

FROM TRAGEDY TO TESTIMONY



“God told me that my life was not just going to be a tragedy, it was going to be a testimony.” As Brandy Hamilton shares her story and helps other women every day, she has transformed tragedy into her testimony.

Brandy grew up in Portland, Oregon with an alcoholic mother and step-father. There was domestic violence in their home, so she would often run away. She was sexually assaulted four times as a child. With the start she had, it is no surprise that Brandy’s life collapsed from there.

Brandy tried her first drug at the age of 8 when her babysitter gave her marijuana. She used smoking as a coping mechanism. At 12 years old, she was approached by a pimp, who told her that he would help, and she would have somewhere to go. This incident began a 2-year period of prostitution, some of which took place in Seattle during the time of the Green River Killer. “God had a different plan,” said Brandy.

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A Graduation Testimony

Our graduation in September was, once again, a celebration of God’s amazing restoration for 13 men and women. One of the graduates, Sondra Scheiblich, was surrounded by her two teenage daughters and shared her testimony, which provoked many amazing comments from those who were privileged to hear it. We are grateful for Sondra’s willingness to share it with you as well:

I was a broken hopeless mother of two amazing girls. I literally had no hope. I felt the life I was living was all I had coming to me...lonely, desolate, uninspired. A life I didn’t want for us to live. After months of calling nearly every day, I got a call from Carrie (the Mission’s Woman’s New Life Program Director) that would forever change me from the inside out.

Today I’m still broken, but the “scars” will heal and always be a reminder of what I am. What matters most, however, I’m no longer hopeless. There is faith in a better life for us – my talented girls – and for a future. We can make it in this world.

So to every person – who supports this Mission, who volunteers here, who works here tirelessly putting up with the men and their battles through life or desperately trying to get through to us hormonal women fighting addictions, hot

flashes, struggling to juggle our children, chores, meal times, classes, and ourselves – we are a temperamental lot! Thank you! You have changed the lives of at least this family.

And most importantly, to me at least, are my girls – my ultimate supporters; there for me no matter what. Whenever, wherever, however, lighting my path through the darkest night. I’m fighting for you. The struggle isn’t over by far. We have a long way to go, but this day marks how far we have come. And we are not going back!

What a wonderful testament to God’s work in the lives of people at the Mission! Our next graduation is November 16 and will once again feature God’s amazing restoration. Our keynote speaker will be Ron Barber, Founder of RB Environmental, who has led the renovation of the former Alustiza Hotel and Restaurant towards a 170-bed women’s New Life Program expansion. You are all invited! Simply RSVP to us at (209) 320-2310.

Blessings always,

Wayne G. Richardson

GRADUATION

Thirteen students graduated on September 21. City of Stockton District 5 Councilmember Christina Fugazi gave the keynote speech and graduates received certificates of completion. Congratulations to Cierra Barcelos, Roy Beck, Josh Blewett, Roger Carranza, Tim Elia, Kimberly Erbaugh, Chris Evon, David Fox, Jesus Guerrero, Sam Harvey, Nora Legg, Katherine Mesa, and Sondra Scheiblich!

September’s graduation also doubled as an alumni homecoming! Graduates gathered to reconnect and celebrate their accomplishments. We are so blessed to see what God did in their lives at the Mission and what he has continued to do beyond.



Christina Fugazi & Roger Carranza



Chris Evon & Christina Fugazi

Thankful Thanksgiving

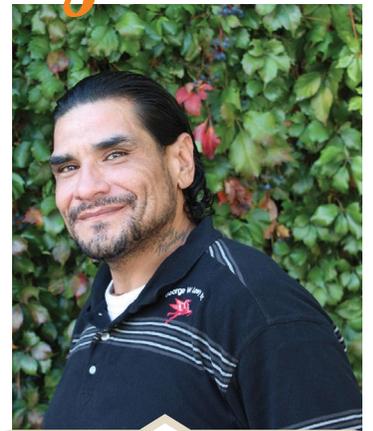
MILTON SELLS

I'm thankful for the Gospel Center Rescue Mission to allow my family to get a better start in life and start over.



NAOMI SELLS

I'm grateful for God's grace and mercy and for the Gospel Center Rescue Mission for giving my family a second chance.

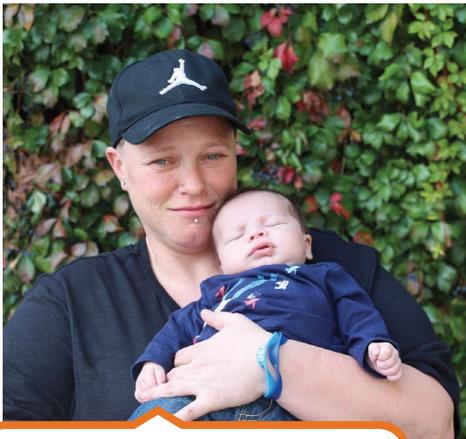


JUAN MONREAL

I'm thankful for having a roof over my head and a comfortable bed.

ELAINE TANKERSLEY

I'm thankful for the Rescue Mission because for the first time in my life I'm sober at 61 years old, and I've been diagnosed with cancer, and I'm going to get healthy here.



LACYINE LUCERO

I'm thankful for the Mission because I have a clean baby and I'm clean.



ROBERT MALDONADO

I'm grateful that God gives second chances and restores lives here at the Mission and gives us hope for a better life.

ASHLEY WILSON

I'm thankful for the Gospel Center Rescue Mission because I have a chance to be a clean and sober mother to my son.



AL WILSON

I'm thankful for the Mission for giving me a second chance with my grandson and my daughter.

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We are grateful for your support during this Thanksgiving season.

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During this time she was introduced to methamphetamine. She went to jail for prostituting and loitering charges, and when she got out she sank deep into a meth addiction. Her friends would make meth in the house so that she could get drugs for free. After overdosing several times, she reached out to her mom to get her adolescent treatment. "I was scared I was going to kill somebody or kill myself," said Brandy.

Brandy got clean at 18 and stayed sober for almost 10 years. During this time, she was going to church and recovery meetings. "I fell in love with the Lord," she said.

After having three children, she relapsed and got into an abusive relationship. She stopped going to church and meetings and would drink daily to cope with her anxiety and panic disorder. She was a functioning alcoholic for many years until she came to the Mission last December.

She arrived at the Mission with nothing but a pair of ripped sweatpants and shoes with holes in them. "I was so hopeless in that dark place. You want to get out but you're so sick that you have to take the next drink. It's a vicious cycle," she said.

Upon arriving, Brandy kept to herself and focused on her classes. "I was ready for a structured program. I knew that if I didn't do it, I wasn't going to make it."

Brandy was able to learn who she was after wearing so many masks throughout her life. She was able to find identity in Christ and apply the lessons she learned in classes, counseling, and church. "Addiction is just the symptom. I knew this time in order to get sober I had to get down to the causes and conditions," she said.

Since coming to the Mission, Brandy has regained a strong relationship with God and become confident in

telling her story. She graduated in July and now teaches a human trafficking class to the women at the Mission. She also shares her testimony at local high schools and is involved in church.

Brandy hopes to work full-time at the Mission as a counselor. She has a passion for helping women see their worth. In the meantime, she has a part time job that allows her to still have time to teach classes at the Mission. By God's grace Brandy has had all of these opportunities available to her.

"I'm so excited for God to be able to use me as a vessel that I can uplift as many people as I can. Since I've been here I just fell in love with Him again, and I am able to walk in peace."

DONATIONS NEEDED

The Mission welcomes your donations and is extremely blessed by them! We are always in need of toiletry items and clothing for the homeless; however, our newest need is a minivan. We use our vans daily – driving students to their jobs, picking up mass donations, and more – which has taken a toll on these vehicles. If you have a large vehicle you aren't using anymore, or desire to help us purchase one, please let us know by calling (209) 320-2310.

On Thanksgiving day, we will be serving over 500 meals. We welcome your donations of Thanksgiving food, such as turkeys, pies, stuffing, and more.