

GIVING THANKS *with a Grateful Heart*

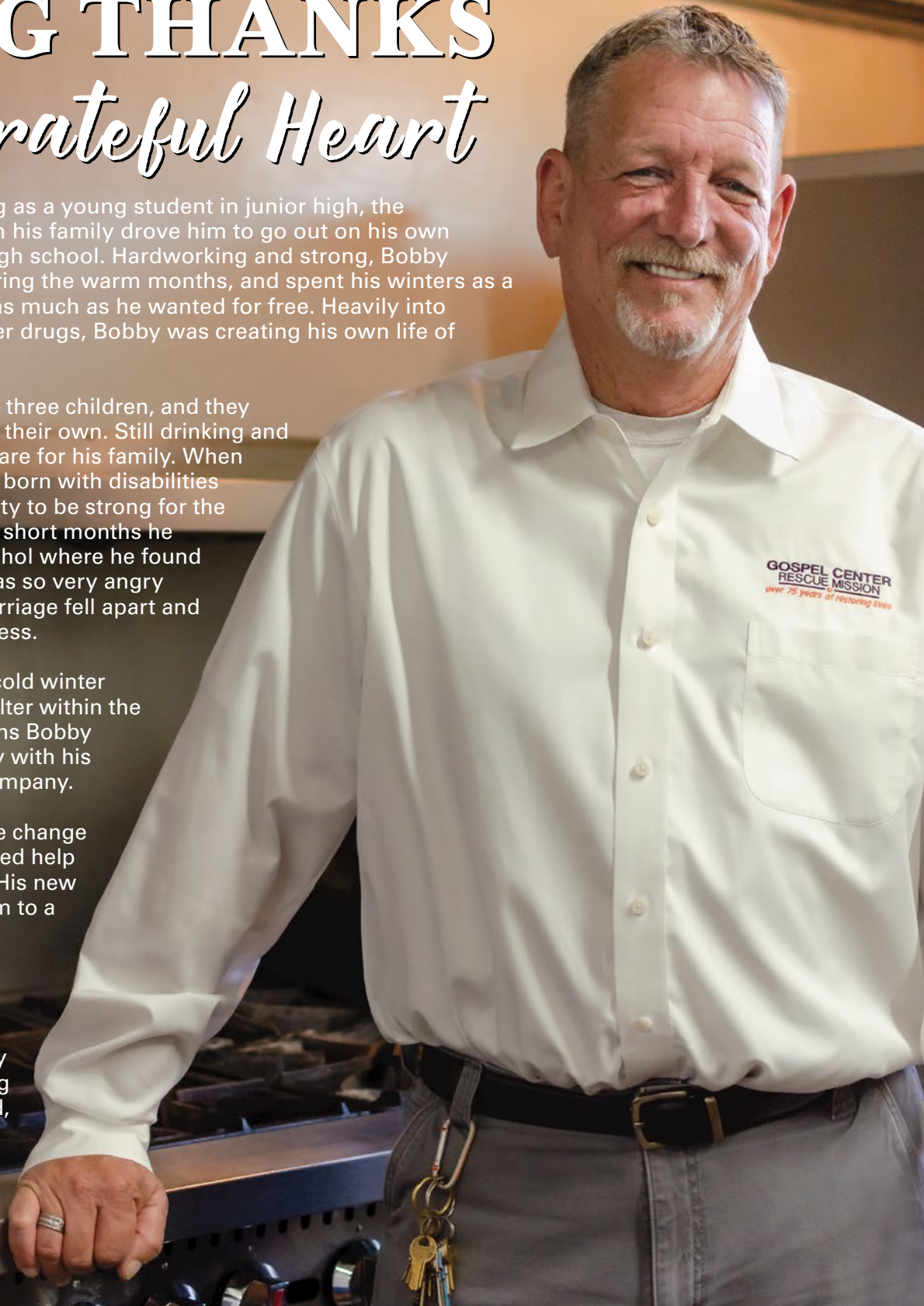
With his drug use beginning as a young student in junior high, the dysfunction and abuse within his family drove him to go out on his own following graduation from high school. Hardworking and strong, Bobby Smith worked as a roofer during the warm months, and spent his winters as a bartender so he could drink as much as he wanted for free. Heavily into methamphetamines and other drugs, Bobby was creating his own life of addiction and homelessness.

Bobby married a woman with three children, and they eventually became parents of their own. Still drinking and using, Bobby did his best to care for his family. When his young son, who had been born with disabilities died, Bobby felt a responsibility to be strong for the family. However, within a few short months he turned back to drugs and alcohol where he found his solace and comfort. He was so very angry with life with God that his marriage fell apart and he once again became homeless.

For many years he spent the cold winter months at the emergency shelter within the Mission. In the summer months Bobby spent his time at the cemetery with his "pet" racoon that kept him company.

Life was about to make a huge change when he befriended and offered help to another homeless person. His new friend asked Bobby to take him to a neighborhood church. The preacher spoke - at the seven-hour service - and said "Don't question God. Accept His plan and His timing. Don't be angry with God." With only a few experiences of attending church with his aunt as a child, he had never really given a thought about a life with God. He accepted the

continued on back page





Thanksgiving – Every Day

With November brings Thanksgiving and a time when we reflect on how blessed we are to know that God provides all our needs. The Pilgrims certainly knew this as they survived the hardships of living in a new land in order to worship God freely.

At the Rescue Mission, Thanksgiving is actually celebrated 365 days a year. Bobby Smith, our amazing Food Service Director, as part of our Campus and Community Feeding Programs, every day leads a team of New Life Program Students and Staff in the preparation of up to 500 hot meals along with the distribution of up to 1500 cold meals. Every. Single. Day! The hot meals are prepared for four shifts of breakfast and dinner: 1) Campus New Life Program and Emergency Lodging - women & children; 2) Campus New Life - men & Staff; 3) Men's Emergency Lodging; and 4) community feeding along with two hot lunch serving times. Cold meals, consisting of sandwiches, snack and breakfast trays, yogurt and salads, are collected from Starbucks early in the morning by Second Harvest - based in Manteca - and arrive at the Mission before 4am every day. We are blessed by our partnership with Second Harvest and Starbucks for these cold meals.

You may be surprised to learn that our Students do most of the food prep and kitchen cleaning as part of their daily "Ministry Assignment," and towards earning a California ServSafe Food Handler's Certificate. This training is not only a great "life skill" but also gives Students an advantage when

competing for food service or warehouse jobs where food is being stored or reconfigured. By the way, Bobby Smith also leads our Food Service Trade School. So, if you did not get it by now, Bobby is an amazing part of the leadership at the Mission!

In closing, I am sharing with you an exciting update regarding food service and our campus expansion. Many of you may know by 2024 we are expanding our bed capacity from 228 to approximately 500. This will primarily occur with the renovation of the former Alustiza Building and the demolition of the two Campus Victorian structures which will be replaced by a new three-story dorm. With this growth we need to expand our kitchen and dining room. Thanks to a San Joaquin County Community Development Block Grant and several generous, anonymous donors the food service projects are funded. The present kitchen and dining room will become one large kitchen. The adjacent chapel will become a multi-purpose chapel, dining room and meeting area. This work is expected to begin in the spring of 2020 and finished well before the Alustiza renovation completion in 2021.

May the Lord bless you this Thanksgiving season and every day!

Wayne G. Richardson

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

JOIN US:

November 16th - GCRM Night at the Stockton Heat.

January 18th for Teddy Bear Toss Night

March 28th – Star Wars Night

Each of these games we will have a table display... so stop by, say hello and ask about your programs and find out what is happening at our Mission.

To order tickets to the November 16th game go to groupmatics.events/gcrmnight.



We thank our local Hockey Team – Stockton Heat – for their continued support of our programs and students. Over the season we have three stand out nights to highlight our Students and Kids!

GRADUATION



Above: Britton Kimball, Keynote Speaker and the first recipient of the Distinguished Graduate Award flanked by New Life Program Graduates – September 20, 2019.
Left: Britton Kimball, Distinguished Graduate



Anticipating their entrance to the ceremony.



Pray without ceasing.

Grateful. Blessed. Inspired.

These are the words that describe not only the hearts and lives of the New Life Program graduates, but our guests in attendance as well! At the September graduation we honored alumnus Britton Kimball, COO of the Mission with the first Distinguished Graduate Award. The smiles on the faces and the bright sparkle in these eyes tell the joyful story of renewed lives through Christ.



Sharing the joy!



Leading the flag salute is Carrie Williams, New Hope Family Shelter Director, Azael (10), and David (13), sons of graduate Morgan Porras Burgos.



David, his joy is infectious.



Carol Ornelas, CEO, Visionary Home Builders of California gave words of encouragement and the closing prayer.



Sharon Benninger, Board Member and co-founder of "Lift Up All" Foundation.



Left: New Life Program graduate and poet, Pamela Bolanos with her friend and community leader, Kristen Birtwhistle, CEO United Way of San Joaquin County.



The Celebration!



GCRM representing LOVE STOCKTON

On October 5th GCRM Staff and Students went to Haven of Peace to finish up a few projects started during the September 21st LOVE STOCKTON project, helping with painting and other necessary maintenance!

GOSPEL CENTER RESCUE MISSION

restoring lives since 1940

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

Thanksgiving – A time to reflect on God's blessings

Continued from cover

pastor's words and began to seek out God's plan in his life.

In 2010, after years of living in and out of the Emergency Lodge at the Mission, Bobby was led to the New Life Program where he found Jesus Christ. Now he has peace and lives in a safe environment free from drugs. He has the added benefits of counseling, classes and church. Additionally, Bobby has a very important job.

He began working in the kitchen as a cook. After his boss, the Director of Food Service resigned Bobby's hard work and dedication to keep the kitchen running smoothly did not go unnoticed. During a kitchen renovation, Bobby's leadership skills kept the project on track and proved his ability to manage. He was given the opportunity to become the new Director of Food Services and has thrived in this very important role at the Mission. Since 2013, Bobby is responsible for all ordering and receiving of food, developing menus based on the donations that come in, managing a full staff and feeding the multitudes. In the CEO's message, there is a breakdown of meals that are daily prepared by the kitchen staff at the Mission.

His life and job at the Mission is a huge blessing to him as well as up to 500 people each day that come through the dining room and emergency lodge doors. It is also a blessing to those that work in the kitchen as Bobby serves as a mentor – preparing Students with the opportunity to find employment. When asked about what he enjoys most about his job as Director of Food Service, Bobby said, "I love my job because I can teach



Bobby Smith, all smiles at graduation!

students the valuable life choices I have learned by going through the New Life Program. I also teach them about food safety, and they end up with their California Food Handlers Card. Many Students are now working in the food industry because they had the advantage of having this certification and on-the-job training at the Mission."

Bobby has also used his life experiences to reach into the community. For the past six years, Bobby has served as the Representative for the Homeless at Community Medical Centers (they have a clinic on the GCRM Campus) and also currently serves as President of their Board of Directors.

It is such a blessing that the Mission that initially served Bobby and provided the tools to make him well is now the recipient of a man who is himself a servant helping others not only with their physical care but also their spiritual well-being.

Thanksgiving is but one day to most of us. With a very grateful heart, Bobby serves up Thanksgiving every single day to hungry people with hungry souls who are deeply loved by God.

*Donations
Needed*

Jackets • Sweaters • Socks
Mittens • Blankets • Robes

Always in need of soap,
shampoo and conditioners.

We thank you for any donations
For donation drop-off or pick-up, call (209) 320-2310.