milton began the New Life Program as well. They were able to go through the program as a family, and Milton and Naomi graduated together in January. "My life has changed for the better and I'm really grateful," said Milton.

Surrounded by their two sons and supporters at the Mission, they got married on March 6. "We always wanted to get married, and the Mission gave us the opportunity," said Naomi. "Our kids feel more comfortable at school now that we are married just like their friends' parents are."

Milton and Naomi are in the second phase of their program and reside with their boys in an apartment on campus. Naomi is currently seeking employment so that they can start saving for a place of their own.

Throughout their journey, Milton and Naomi stuck together despite hardship. "We didn't understand at the time why all this happened if God is supposed to be good," they said. "The Mission has helped us to understand that he always has a reason."

Now Milton and Naomi are able to teach their children valuable lessons. "I'm able to express to them that it's not always going to be a perfect world, but you have to keep faith that God is going to make a way."

Though it took many years to get to where they are now, Milton and Naomi and their children are now able to have the life they've always wanted – to be together as a family.

GRADUATION

Eleven New Life Program students graduated on March 15. Ron Van De Pol, President of Van De Pol Enterprises, encouraged the graduates in his keynote speech. Van De Pol Enterprises has been a longtime supporter of the Mission. Ron's father was a GCRM Board member for several decades and Ron recalls coming to the Mission as a child. We are thankful for the generations of support from the Van De Pol family.

Congratulations to Cierra Barcelos, Carl Berry, Morgan Burgos-Porras, Kimberly Erbaugh, Kyle Fritsch, Samuel Harvey, Lester "Aaron" Hawthorne, Walter "Kelly" Long, Lisa Morris, Tiffany Thomas-Richey, and Jessica Thomsen!

