

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

SUMMER 2017



Clockwise from top left: Volunteers hand out fruit at the Day of Hope picnic; this “Rotunda Renegade” pirate ran in the Yinzer 5K and won the title of Best Dressed Yinzer; volunteers enjoy Tunch & Wolf’s Walk for the Homeless; Forrest and Lloyd enjoy a cup of water from the cooler at Light of Life’s front door on a hot summer day; families from our Women & Children’s Program show off new bikes given to each child; horse back riding was one of the many outings the children took this summer.

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LIGHT of LIFE
rescue mission
Food. Shelter. Hope.

NOBODY SAID IT WOULD BE EASY...



Craig Schweiger, Executive Director

Dear Friend,

Let me use the tried and true S.W.O.T. method of analysis to present an update to you. I will address our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats... I switched it up to make it S, W/T, and O because I am combining Weaknesses and Threats and ending with Opportunities.

STRENGTHS

I have completed my sixth year as executive director and there are so many reasons to thank God. When I started in July of 2011 with just three months until the end of our fiscal year, we were facing the possibility of closing our books in the red for the second straight year but God blessed the efforts and prayers of our team in those closing months of my first short year to turn it around and allow us to close that year in the black. Since then, we have not looked back; our support has grown every year along with our impact.

The charge I was given when I started was to lead Light of Life to relocate or improve the facilities and I am pleased to share that earlier this year we were granted an approval by the city of Pittsburgh to relocate from our North Avenue Facility to two new sites that will allow us to serve our men, woman, and children in vastly improved space. The staff and leadership has been prudent in our spending so we are now in a position to begin to do some building renovations at our Ridge Avenue location.

We are about to top last year's record breaking meal numbers of 200,000. I really don't know how that team can serve that many meals up from 100,000 six years ago in the same small facilities. We are also perfecting the absolute best model for serving the homeless and addicted which is to follow the principles of Jesus Christ, namely grace that when practiced with a healthy and mature staff can break through even the most hardened heart... only to the glory of God!

Our capable staff continues to grow stronger and more energized. These facts are not solely the opinion of our leadership but evidenced by the fact that Light of Life has been recognized and certified as one of the "Best Christian Workplaces" for the third year in a row. I share with my staff often how excited I am about this and how important it is to me because I know how difficult and discouraging it can be in the environment where we serve.

WEAKNESS/THREATS

Our zoning approval granted earlier this year is being appealed by two neighbors of our future satellite site under the Veterans Bridge. We will need to direct more time, effort and resources to fend off that appeal.

This year 2017, Light of Life, similar to where we were in 2011 is facing the possibility that we may not reach our budgetary goal. As we approach the final month of our fiscal year, I am anticipating that we may be short by \$600,000. Some of this situation is attributable to a loss of funds from government sources. Funding was ended in some areas citing a different philosophy in care for the homeless. Fortunately we don't rely heavily on government funds and we are going to stay the course with the plan we have seen produce many transformed lives through Jesus in our 65 year history.

Even donations are not keeping pace with budget expectations. Strangely, I have seen a pattern in the past when we experience an inverse relationship when the economy is good funding can actually be lower for us and during tougher economic times we have seen a positive spike in support. I can only attribute that to the empathy and compassion of those who call Pittsburgh their home. The theory being that when times are tough there are more needs. Our clients/guests, the homeless and addicted are often not in the situation they find themselves primarily due to economic problems so there is as much or more need now than ever.

In fact, as I write this, we are experiencing an epidemic. As you are all aware of the opioid crisis, you may not have considered the stark reality that victims not only die, victims often become HOMELESS. Light of Life is experiencing an historic rise in the homeless population and we are being stretched further than ever. Our staff is stretched, our facility is stretched and our budget is stretched. As a good neighbor in Pittsburgh wanting the best for all of our residents and neighbors, our challenges have grown immensely here in 2017.

OPPORTUNITIES

When there are troubles, there is opportunity to answer the call. Our ministry here on the front line in Pittsburgh can use willing and committed volunteers to assist. Light of Life working in partnership with Family Guidance has a strong need for mentors to work in the lives of vulnerable kids before they slip into the jaws of addiction. The men and women who are in our program living a clean and sober life also need mentors and a support network to help them get on their feet and to encourage them as they go out into society to live a productive life. When government funds are not available there is a chance for the church to step up and fill that financial void. **If God is tugging at your heart, please respond because it is most needed.**

I don't believe there is anyone whose lives are not impacted by the grip of addiction. Light of Life is uniquely positioned to take a stance on the issue and rally any and all supporters to come alongside at this critical time. We have aligned many partners to fight in the war on drugs and reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our strategic plan in serving the most vulnerable here in Pittsburgh through a network of Christ-centered churches and organizations is poised to do what the government and the secular "solution" has not, please come by our side right now at this most important time.

And finally, in order for any of this to happen, we need prayers from the prayer warriors in the kingdom right here in Pittsburgh. Praise God for you and for this work He has given us to reach the lost for His glory!

Craig

NEW LIGHT OF LIFE PROGRAM: SISTERS' RECOVERY HOUSE



Two of the newly decorated apartments

Light of Life owns an apartment building on the North Side that we recently renovated to meet a need we have seen for single women WITHOUT children or without custody of children for at least 9 months. Named the Sisters' Recovery House, this living space provides a community and independent living space for women who may otherwise be homeless. While living in these apartments, the women join the same programming the women in our family program attend. This is a new Women's Program that is in addition to what we already provide.

"This provides women a place where they can recover that is safe nurturing as well as a place where they can belong," said Women & Children's Manager Sherry Rorison. "It provides a sense of family and somewhere they can call home."

When it was decided that these apartments would be used for single women, we put a call out to you for help in making the spaces look and feel like home. You answered above

and beyond what we could have expected! Each apartment is beautifully decorated and most importantly has a feeling of God's presence. Thank you for your investment in this new program!

The night after the first woman moved in she said, "I have not slept like this in years. I feel so much peace."

There are a total of 10 apartments plus 1 apartment where a graduate lives to be the "house mom" and keep building the relationships there. There is also a community room where the women gather daily for devotions.

Please keep the women living in this space in your prayers as they seek healing and a new life through Christ at Light of Life!

We'd like to give a special thank you to these groups who gave so much time and talent to make each apartment unique and beautiful:

North Way Wexford
Grace Community Church
Community Bible Study
Victory Family Church
City Reach – Allison Park

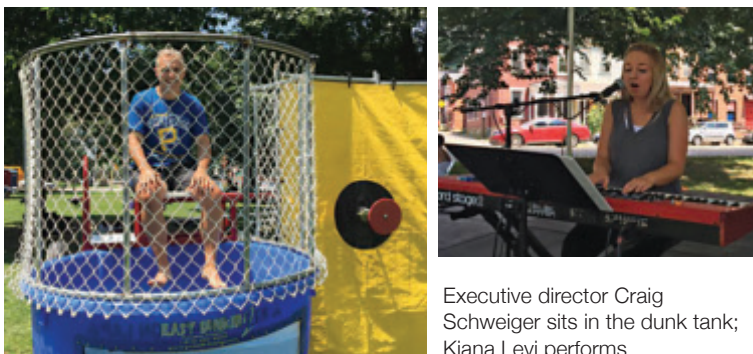
Love Karen
Brookside Group
AGH Anesthesiology Dept.
Living Ministry

Thank you to the generous donors who made all of the furnishings possible: Victor Tonas and Wendy Hopwell, Thomas Norton, Ned and Mitch Conley, Dale and Jeanne Kleiner, Matt Putila, John and Dara Henne, and anonymous donors.

DAY OF HOPE PICNIC

Thursday, July 20 was our annual Day of Hope Picnic, a day with free food, children's activities, live worship music and stories of how lives have changed because of hope in Christ. For the first time this year we had a dunk tank, with various people stepping up to take a chance of being dunked.

The purpose of this day is to share hope with people who may be struggling. We saw lots of smiles and offered many prayers with those who stopped by our prayer tent. We couldn't have done this without the time of countless people, including the North Side Homeless Alliance for their help in planning and being part of this great day!



Executive director Craig Schweiger sits in the dunk tank; Kiana Levi performs

DAY OF HOPE BY THE NUMBERS:

985 plates of food served

90 volunteers helped make the day run smoothly

36 community agencies were available to connect with people for:

- Free testing
- Health screenings
- Homeless support resources
- Drug and alcohol recovery resources
- Veteran resources
- Other community services for those in need

Countless number of stories of how Jesus changed lives were shared



**Tuesday, October 17
at 6:00pm**

**Hyundai Club West
at Heinz Field**

Hosted by
Tunch Ilkin & Craig Wolfley
www.lightoflife.org/gala
for info and tickets

MORE THAN A MEAL GALA & FUNDRAISER

Step into someone else's shoes and catch a glimpse of the darkness that often surrounds the homeless through a unique art experience unlike any Light of Life gala in the past. Then join us in celebrating lives transformed through Light of Life Rescue Mission's ministry of food, shelter, and hope.

Registration: \$125 per person, a table of 8 is \$1,000, a table of 10 is \$1,250. For all registration questions or to sign up online, visit www.lightoflife.org/gala or contact Melanie at 412-258-6183 or mholcombe@lightoflife.org.

Sponsorship Opportunities: For information about business sponsorships, please contact Doug at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.

Silent Auction Donations: For information on getting a group of friends or your church small group together to put together a silent auction basket, please contact Maggie at mjohnson@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4160.

All proceeds benefit Light of Life Rescue Mission.

WOMEN & CHILDREN'S PROGRAM SUMMER FUN

The Women & Children's Program wrapped up their summer of fun activities to strengthen the family relationships. Some of the activities the families did together were:

- Raccoon State Park
- Moraine State Park
- Zoo
- Heinz History Center
- Idlewild
- Aviary
- Water Steps
- Picnic in the park
- Pirate baseball games



Families are strengthened by the positive interaction between each family member and there were many memories and fun times created. The women and their children were given an opportunities to learn, grow and explore not only individually but as a family.

Here is what some of the children said about their summer:

"I had so much fun with my mom this summer"

"I love doing things as a family"

"My favorite thing this year was floating on the lazy river with my mom"



Our fiscal year ends September 30th!

Will you give an additional donation to help us finish strong?

LIGHT OF LIFE ACCEPTS CAR DONATIONS



Light of Life is now able to accept in-kind donations of vehicles and real estate thanks to our recent partnership with locally owned Green Apple Barter Services and Green Apple Auto Works. You can donate these gifts in-kind to Light of Life and you will benefit from a reduction in your taxable income. Also, you will avoid the costs associated with selling these items such as repairs, advertising, registration and insurance while you wait for a buyer. Contact Maggie Johnson at mjohnson@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4160 to donate or for more details. Thank you!



EVERY LIGHT OF LIFE CHILD GOT A NEW BIKE FOR SUMMER!

On Wednesday, June 28, 2017, thirty-one new bikes were given to children in Light of Life Rescue Mission's program. Over the course of three weeks, Pittsburgh police officers from training academy located on Lincoln Avenue held classes for the children about health, safety and well-being, with the last class about bike safety.

After the bike safety class on June 28th, there was a presentation to give each child a bike. Public Safety Director Wendell Hissrich and Pittsburgh Police Chief Scott Schuber were part of the program and encouraged the children to have a fun and safe summer. The new bikes were donated by Light of Life sponsors from Bear Dog Bikes and helmets were donated by Children's Hospital.

The bikes were assembled by the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Bicycle Unit officers, led by Pittsburgh Police Bicycle Unit Sergeant Tom Mignogna. The Bicycle officers led a bike rodeo, which was a course of cones set up in the parking lot which gave the children an opportunity to practice riding their new bikes. There was a pizza party to end the bike presentation celebration and all of the mothers and children enjoyed a great day together with many more fun summer days to come!

YINZER 5K & LIL' YINZER FUN RUN RECAP



Thank you to everyone who came out for the Yinzer 5K and Lil' Yinzer Fun Run presented by Uncle Charley's Sausage on August 19th! Over 150 runners showed up in their black and gold and raised over \$12,000 for Light of Life. After the race, a smorgasbord of Pittsburgh food was given to runners — everything from Uncle Charley's Sausage to Pierogies Plus pierogies to Islay's ice cream. Jim Krenn was the Yinzer emcee and he was joined on the Pittsburgh Party Pedaler by WTAE's Jackie Cain and Miss Pennsylvania Victoria Piekut to judge the best dressed Pittsburgher. Keep an eye out for the Yinzer 5K 2018 and plan to show your Pittsburgh pride while supporting the critical work at Light of Life!

Thank you to our sponsors:

Uncle Charley's Sausage Company

Primerica

Swimming Pool Discounters

NexTier Bank



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PROGRAM GRADUATES: Ashley F, Gretchen R, Greg M, and Jeff Z

TUNCH & WOLF'S WALK FOR THE HOMELESS



Tunch Ilkin and Craig Wolfley

Thank you for making the 15th annual Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless memorable! We raised a total of \$115,363 for the Mission. This year's event was held over Memorial Day weekend and around 800 people came out to walk for Light of Life before their picnics and gatherings.

We hope you make it out next year!



INTERNS – THANK YOU!



Thank to our summer interns for investing in the lives of the men, women and children at Light of Life! We wish you well on the next steps of your journey.

L to R: Angela Chervon, W&C, Emily Owen, W&C, Tim Wendlandt, E&E, Carolyn Ebel, Development, Lydia Nelson, Care Support.

Every year Light of Life puts together **Thanksgiving Baskets** for those in the community who have the ability to cook food but don't necessarily have the financial resources to purchase the food. With our goal of **1,000 baskets** this year, we are asking if you would **consider collecting one item this year**. Your options include:

- Stuffing 6oz box – 2000 more needed
- Instant potatoes 26.7oz – 2000 more needed
- Green beans 14.5oz – 3000 more needed
- Corn 15.5oz – 3000 more needed
- Canned gravy 15.25oz – 2000 more needed
- Cranberry sauce 15.5oz – 1000 more needed
- Canned Yams 16oz – 2000 more needed

WE
NEED
YOUR HELP

For more information to schedule a donation drop off, please contact Emily at 412-258-6162 or erabatin@lightoflife.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **September 5th and 19th, October 10th and 24th, November 7th and 21st, December 5th and 19th – Volunteer Orientations.** Please first go to lightoflife.org and click on the "Get Involved" tab, then fill out the "Volunteer Application" to register. All orientations begin at 6 p.m.
- **October 17th – More Than a Meal Fundraiser & Gala at the Hyundai Club West Lounge at Heinz Field.** Step into someone else's shoes and catch a glimpse of the darkness that often surrounds the homeless through a unique art experience unlike any Light of Life gala in the past. Then join us in celebrating lives transformed through Light of Life Rescue Mission's ministry of food, shelter, and hope. For more information visit www.lightoflife.org/gala.
- **October 31st – Trunk or Treat from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Volunteers decorate their cars and provide a safe alternative for children on the North Side to have a fun evening.** NEEDED: Candy, hot dogs, and hot chocolate. We are also looking for volunteers to commit to being at Trunk-or-Treat with a decorated car to pass out candy. Please contact Emily at erabatin@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6162 or Brenna at bgallagher@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6128 for information and to sign up to help!
- **November 23rd – 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. We are looking for volunteers for the entire day starting at 5 a.m. Please contact Brenna at bgallagher@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6128 to get involved.

NEEDED FOR THIS WINTER: Warm coats and winter clothing. At this time we do not have a need for winter accessories.

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rescue mission
Food. Shelter. Hope.

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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