

## LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS



**T**iffany Steenburg's life looked great from the outside, but her reality was far from ideal. She was married, had a job, drove a nice car, and raised four children, but she was hurting on the inside.

Her addiction took her through many low points, but it wasn't until she was left on the streets that she saw the light.

Growing up in a family of alcoholics, Tiffany always had access to alcohol. She was 13 when she started drinking. Her life spiraled from then on.

Tiffany got pregnant at 16 and moved out with her boyfriend until the age of 18. She then met her ex-husband at 21 and was married for 14 years. During this time she had three more children. Tiffany and her ex were functioning alcoholics who established a life together – they had a house, they worked full-time, and their kids were straight A students.

Tiffany remembers many times when she was too drunk at work to drive home, so she walked instead. She was also assaulted during several of these times, but she was never a reliable witness because she was drunk. "I don't even know how I got home some days. By the grace of God nothing else ever happened to me," said Tiffany.

Tiffany recalls being sick every day from too much alcohol, but nothing ever stopped her from continuing in her addiction. "I had always been fired from my jobs. It wasn't because they knew I was drinking, but because the alcohol was affecting how I worked," she realized.

When Tiffany worked for a bus service in 2014, she started doing drugs with a coworker. She no longer





# Alumni Homecoming!

This month, I want to let our alumni and faithful supporters know that we are instituting Homecoming here at the Gospel Center Rescue Mission! Homecoming will take place every year in conjunction with our September graduation. This month's graduation on the 21st features City of Stockton Councilmember, Christina Fugazi, who has been a champion for us in our funding efforts for the renovation of the former Alustiza Hotel. The building will be transformed into a 112-bed housing facility for women in our New Life Program.

Homecoming will give alumni the chance to enjoy a campus open house and a barbecue before the graduation at 1:30 pm. So alumni, please save the date and let us know if you are attending!

To our faithful friends and supporters, please consider attending graduation, where you can meet past students and congratulate our new graduates, as well as take a campus tour. In both cases of new and past graduates, guests will see God's miracles that are living all around us in our

alumni through His regeneration. Titus 3:5-7 speaks to not only our alumni but to all of us, stating:

*...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

To all our amazing supporters, thank you for answering God's call to support His work at the Gospel Center Rescue Mission by using the enclosed envelope to respond as the Lord leads you.

Blessings,

Wayne G. Richardson

## GRADUATION



*Our graduates with Lincoln Center President, Phil Johnson*

On July 20 we celebrated eight graduates and their accomplishments! Our chapel was packed with so many families and friends who encouraged and cheered for their graduates. Lincoln Center President, Phil Johnson, gave an inspiring keynote speech and congratulated each of the graduates with a gift. Congratulations to Lisa Ramirez, Katherine Wallace, Brandy Hamilton, James Swearengin, Craig Miller, Melissa Lopez, Martina Terry, and Tianna Morgan.

felt drunk because of the drugs and was able to get her job done. Meanwhile, her marriage was falling apart. In 2015 Tiffany lost her job, got divorced, and moved with her kids to her grandmother's house.

Since she was unemployed, Tiffany would go out at night to go party after her kids went to bed. Her behavior worried her father, who forced her to start a recovery program. It wasn't long until Tiffany was kicked out of the program for being violent.

Tiffany continued doing drugs and drinking to numb the pain she felt from losing custody of her children. Through the next two years, Tiffany endured an abusive relationship and jail time.

It seemed Tiffany's life had hit a low point, but it wasn't until she was released from jail last October that she hit rock bottom. After catching a bus back home, she woke up in Manteca to a new perspective. "It was the first time I looked at my life from outside myself. I asked myself, 'What are you doing, Tiffany?'" she recalled. "It was the first time I finally heard God say, 'Are you done yet?'" and the first time I said, 'I'm done, Father, I surrender.'"

Tiffany knew she needed to get help right away. She went to a gas station and told them that she wanted to kill herself just so that she could be admitted to

the hospital. To her dismay, she was discharged with nowhere to go.

After being rejected by another local program, Tiffany called Gospel Center Rescue Mission (GCRM). "I had paper scrubs on, a blanket, and no shoes," she said. "I was begging Pam (administrative volunteer) because she said there were no beds open." Pam told her that something in her heart made her go to Britton (GCRM Chief Operating Officer) to see how they could help.

Tiffany hitched a ride to the Mission, where she met Pam and Britton. "Britton looked at me like a father looks at his daughter and asked me if I was ready to change. I said 'yes.'"

From that moment, Tiffany's life has never been the same. Even through her darkest points, she has always had faith. Her life was dimmed by the obstacles she faced, but now she responds to every situation with joy. She graduated from the first phase of the New Life Program this past May.

"I choose to be in the light. I wake up every day knowing I'm right where I'm supposed to be," said Tiffany.

At our New Life Program Scholarship Gala last spring, Tiffany was seated at a table with the manager of Trader Joe's in Stockton. He was inspired by Tiffany's story and hired her, despite her past. She has been working at Trader Joe's for the past few months, excelling at every position and quickly moving up in the ranks.

Tiffany is thankful for the Mission and all the people she has met there. Everything she's gained at the Mission has kept her grounded and humble. She is known on campus as the most joyful, energetic, positive person full of so much life. While she knows there will always be struggles, Tiffany stays focused on her future. "I'm just trying to do the next right thing. I choose not to go on any plan but God's plan."

## IN THE COMMUNITY



Wayne & Carol Richardson with Stockton Kings dancers during the "Stuff the Bus" event

The Stockton Kings, the G-League team of the Sacramento Kings, officially came into town earlier this spring, and have already made a huge impact in the community. In July the Stockton Kings held a "Stuff the Bus" event at Lincoln Center, in which school supplies were collected to benefit the children at the Gospel Center Rescue Mission. Thanks to the Stockton Kings for their support of the Mission!

## ALWAYS ACCEPTING DONATIONS!

- Clothing
- Household items
- Furniture
- School supplies
- Bulk food
- Monetary gifts

Drop off at 445 S. San Joaquin Street or arrange for a pickup by calling (209) 320-2310.



# GOSPEL CENTER RESCUE MISSION

*over 75 years of restoring lives*

445 S. San Joaquin Street  
Stockton, CA 95203  
(209) 320-2310  
[www.gcrms.org](http://www.gcrms.org)

## WOMEN'S NEW LIFE PROGRAM EXPANSION

**T**he Gospel Center Rescue Mission recently received a \$1,350,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco's 2018 Affordable Housing Program, sponsored by BAC Community Bank. This adds to \$668,225 in San Joaquin County and City of Stockton Community Development Block grants and the generosity of RB Environmental, who has performed the removal of hazardous material and interior demolition.

This women's New Life Program expansion is happening at the former Alustiza Hotel and Restaurant that has been vacant for over a decade on the northeast corner of the GCRM campus. It will provide 112 new beds, in addition to the 64 current beds for women and children. The project will pair housing with supportive services, including case management, drug and alcohol counseling, life skills training, job coaching, GED completion, support groups, and work therapy to help residents maintain long-term, sustained independence. Residents will also benefit from facility amenities such as a children's daycare, computer learning center, kitchen, dining center, exercise room, and play areas.

The first three phases of renovation work on the project have been completed, and the building currently stands with only structural beams, floors, and exterior walls in place. The fourth phase began in July, which included 100 percent design by WMB Architects and seismic reinforcement of the building.



The fifth and final phase will begin January 2019. This will include the construction of four studio apartments, one 1-bedroom apartment, and a 20-woman dorm space on the ground floor; 18 rooms on the second and third floors; new exterior street sidewalks; underground utility replacement; and exterior signage.

"This has been an amazing 14-month \$2.8 million fundraising effort; but more importantly, it keeps us on track for a grand opening in early 2020 for what we believe will be one of the largest Christian, long-term, resident regeneration programs for homeless women and women with children in North America!" said Wayne Richardson, CEO of Gospel Center Rescue Mission.