

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

WINTER 2015



Clockwise from top left: The "Do Crew" helps on Thanksgiving Day; Thanksgiving Baskets ready to go; Gary and Jim complete Life's Work program; a volunteer plays with children from Light of Life; a gentleman enjoys a meal at the Mission; a shelter guest says thanks for your support during the Critical Alert.

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LIGHT of LIFE
rescue mission

Life sustaining. Life changing.

Jody's Story

Before coming to the Men's Residential Program at Light of Life over a year ago, current client Jody Y. was sleeping in the streets and eating out of dumpsters. "I was down and out," said Jody. "I was broken. Eating out of dumpsters here and there, sleeping where I could, it was like I had no purpose. I would just wake up and do the same thing all over again."

When Jody was young, he experienced difficulties and used drugs and alcohol as an escape for over 30 years. He finally hit the lowest point when he was sleeping alone under a bridge, with no food and no friends. "I needed warmth and shelter and someone to talk to," said Jody.

Jody went looking for help and was directed to Light of Life. "I was reading the sign out front and I saw it said Light of Life Rescue Mission," said Jody. "I needed rescued. I definitely needed rescued. I talked to [Cook and Program Support Specialist] Hutch and he said this is a program where you can change your life."

Today Jody is experiencing a changed life. In addition to over a year of being clean from drugs and alcohol, Jody has developed a deeper relationship with God and has discovered a new passion. "When I got clean in here, I was talking to God more and I started writing poetry," said Jody. "I never wrote before coming here and now I have books full of poems I wrote." (Read an example of Jody's poetry in the box at the right.)



Jody Y.

Jody also reconciled with his family and now has a relationship with his grandchildren. "What keeps the light on for me is my grandkids. I want to see them grow up," said Jody. "Since getting clean, I've been over to my daughter's house over a hundred times. My granddaughter runs up to me and says, 'Papa, I love you.'"

Although Jody's life has transformed for the better, he is experiencing the physical consequences of using drugs and alcohol for all of those years. "If it wasn't for the Mission, I'd be dead," said Jody. "I didn't know I had medical problems until I came to Light of Life. They helped me set up doctor's appointments, get to the appointments and set up insurance. I would really be dead. God and Light of Life gave me a second chance."

By coming to the Mission, Jody's life has literally been saved. With this second chance, Jody is working on getting his GED so he can go to college. "I'm finally achieving something," said Jody.

We couldn't provide programs for Jody and others who come to the Mission without your financial support, time volunteering and prayers. To make a donation, please visit www.lightoflife.org/give or return the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your help giving others a second chance.

Changes

By Jody Y.

Change happens all the time,
When the worm changes to a butterfly,
As the leaves from the tree turns colors.
Just one mistake can change your life.
The devil seems to change your mind,
From what you really are.
You can prune your life from what you
are today.
Change is really for good and what it
seems to be.
People hide behind their masks from
what they really are.
Do I really want to change,
Or am I still hiding from myself?
I stand at my own door and knock,
Will I let me in, or will I keep being sick?
The door has closed on my addiction.
Other doors have opened.
It's time to walk through them
And find out what life has in store for me,
And my spiritual soul.



Donors Give Generously for Critical Alert

On Monday, January 8, Light of Life was one of 36 organizations to participate in the Pittsburgh Foundation's Critical Alert Campaign.

The focus of the campaign was financial support for non-profits that provide housing to the homeless. The Pittsburgh Foundation set up a dollar for dollar match for donors who contributed through their website. Donors were able to indicate which non-profit they wanted their donation

and the match to go toward. Because of your overwhelming support, Light of Life received over \$144,000 in donations with another \$144,000 matching dollars for a total of \$288,000 in contributions! To all who gave, thank you so very much for your generosity. Your support is making a difference in the lives of the men, women and children who come to Light of Life for food, shelter and hope.

Holidays in Numbers

You helped make the holidays very special for hundreds of the men, women and children who count on Light of Life for holiday meals and friendship. Whether you donated gifts for people in our programs to open this Christmas, volunteered to serve the Thanksgiving or Christmas meals (or any meals in between), made a financial donation to support the work that goes on at the Mission every day, or remembered the homeless in your prayers, you played an important role in sharing the love of Christ with our hurting neighbors. Here are some numbers that give you an idea of how the holidays were celebrated at Light of Life!

- **Thanksgiving Basket Project** – 421 baskets filled with turkey and all the fixings were given to local families in need. We partnered with 15 Pittsburgh non-profits to connect with families who were able to cook Thanksgiving in their own homes, but didn't have the means to purchase the food. This is the fourth year Light of Life has headed up this project and the most baskets we have ever given away!
- **The Great Thanksgiving Banquet** – 1,017 meals were served at the Mission or delivered to local high-rise buildings on Thanksgiving Day. This year we even delivered meals to the Cold Weather Shelter, which was open due to inclement weather. Our kitchen staff and volunteers worked hard all month to be prepared for this big day. Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald served the first meals of the day with sports broadcasters Tunch Ilkin and Craig Wolfley. Thank you to our Great Thanksgiving Banquet sponsor UPMC Health Plan.



Praying before Thanksgiving meal.



Packing up food for the Thanksgiving Basket project.

- **Christmas Outreach Meal** – 1,031 meals were served on December 23, 2014, at the Mission and to 15 local high-rise buildings. Mayor William Peduto joined over 100 volunteers to help serve meals, which included ham, au gratin potatoes, peas, rolls with butter, and dessert.
- **Hams for Women & Children's Program** – 25 hams were given to the women in our program. They were able to host Christmas dinner in their own homes and share a special meal with their children.
- **Christmas Giving Project** – Over 2,000 presents were collected and given to the men, women and children in our long-term programs. We are happy to share that every child in our program received their very own bike! Thank you so much for showing love in this very tangible way. The men, women and children were so grateful that people who don't even know them personally would make an extra effort for them. We want to send out an extra special thank you to those of you who responded to our urgent need for gifts.

In addition to all of this, we have been giving away hundreds of winter coats, hats, gloves, scarves, blankets and more throughout the winter season. All of the items we gave away were donated by you!

Job Training Through Life's Work

Congratulations to client's Jim R. and Gary S. who completed an 8-week training program for environmental services!

"It was all hands-on learning," said Gary. "When learning to clean bathrooms, we cleaned bathrooms every day for 2 weeks. Same with cleaning carpets or waxing floors. I think it's the best way to

do it because with hands-on you have the instruction of someone showing you how to do it."

The class was offered through Life's Work, an organization located downtown. Once students complete the training program, they receive help being placed in a job. "I feel like I've accomplished something," said Jim.

Please keep all of the men and women in our programs in your prayers as they prepare for school and employment. If you would like talk with clients about your career, please contact David at dwardsworth@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6152.

Where would you be without Light of Life? How has your life changed since coming to Light of Life?



"I was homeless since 2009, and I would still be searching for God and wandering in the wilderness. My life has changed so much in a positive way...Since I've allowed myself to listen to God, I'm learning that with faith it's much easier. The burden I've been carrying is gone."

–Tim, Men's Residential Program

"I would still be living on the street. I have gained a more positive outlook on life. I think Light of Life is a great place, and it helps people. If I need a question answered, there is always someone to ask."

–Joe, High Commitment Shelter

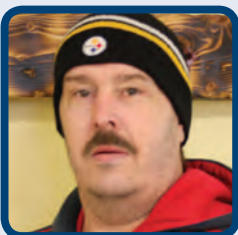


"I would be homeless and on the streets using drugs and alcohol. Now I'm getting spiritually fit and learning to live a life of sobriety. Never doubt the power of God. My hope has been restored."

–Kevin, Men's Residential Program

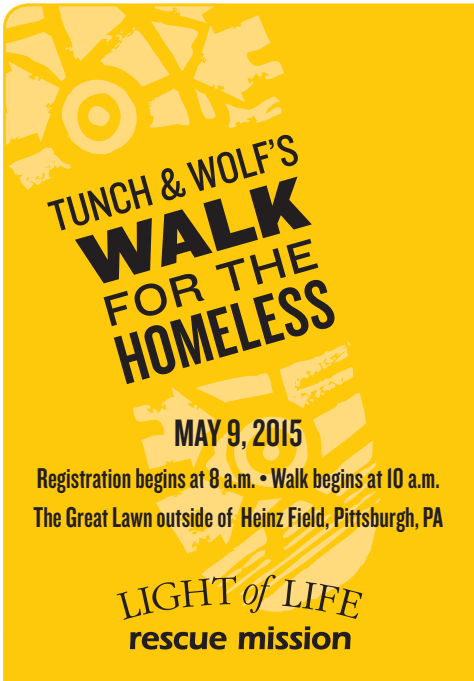
"I would be underneath a bridge, hungry and completely hopeless. I've learned that through God's grace I do have hope. I do have a future and there is no coincidence God does have a plan for me."

–James, Men's Residential Program



"I would be deceased. Light of Life brought me back to a closer relationship with Christ. It has been tremendous for me. I'm thankful for everyone I come into contact with."

–Hutch, Graduate and Staff



**TUNCH & WOLF'S
WALK
FOR THE
HOMELESS**

MAY 9, 2015

Registration begins at 8 a.m. • Walk begins at 10 a.m.
The Great Lawn outside of Heinz Field, Pittsburgh, PA

**LIGHT of LIFE
rescue mission**



Tunch Ilkin and Craig Wolfley, Steelers sports broadcasters and former players, are happy to announce their 13th annual Walk for the Homeless on Saturday, May 9! Join them for this fun, family-friendly event that begins with a walk along the beautiful North Shore Trail and ends with delicious food from local vendors. It will be held rain or shine and proceeds benefit the critical work at Light of Life Rescue Mission.

Here are ways you can get involved in this year's Walk for the Homeless:

– **WALK!** You can sign up to walk as an individual helping the homeless or head up a team to come together to make a difference for Light of Life. There is no fundraising minimum per person, but we encourage you to let everyone you know that you are part of Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless and ask them to support you. Every walker and every dollar counts! To learn more go to lightoflife.org/walk2015.

– **Become a business sponsor.** Walk sponsorships are an excellent opportunity for businesses to make a difference at Light of Life as well as let the public know you support the Mission. There are a wide range of donation levels available. Please contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161 to find out what level your business could sponsor Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless.

– **Volunteer.** This event couldn't happen without dedicated volunteers. We need help with set-up, registration, clean-up and more. People of all ages are needed to make this event a success. If you want to find out more about volunteering at Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless, contact Bri at bfeindt@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4160.

If you have questions or want more information about Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless, visit lightoflife.org/walk2015 or call Kate at 412-803-4138. Walk information will also be updated regularly on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

For all of you who have come to the walk before, we hope to see you there again this year. Bring a friend! If you have never been to Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless before, please come out for the first time this year. **We'll see you there!**



Run for Light of Life

Calling all runners!

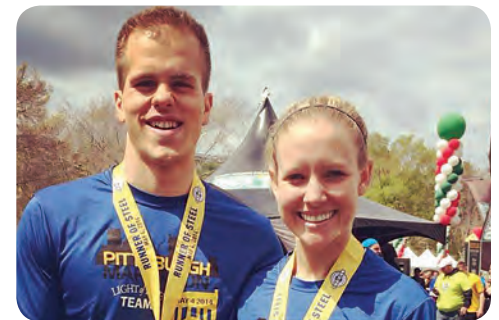
You don't have to run the entire 26.2 miles to be part of Team Light of Life! You can choose to run the 5k, relay, half-marathon or full-marathon.

If you are running (or thinking about running) any of the races in the Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon during the weekend of May 2-3, you can sign up to be part of our team. We will pay your registration fee and in turn you commit to raising money for Light of Life Rescue Mission. Proceeds raised by our team go toward helping the poor

and homeless who come to Light of Life for food, shelter and hope.

This is the third year in a row that Light of Life is a charity for the marathon, and the second year as an official charity. That is all thanks to you – those of you who run and raise money for the Mission as well as those of you who make financial donations to our team.

To learn more about running for Light of Life, go to www.lightoflife.org/marathon or contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.



If you are not a runner, you can still be part of the team by making a donation at www.crowdrise.com/lightoflifepittsburgh/2015 or by sending a check made out to Light of Life Rescue Mission, P.O. Box 6823, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Please write "Pittsburgh Marathon Team" in the memo.

Refuge from Cold Weather



A gentleman in our emergency shelter.

When the fullness of a Pittsburgh winter hits, Light of Life Rescue Mission takes the extra step to help the homeless stay safe and warm. Thanks to your generous donations of coats, winter hats, gloves and blankets, we are able to give these warm items to anyone who comes to the Mission with a need.

One January day a man came to the Mission doors after spending hours in the bitter elements. "I saw him come in with red, chapped hands, a thin jacket and no hat," said Lloyd Massie, Guest Relations Manager. "So I asked him if he needed winter items, and he said he did because he was cold. We were able to give him what he needed. It feels good to know the warm items are here because of the donations we receive."

Light of Life's emergency shelter is available for homeless men to stay. Although it is primarily thought of in the winter time, the emergency shelter is open every day of the year. A man staying in the shelter receives a safe place to sleep, two meals, a shower, chapel services and the opportunity to receive long-term services. In 2014, Light of Life provided over 11,000 nights of emergency shelter!

“Through the blessing and mercy of the Lord, he has helped me when I needed help,” said shelter guest Norris. “It’s been inspirational to be at Light of Life. I feel secure with everyone here. It’s been a good thing for me.”

On really cold days, a heated area is open at the Mission between breakfast and dinner time so that those who would otherwise be outside have a place to stay out of the elements. Hot chocolate, snacks and access to the restroom are also provided.

Your donations and prayers for Light of Life are helping to make a difference to the poor and homeless who have come to the Mission seeking help this winter. Thank you!

Business Sponsor Thank You

There are many business who generously donate to Light of Life throughout the year. We would like to recognize the top business supporters of 2014:

- Resurgence Solutions
- Pittsburgh Pirates
- Geno Levi Salon/Beauty Restores Foundation

To all of the business owners and to all of the employees who have gotten your place of employment involved with Light of Life, thank you. Donations from businesses make a difference. If you would like to learn more about organizational giving and business sponsorship opportunities, please contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.

Light of Life 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.

Upcoming Events

- ▶ **February 26 – Volunteer orientation.** Please register for an orientation by completing the volunteer application online. It can be found at www.lightoflife.org under the “Get Involved” tab.
- ▶ **March 9 – Volunteer orientation.** Please register for an orientation by completing the volunteer application online. It can be found at www.lightoflife.org under the “Get Involved” tab.
- ▶ **March 24 – Volunteer orientation.** Please register for an orientation by completing the volunteer application online. It can be found at www.lightoflife.org under the “Get Involved” tab.
- ▶ **March 21 – Open House.** Take a tour of the Mission and our Western Avenue location any time between 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Tours begin at 10 E. North Avenue. Visit www.lightoflife.org/openhouse or call Kate at 412-803-4138 for more information.
- ▶ **April 3 – Easter Outreach Meal at the Mission.** In addition to serving an Easter meal to anyone in need at the Mission, volunteers will deliver hot meals to local high-rises.
- ▶ **May 1 – Tour with Tunch & Wolf.** An all-day urban hiking adventure with stops at delicious Pittsburgh eateries along the way. Contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161 for cost of tour and more details. Proceeds benefit Light of Life.
- ▶ **May 9 – Tunch & Wolf’s Walk for the Homeless** at the Great Lawn outside of Heinz Field. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the walk starts at 10 a.m. Visit www.lightoflife.org/walk2015 or call Kate at 412-803-4138 for more information.