

A NEW CALLING

“ Now I can have relationships with people, to love them for who they are and to be there for them. I am not looking for validation from anyone anymore. Because I have validation through Christ. **”**

These are the opening words from Jessica Elaine Thomsen as she sat down to tell her story.

“It’s very lonely out there,” she began. Her mother was not present in her life and her dad was always working and under the influence of something. Her grandparents, with whom she lived were her stability. Jessica was a lonely and very angry, rebellious child. She really wanted her family together - needing and wanting a mom. She held her dad on a pedestal and wanted more from him, but learned early on that life wasn’t picture perfect, and never would be.

At a young age, she began drinking. As she got older, her rebellious nature broadened, finding comfort in being alone, as she drank and self-medicated.

Jessica tried very hard to live up to the expectations of others. Through all her anger and rebellion, she did very well in school, excelling academically, and always received high marks, graduating early from high school. Soon after she left her grandparent’s home she got pregnant and separated herself from her family. She became involved in a very bad lifestyle, running with a rough crowd, drinking, doing drugs and looking for love and companionship with all the wrong people. While in this very bad, abusive environment, she had two daughters, Brandy Lynne and Laura Lee. Eventually her daughters would be taken in by her grandparents, who gained legal custody.

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An Amazing Leader Team!

I would like to take this opportunity to spotlight and thank the amazing group of leaders – our Directors – that God has assembled here at the Gospel Center Rescue Mission! The majority of these men and women are serving on Campus during this Coronavirus pandemic.



BRITTON KIMBALL, *Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director GCRM Graduate*

Britton runs the campus along with 7 of our 8 core programs. He is one of the most knowledgeable individuals on homelessness and has been my trainer in this area.



MIKE VISS, *Chief Financial Officer*

Single handedly, Mike annually processes millions of dollars of invoices and income and does the payroll. He also keeps us all focused on the budget.



BILL BROWN, *Director, Government & Foundation Relations*

We are blessed to have retained the wisdom and experience of my predecessor and mentor who secures key grants that are modernizing our campus.



SANDRA DEAVER, *Director, Recuperative Care Program GCRM Graduate*

Sandra is running a pilot program and is probably the most knowledgeable non-profit executive on homeless recuperative care and how-to liaison with the medical community.



BILLY FREEMAN, *Director, Men's New Life Program GCRM Graduate*

Billy will be running one of the largest homeless regeneration programs in California when the Men's New Life Home (178 beds) is completed in the next four years.



ELVA GARCIA, *Director, SSA/SSI Representative Payee Services*

Elva oversees a team that cares for almost 600 SSA/SSI clients (most are homelessness) and processes about \$6M in benefits annually.



SUMMER KIDS PROGRAM!

Support one (or more) of our Mission Kids for the upcoming Mission Summer Program. A donation of \$350 will give one Mission Kid and their mom funding for field trips, art projects, swim parties and other fun activities to keep them engaged and active!

Thank You

TO OUR SPONSORS

We are thankful for the support that we receive from each and every donor. Every donation, no matter how big or small is used to change lives of our students! Our community leaders also step up in so many ways. San Joaquin County is our #1 donor for the New Life Women's Home (former Alustiza) with funding of \$2,050,000. The Federal Home Loan Bank and City of Stockton have also provided significant support. We are excited to get the doors open to the New Life Women's Home for the many women and children in our community.



TOM HUBER, Director,
Men's Emergency Lodge
GCRM Graduate

Tom leads a team that every night ensures 70 guests (and an additional 50 in the winter) are given a bed, shower, meals and access to our New Life Program.



BOBBY SMITH, Director,
Food Service
GCRM Graduate

Up to 500 hot meals are prepared and up to 500 cold meals are distributed for our programs and the community 365 days a year under Bobby's supervision.



THOMAS MITCHELL, Director,
Special Projects

Thomas does all the projects that do not fall into anyone's direct responsibility. A "renaissance man" of many talents, we were able to recruit him from Faith Farm Ministries in Florida.



CARRIE WILLIAMS, Director,
New Hope Family Shelter
GCRM Graduate

Carrie will be running one of the largest homeless regeneration programs of its kind for women and children in America (218 beds) by end of 2020.



ANDREA MOUNTJOY, Director,
Donor Relations
GCRM Graduate

Andrea enters all gifts into our system, runs our food stamp and volunteer programs, writes grants, and orders all supplies for GCRM.

Please keep these amazing Servant Leaders in your prayers!

Wayne G. Richardson



CAROL RICHARDSON, Director,
New Life Program Scholarships
Carol's focus is our New Life Scholarship Program (linking donors to our Students) as we expand to 400 Students and children in the next 4 years.

Donations Needed

We are actively seeking items to keep our Mission Kids busy during the COVID-19 Sheltering.
Art Supplies: Crayons – Paints – Beads – Pipe Cleaners
Plastic Table Cloths • Paper Towels and Plates



Left to right: Wayne Richardson, Kelly Hanisch, Mary Jarrard, Lori Behnke and Britton Kimball.

A True Blessing

Living out the words of Proverbs 31:20 – "She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy" Showered with Love (SWL) – an amazing Christian non-profit partner, blessed us greatly this past month. During the repair of a sewer pump that prohibited the use of our (basement) Men's Emergency Lodge, we temporarily used our Chapel for a dorm. We were blessed to have SWL provided showers for our guests.

GOSPEL CENTER RESCUE MISSION

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Happy Mother's Day!

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After her third daughter Athena was born, Child Protective Services was ready to take and adopt out her baby. Living in a car, going from house to house and close to the end of her rope, Jessica called out to God, "Please take me out of this lifestyle. I don't see a way out. My daughter deserves more, and I don't know how to get out of this." CPS took Athena away, and looking back found it was probably the best thing that happened to her. She was ordered into a program at New Directions, followed by the opportunity to come to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission. Fighting to keep her daughter was her motivator to come in and stay at the Mission.

The Mission is where she also connected with Jesus Christ.

It started with her Mission counselor Lindsey. Jessica knew her from the streets and had seen how Lindsey had changed. They had a trusting bond and she felt secure. Lindsey walked her through a lot of painful things that she had been avoiding. "She has been the light of my life. For someone to be able to see and relate to how dark I was living, it inspired me. You experience love and hope here at the Mission. Before I was so scared. They loved me when I felt I couldn't be loved," explained Jessica.

Her belief in Jesus Christ changed, too. She went from asking "Why would God do this to me?" to "knowing a God who loved me through heart break, drug addiction and bad choices."

Now an employee, living at the Mission, she also holds a very important position. Jessica is the first person to greet you as you enter the Mission. "My job is in the payee office," states Jessica. "I get to see all kinds of

people, from visitors and guests wanting to donate to the mission, to homeless people seeking resources."

"We cannot be more pleased that Jessica is the face of the Mission," states Wayne Richardson, CEO. "She has an important job, especially where she can show her compassion." Working with each homeless guest has given Jessica a feeling she will never forget – a steady reminder of what her life was like. She is loving and kind and compassionate for other people who are hurting.

She especially loves working with the ladies in the Mission's SSA/SSI Representative Payee Department. Daily she receives encouragement as they pray every morning for the Mission, their lives, the lives of the homeless and the work they are doing.

"I ran on self-will for a long time and it is very apparent God has chosen to use me even through my damage and destruction. Once I finally surrendered to my Lord and Savior, my life has changed. It is only through the glory of God that these changes can happen."

Jessica knows that prayers work. Knowing that things can change – no matter how dark or impossible it seems – God finds a way! No matter how bad it gets He is always there. "My mask was anger and rebellion – behind all of that was sadness that left me feeling unloved, unworthy and left behind. "God gives second chances in a big way and self-forgiveness shouldn't be taken lightly."

Jessica, who has completed Phase 3 of the New Life Program currently lives on campus. Jessica closed with "My goal is to find a house and keep it. I am safe here, but I am anxious to test the waters and live on my own and do the right things. God is so very good."