

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

FALL 2016



Clockwise from top left: Chef Ian brings a food donation into the Mission kitchen; Walgreens offered free flu shots at the Mission; The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra played in our side lawn during their Day of Music; Donald and his mentor John enjoy time together; the More Than a Meal Gala brought friends together for a great cause; horseback riding is one way we provide meaningful experiences at the Mission.

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LIGHT of LIFE
rescue mission
Food. Shelter. Hope.

JOHNNY'S STORY

Light of Life Rescue Mission is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Hot days, cold days, rainy days, sunny days — we are open to help lost, hurting and hopeless people find their way to healing through Jesus Christ. We meet people in many different ways, but providing good meals and a bed to sleep in on an emergency basis has been a great way for us to form relationships.



Johnny, Shelter Guest

We met Johnny when he was looking for a shower and a bed. Read his story below and know that God is at work giving people another chance at Light of Life.

Johnny went into the military as soon as he was eligible to sign up. He served 4 years in the Army and fought in Vietnam. He was injured, honorably discharged and went to work a stable job in Pittsburgh. Sixteen years ago he was wrongfully

accused of a crime and he fought the charge using every asset he had, including his house and everything in it.

He lost the trial and was sentenced to 20 years in prison, where he went with literally no possessions to his name. While in jail he connected with an organization that helped prove Johnny's innocence and he was released from jail in 2013 after being in for 13 years. When he left the jail, he only had the clothes on his back and wandered the street for 3 years. He didn't drink or do drugs while on the street, but he had pretty much lost trust in people and lost hope in God.

In May 2016 he was asking around for a place to sleep and someone on the street directed him to Light of Life. In his own words: "I didn't know where I was going to go from one day to the next. Some days I ate, some days I didn't. It was survival. This place [Light of Life] was a lifeline. I started eating again and took a shower. The staff helped me. I told my story and they took an interest in me."

The interest Light of Life staff took in Johnny helped changed the direction of his life. "They took a chance on me and that showed me there is a God because he moved them to help me," said Johnny.

Because of the help of Light of Life staff, Johnny got connected to Vets Place and is receiving help with doctor's appointments, benefits, finding a place to live, getting his driver's license and birth certificate, etc. Our staff made sure he was taken care of and continues to invest in Johnny's life by listening, finding resources, and sharing the love of Christ with him.

"They took a chance on me and that showed me there is a God because he moved them to help me," said Johnny.

The man who walked through our doors had little faith in society, people, or God, but he found more than he could have hoped for when he came to Light of Life. He was welcomed and shown love through people being willing to listen.

If you are going through a difficult time right now, let Johnny encourage you. "Don't lose faith," he said. "As far as being out in the world alone, all you see are shadows and lost dreams. In the end, there is light at the end of the tunnel with God and people. There are people in the world who want to help you."

Thank you for your support of the Mission. You are helping people!



RUN FOR TEAM LIGHT OF LIFE

Light of Life Rescue Mission is an Official Charity for the Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon and we would like you to join our team! If you sign up to run the marathon, half-marathon, relay, 5K or kids' run for us, we will pay your registration fee! All you have to do once you are part of Team Light of Life is spread the word that you are on our team and raise money for the Mission, which is easier than you think.

Last year our team of 127 runners finished in 2nd place overall for fundraising out of all of the Pittsburgh Marathon Charities by raising over \$137,000 for the Mission! Our goal this year is to have 150 runners and you can be part of making that happen today. **Learn more at www.lightoflife.org/marathon or contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.**

Whether this would be your first race or your 100th race, please run for Team Light of Life this year. We will be with you to encourage you, support you, and make great memories with you as you support the men, women and children at Light of Life.



MORE THAN A MEAL GALA

We held our annual More Than a Meal Gala and Fundraiser at Heinz Field on Tuesday, October 18, 2016. Former Steelers, current sportscasters, and great friends of the Mission Tunch Ilkin and Craig Wolfley hosted the event. They

shared humorous stories of their days playing football together as well as meaningful experiences they have had while spending time at the Mission.

Three program graduates shared about what their life was like before coming to Light of Life, what their time was like in the program, and where they are now. "When I came into the program I was so broken, so full of shame, so riddled with guilt. I never thought that God would be able to forgive me or love me or have any use for me," said Debra. "So coming there I had to learn that God still loved me despite everything." It was moving to hear how God has been healing these graduates and how they are helping to show others His love and healing power today. To watch the complete video of Tautia, Jim and Debra



BJ Finney, Craig Wolfley, Craig Schweiger and Tunch Ilkin

telling their story in their own words, visit www.youtube.com/lolrescuemission.

There were 355 people in attendance at the gala, including current Steeler BJ Finney and his wife Amanda, and over \$130,000 was raised for Light of Life. Thank you to everyone who helped make the gala a wonderful celebration of God's daily work at the Mission and beyond!

CASEY'S STORY



Casey, Women & Children's Program

One of the many things that is special about Light of Life's long-term programs is that we get to see a person grow and change over time. Casey and her daughter came into the Women & Children's Program in August 2014 feeling lost and without direction, and today she is accomplishing dreams she never imagined.

For eight years Casey was wrapped up in an addiction and when she finally took the step to get clean she realized she didn't know how to live life. "I didn't have purpose at all and had no clue what I was doing,"

said Casey. "I went to rehab and got clean and ended up at a three-quarters house, but I wasn't progressing."

She knew something had to change, so she applied and was accepted into Light of Life's program. "My first day was awesome," said Casey. "It was an outing to Raccoon State Park and it felt like family. The ladies made me feel so comfortable and my daughter had a ball with the kids. It was a good feeling!"

That was the first of many days for Casey and her daughter to bond with others in the program. Not only have they made great friendships, but they have grown in their relationship with God. "When I first started, I didn't even know how to read a Bible," said Casey. "Light of Life definitely guided me to God, the understanding of God, and building a stronger relationship with God by giving me the tools."

One of the most exciting celebrations for Casey is that she passed her GED test in July! A tutor came in to help her prepare every week and a volunteer came to Light of Life to watch Casey's daughter

"Light of Life definitely guided me to God, the understanding of God, and building a stronger relationship with God by giving me the tools," said Casey.

during that time so Casey could completely focus. "If I didn't have support of staff and volunteers, I never would have done it," said Casey. "It didn't seem obtainable. I couldn't see sitting down and studying and having the information stick. I was nervous up to the day, but the staff believed in me and showed me it was possible."

In addition to working part time, this January Casey is starting college with the major of nuclear medicine technology. Her dream job is to work in a medical lab and we know she can do it! "I'm excited and nervous," said Casey. "It's new, but I feel awesome that I can see a future and hope and all the things God wants for me."

"Light of Life gave me back my family and taught me to love myself and love my daughter," said Casey. "God's grace is sufficient for me. Without it, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Thank you for your support of Light of Life. You are helping dreams come true.

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

Thanksgiving is a time for reflecting on the blessings we have been given. Some of our Light of Life Men's Program residents and the Chaplin of our Outreach Services shared with us what they are personally thankful for this season.



"Before coming to Light of Life I felt hopeless. I was in a place in my head with little belief to almost none. The staff and clients helped me open my eyes to a bigger picture. They helped me search inside myself and accept Jesus Christ as my Savior and for that I will be forever thankful.

I am extremely grateful to be a father and to have a loving and supportive family."

– Zack, Men's Residential Program



"I'm thankful for this new life, the opportunity that Jesus offers, and the new structure I'm working on for after I leave Light of Life. I am

thankful for this opportunity I have before me here with the Light of Life."

– Brandon, Men's Residential Program

"I am thankful for having another life. I'm thankful for the program for helping me out and for slowly finding my inner self. And for how beautiful life can be on the other side of addiction."

– Howard, Men's Residential Program
(Howard chose to not have his picture taken.)



"I'm thankful to feel like I belong. Also, I'm thankful to have a bed, meals, shoes, clothes, Light of Life staff, Jesus, and the love of my parents."

– Ethan, Men's Residential Program



"I am thankful for the opportunity to serve at Light of Life Rescue Mission. I realize that God has placed each person here for such a time as this. I am thankful that God's

grace supplies our community with every good and perfect gift. I am blessed to witness and take part in this community of healing and grace."

– Gary, Chaplin of Outreach Services

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Dear Friends,

Lord willing, this year 2016 Light of Life will serve more than 200,000 meals to people that are hungry. Feeding this many individuals is a big undertaking. But in reality, it's fairly simple to meet this need. People come to us hungry, so our dedicated, hardworking staff work together to provide a meal. Their need for nourishment is met.

Addressing the needs that come along with addiction are far more complex. If you have had any experience working with someone who has a drug or alcohol addiction you'll know what I mean. It's not just about working with someone through detox and short term sobriety. Walking with someone through all the challenges that come their way in their new life apart from drugs and alcohol can be very daunting and often discouraging. Many who come to us have been in active addiction for decades. The only way to describe it is completely starting over. Undoing so much in the way of bad habits, stemming from unhealthy relating, which stems from long-held false beliefs about self, God and others.

I think it's fair for me to declare that drug and alcohol addiction is not just a problem, not just a crisis in our country but it is a true epidemic. The news stories of overdoses alone are distressing. Not to mention the families torn apart by these losses, the children left parentless. But for every overdose there are many, many women and men who are in active addiction, barely surviving, doing whatever it takes to avoid the crushing feelings of withdrawal and the guilt and shame that come along with initial sobriety.

For more than 64 years, Light of Life (which includes you and me) finds itself right in the center of this crisis and those we serve are enduring the lives representing the primary result of this destruction...I always ask myself, "How can we be better?" I can assure you that we work daily to serve in the most God-honoring way, demonstrating Jesus to those we serve. Recently we decided to expand perspective to reach more people before they are led down these destructive paths.

In addition to standing beside other ministries and blessing them with our abundance, Light of Life officially made a formal affiliation with Family Guidance in May 2016 and I can report that relationship is going well. Aligned with our 64 year history of serving the poor, homeless and addicted with meals and life-sustaining programs we are now investing in the Family Guidance 50 year legacy of serving families and children in Pittsburgh. Family Guidance reaches urban at risk kids primarily through camping and mentoring programs. Our investment in this affiliation has enabled us to reach hundreds of kids in a short period of time with the love of Christ to combat the negative forces in the environments where they live.

Both ministries share the mission of transformative care found only in Jesus Christ. As part of this affiliation, while we remain separate and distinct organizations we are working together sharing each other's gifts, talents and resources in order to operate more efficiently and be more effective in Christ-centered ministry across our community to those in need. Overall we believe that unity and partnership glorify God and it is our hope that this bold step will serve as a precedent to demonstrate how the Body of Christ can flourish in its work in Pittsburgh to advance the Kingdom.

We are grateful for your support of the work we do. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this affiliation with you in greater detail. Please let me know if you would like to meet with the leadership of both organizations.

As a relocation update in an effort to develop new facilities where we can better care for all those we serve, all of us at Light of Life are working diligently with the community. We are meeting and partnering with the neighbors, the city and county government, PennDot and currently with the parties that are opposing our move. We hope to have good news soon, at which point we will update you and eventually ask for your help as we move forward in creating our new multi-site home on the North Side.

Sincerely,



Craig Schweiger, Executive Director

Light of Life's Annual Christmas Ornament



Light of Life's annual Christmas ornament is available! This is a great addition to your Christmas tree or as a gift for those hard-to-buy-for friends, family members, and co-workers. Made by Wendell August, this ornament is high-quality and a treasured keepsake.

This year we chose a classic design with our logo that reminds you of the food, shelter and hope you help provide to hurting people when you support Light of Life.

There is a suggested donation of \$25 per ornament if you are able to stop by our offices to pick up or \$30 per ornament if you would like it mailed to you.

To order, go to www.lightoflife.org/ornaments or contact Emily at erabatin@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6128. We have a limited number, so get your ornament today!

A special thank you to Oxford Solutions for sponsoring ornament production.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **November 17th, November 30th, December 8th and December 19th – Volunteer Orientations.** Volunteer orientation at 6 p.m. Please register for an orientation by completing the volunteer application online. It can be found at www.lightoflife.org under the “Get Involved” tab.
- **November 24th – The Great Thanksgiving Banquet at the Mission.** Men, women and children who do not have a place to go for Thanksgiving dinner are invited to Light of Life for turkey, stuffing and all the fixings between 1-6 p.m. Anyone who has need of winter items will have the opportunity throughout the day to receive coats, hats, gloves, scarves and more.
- **December 4 – Alumni Christmas Celebration.** We are celebrating Christmas with the men and women who have graduated our programs over the years and their families. Please contact Kate at kwadsworth@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4162 if you are an alumni who is interested in attending or if you are a volunteer who would like to help with the event.
- **December 22 – Christmas Banquet at Light of Life Rescue Mission.** This annual holiday feast is open to anyone in the community who is looking for a place to celebrate Christmas. There will be a delicious meal, sharing about the meaning of Christmas, a coat tent set up outside to give away winter clothing items, and lots of people around to share the love and hope of Christ.

WINTER NEED:

Large and extra-large adult men's winter gloves that are insulated and very warm.

Winter can be really rough for those who are out in the cold without proper protection. Right now our biggest need are these gloves and they can be dropped off at our front office at 10 E. North Avenue. We are open all day, every day, so please bring us your warm glove donations when it's convenient for you.



We have men come in with red, chapped hands and we are grateful to be able to help them when they ask for warm gloves. We couldn't do this without you!

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

We are looking for gift card donations this Christmas! Gift cards that are given to Light of Life will go toward our client's needs throughout the year. If you or your business/organization are interested in helping to meet this need, please contact Emily at erabatin@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6128.

WAYS TO GIVE

There are so many ways you can support Light of Life Rescue Mission — through volunteering, praying for the ministry, donating needed items, or making a financial contribution, just to name a few.

Below are 4 ways to make a financial contribution to Light of Life:

- ★ **BECOME A MONTHLY PARTNER** – You can sign up to donate a set amount to Light of Life monthly. Either go to www.lightoflife.org/give and check the box that says “I would like to make this a monthly recurring donation” or contact Melanie at mholcombe@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6183 to be added to the Monthly Partners mailing list.
- **Give through United Way** – Light of Life is registered with United Way in Allegheny, Westmoreland and Washington counties. If you give through the Contributor's Choice program, please consider designating your funds to Light of Life Rescue Mission. Our United Way Contributor's Choice Code is #223. If you have questions, please contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.
- **See if your employer has a matching gift program** – Some businesses will match your charitable donation to Light of Life. If you have questions about how to ask, contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.
- **Include Light of Life in your estate planning** – If you would like free information about including Light of Life in your will, please contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161. This is a great opportunity for you to leave a legacy of providing food, shelter and hope.

Thank you for considering these extra ways to give to Light of Life. We are so encouraged by your partnership and we couldn't do it without you!

END OF YEAR GIVING

As you consider making end-of-the-year donations to your favorite charities, please remember Light of Life. All donations received by December 31st will be acknowledged by January 2017 with a tax-deductible receipt.

Thank you for your generosity and partnership in this important, life-changing work!



Mission Statement

As a ministry of Jesus Christ, Light of Life will provide a home for the homeless and food for the hungry, and will build disciples for the Kingdom of God among the poor, addicted, abused and needy.

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