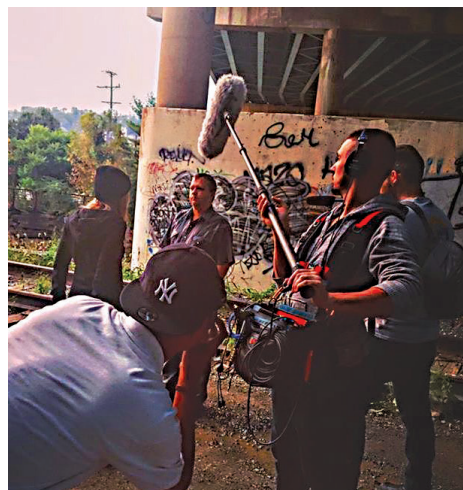


LIVING *by the* LIGHT

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FALL 2017



Clockwise from top left: Men's Program clients and graduates roast marshmallows at the annual bonfire at Simmons Farm; the making of Eye of the Needle documentary (see page 3); Tunch Ilkin, Craig Wolfley, and BJ Finney enjoy their time at our More than a Meal Gala; volunteers sort clothes at our donation center; our Men's Life Recovery Program enjoys a day out white water rafting; CMU staff volunteer their time at our Mission.

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 Aleshia's Story | 5 Annual Christmas Ornament |
| 3 More Than a Meal Gala Recap | 5 Graduation November 30th |
| 3 Light of Life Launches Light Line | 5 Run for Team Light of Life |
| 3 Eye of the Needle | 6 Ways to Give |
| 4 Q & A – What are You Thankful For? | 6 Upcoming Events |

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ALESHIA'S STORY



Aleshia, Women & Children's Program Graduate and Staff

Growing up, I was raised by my grandmother because my mother was an addict. Being the oldest grandchild, I was spoiled by my grandparents, being given the best of everything by them. Even having gone to the best schools and attending church every Sunday, I still chose to make the decisions I made.

At 14 years of age, I started drinking and smoking marijuana. When I was 15 years old, I became pregnant and was a mother by age 16. When I was 18 I became a full-blown alcoholic and by the time I was 21 years old, I was a mother to four children. At 23, I started

smoking crack cocaine in addition to drinking alcohol. There was one time where I left my kids in the house to go get high and that's when my grandmother took my kids away from me.

At 32, I was pregnant with my fifth child and she was taken away from me at the hospital because she was born with crack in her system. When I was 34 years old, I gave birth to my son, my 6th child, and the same thing happened to him. At 35 years old when I was pregnant with my 7th child and realized I would lose him too, I finally tried to get clean. Unfortunately, I didn't stay clean long enough so when he was born, we found out that crack was in his system as well. When he was a month and a half old, I was at the end; I was tired, I was beaten, I was done.

I went to one rehab for eighteen days and then one halfway house for six months and when I was nearing the end of the halfway house program, I decided to interview for the Women and Children's Program at Light of Life. When I initially interviewed, they said there would be a 3-6 month wait to get into the program. By the grace of God though, I got the call three weeks later that there was an opening.

"At my first Spiritual Women's Retreat at Light of Life is where I found my relationship with Christ and I haven't looked back since" said Aleshia.

When I came to Light of Life, I didn't have a relationship with my kids or Christ, even though I grew in the church with my grandmother. At my first Spiritual Women's Retreat at Light of Life is where I found my relationship with Christ and I haven't looked back since.

Since being in the program, I have held jobs for significant amounts of time, I went back to school to get my Bachelors in Human Services and I am now on track to attending grad school to receive my Master's in Divinity.

On top of all of that, I am now working at Light of Life doing the same interview process that I myself sat through when I was 36 years old and at my wit's end. Six months of being in this position, it is still so surreal to me. As I now celebrate ten years of recovery, there is a lot to look back on and be thankful for. Ten years ago, if you had told me I would have to take all these steps to get to where I am today, I would have said "no, I'm not doing all of that". However, today I am grateful for the process because I wouldn't be who I am today had I not gone through the process. I am grateful for the fact that I am a mom of seven and now have a relationship with all my children and grandchildren. Above all, I am grateful for the change and the relationship I have with God today because there is nothing like it.



MORE THAN A MEAL GALA

We held our annual More Than a Meal Gala and Fundraiser at Heinz Field on Tuesday, October 17, 2017.

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.

There were 425 people in attendance at the gala and over \$185,000 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!



Board chair Glenn Graner, Barbara and Donald Tucker, board member.



IF YOU NEED HELP CALL LIGHT LINE

888-412-0036 | Monday – Friday 10 am – 8 pm

This number should not be used for emergencies – if an emergency, please call 911

www.lightoflife.org/lightline

LIGHT OF LIFE LAUNCHES NEW HELP LINE IN RESPONSE TO OPIOID CRISIS

In 2016, 613 people died from an overdose, according to the Allegheny County Medical Examiner, up from 424 overdoses in 2015. More people than ever are seeking resources for themselves or a loved one. Although there are a variety of options and local organizations dedicated to the cause, it can be difficult to know where to start.

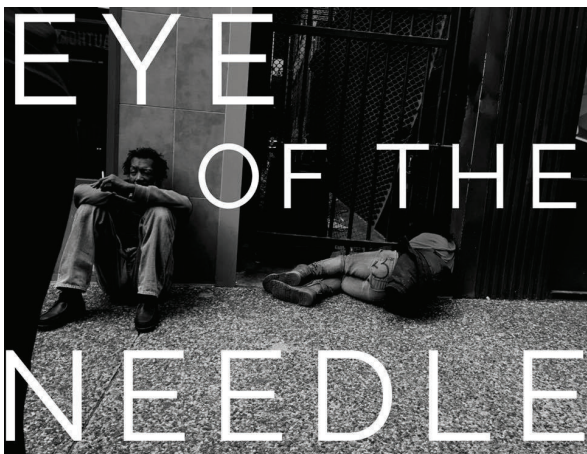
“It can be challenging to find the right place to go for help,” said Executive Director Craig Schweiger. “People call or come to our shelter because they are homeless. Or someone will contact us saying they know a single mom facing homelessness and are unsure what they should do. Since we are receiving more calls than we have in the past, we felt it was important to have something focused on the very specific questions many people are asking.”

To address the multiple needs associated with addiction and homelessness, Light of Life created a new helpline to assist anyone who is either in the throes of addiction, is experiencing difficult times or is actively searching for ways to help loved ones or friends. The LightLine number

is 1-888-412-0036 and will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. A new webpage on Light of Life’s website is a complement to LightLine and includes frequently asked questions and answers, contact information for dozens of community partners and organizations, and direct links to resources.

This effort was announced at Light of Life’s More Than a Meal Gala on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, with more than 400 people in attendance. This year’s gala also featured “Eye of the Needle,” an experiential art installation created by local artists encourage open conversation about addiction and homelessness. To view the video component from Eye of the Needle, visit www.lightoflife.org/eyeoftheneedlepgh.

“What sets LightLine apart is that it’s not just about addiction or homelessness, it’s a true life line for community members who are struggling either themselves or dealing with the multitude of difficult circumstances of a loved one,” said Schweiger. “With our roots in the Christian faith, we are available to listen and, if a person is interested, offer prayer and encouragement.”



Pittsburgh artists came together and to create a short-film documentary called Eye of the Needle to show the reality of the opioid crisis. We went to homeless camps and talked with people in the midst of the battle as well as interviewed a woman who lost her sister to heroin overdose. It highlights that addiction cannot be put in a box and people of all demographics and backgrounds are struggling.

Produced with love by a collaboration of artists and designers for Light of Life Rescue Mission. The design team includes Flying Scooter Productions, Uppercut Studios, and many others.



Please watch and share:

www.lightoflife.org/eyeoftheneedlepgh

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

Thanksgiving is a time for reflecting on the blessings we have been given. Some of our Light of Life Women & Children's Program participants shared with us what they are personally thankful for this season.



"I am thankful for my second chance that my amazing God has given me."

– Stephanie, Women and Children's Program



"I could sit all day writing what I am thankful for. The main thing I am thankful for is God saving me from the black hole I was in and blessed me with a house, job, and wonderful program where I can build a closer relationship with God."

– Jessica, Women and Children's Program



"I'm thankful for my son's health and joy, having a roof over our heads, and getting to say God gave me a second chance at life to be better and being able to give my son a good life. Ultimately, I'm thankful for everything God gives me every day."

– Rachael, Women and Children's Program



"I am thankful for God first of all. Light of Life has helped me tremendously with my faith and it continues to grow every day. I am also thankful for my family and friends. My support system keeps me grounded. I am

thankful for my life. I love my life today and I can now be a good mother, daughter and friend and I can now live my life to the fullest and fulfill my dreams."

– Julianna, Women and Children's Program



"I am thankful for my God who has given me another day in recovery. We are all miracles."

– Karen, Women and Children's Program



"I am thankful for finally being alive again. I am thankful for waking up at peace and having love and gratitude in my heart."

– Georgette, Women and Children's Program



"I am thankful to be walking through my life today next to my Savior Jesus Christ."

– Brittani, Women and Children's Program

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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's ornament was designed by Barb, a graduate of the Women and Children's Program. Barb had many lost dreams prior to beginning her recovery and now truly knows that "All things are possible through Christ who strengthens me." Barb

said, "The design to me shows blind faith in action. These three men never questioned, they just acted."

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

To order, go to <https://www.lightoflife.org/ornament/> or contact Emily at erabatin@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6162. We have a limited number, so get your ornament today!

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

GRADUATION NOVEMBER 30TH

Three Light of Life graduates moved into their new apartments! We are grateful for God's provision of jobs, income, safe places to live, furniture from The Blessing Board, awesome landlords, and their personal relationships with Christ.

Light of Life's next graduation will occur on November 30th at 7 p.m. We would love for you and your family to attend to experience firsthand how your support helps make these amazing things happen! To RSVP, contact Corrin at cmcelwain@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6154



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 154 runners finished in third by raising over \$94,000 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 <https://www.lightoflife.org/get-involved/events/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.

DONATIONS NEEDED

Due to limited space, we are only accepting the following items throughout the winter months:

- Winter coats
- Winter clothes
- New underwear
- New socks
- Men's winter gloves
- Travel sized toiletries

Contact Brenna at bgallagher@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6128 to arrange a time to drop off your donation at our Ridge Avenue location.



GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

We are looking for gifts this Christmas for the men, women and children in our program!

If you or your business/organization are interested in helping to meet this need, please contact Emily at erabatin@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6162 to get a list of our clients' wish lists. Thank you!

2018 SPONSORSHIPS

Interested in learning about business sponsorships for 2018? We have a wide variety of financial levels for each event. For more information, contact Doug Smith at dougsmith@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4161.



END OF YEAR GIVING

Please remember Light of Life Rescue Mission as you consider making end-of-the-year donations to your favorite non-profits! All donations received by December 31st will be acknowledged by January 2018 with a tax-deductible receipt. Thank you for helping us provide food, shelter and hope to men, women and children in need.



Christmas Dinner Volunteers

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **November 7th, December 5th and December 19th – Volunteer Orientations.** Volunteer orientation is 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 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 12-6 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 22nd – 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.



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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