

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

SPRING 2018



Clockwise from top left: Chef Hutch and volunteers pause to smile for the camera during our Good Friday Outreach Meal; Caleb catches a fish during fishing club; cool TCBY treats were a welcome donation on a warm May day; a fresh salad bar is available for residents each day; a guest is fitted for shoes when Wagner Quality Shoes stopped by; Team Light of Life was ready for the 5K in the Pittsburgh Marathon.

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MATT'S STORY

Matt grew up in a large family, with his mom and dad and 6 siblings. He is the youngest child, with a 7 year age gap between him and the next oldest sibling. Matt's dad died when he was 2-years-old and, influenced by one of his older brothers, Matt began drinking at a very young age. The on and off binge drinking began when he was 12-years-old.

"I've always been a binge drinker," said Matt. "Alcohol was always there."

Although Matt twice tried getting clean by going through a rehabilitation program, he ended up relapsing. The last time he relapsed it was around the same time he tried a drug to give up smoking cigarettes. Within a month of taking this drug, he was drinking every day.

"I'm not talking about drinking to catch a buzz. I'm talking black-out drunk," said Matt. "I just physically could not stop drinking. I would actually get physically ill whenever I was not drinking."

On March 29, 2016, Matt decided to detox safely from alcohol in a facility where he was supervised and then he went into a 90 day rehabilitation program. From there, he came to Light of Life because he had no where else to go to start putting his life back together.

When he first stepped in the doors of Light of Life, he decided he didn't want to stay. He grew up in the country and wasn't sure about being in a city. But, the relationships he formed with staff and other men in the program convinced him he was right where he needed to be.

His care team leader really helped with the transition. Matt remembers, "She looked at me and said, 'You're thinking about leaving, aren't you?' I said yes, this is not me. It's not what I'm used to. She said, 'Well Matt, God put you here for a reason and



now it's up to you to figure it out. Just stay put and let's figure this out together.' And it's been 18 months, so obviously things have worked out."

Things have definitely been working out for Matt! He recently graduated from the Community Kitchen Pittsburgh 12-week training program. He was 1 of 2 students who passed the SafeServe Certification exam and was honored with 4 additional certificates recognizing his attitude, efficiency, timeliness and perfect attendance.

"I enjoy cooking. I truly do," said Matt. "And it's always been my dream to have a 30 or 40 seat restaurant." For now, Community Kitchen has placed him to work at a high-end local restaurant where he will begin to save money for his own apartment.

What does Matt want to say to you about his experience? "Thank you so much for being able to make this place happen. The fact that you are willing to give us whatever it is you can, whether it be money, time, food, whatever, it just makes all the difference. You may not see it, but it does, it truly does make a world of difference."

At Light of Life, we believe that healthy relationships are a big part of the healing process. Matt shares his experience about how important the friendships he made are to him.

"I can honestly say I've made friends here that I honestly care about, you know, that I truly do love. And, you know, that has made an entirely huge difference. Staff does care, that's different. And to actually meet people that are exactly like me — and I mean exactly like me — that made a world of difference. I've been in rehabs where I've met other alcoholics and it's like, OK, no big deal. But whenever I met them here — and to hear their stories — they're exactly like me." — Matt, Men's Program Resident

EASTER RECAP

We served our annual Good Friday Outreach Meal on Friday, March 30th. In addition to meals served during extended hours at the Mission that day, volunteers delivered 711 hot meals to local high-rises. After serving meals, the volunteers stayed and visited with the residents in the high rises. This is a great way for us to get outside of our doors and be a good neighbor. A total of 884 meals were provided on this day alone!

The meal was either fried fish with tartar sauce or ham, au gratin potatoes, buttered peas, rolls and Boston cream pie. There was also a tent open outside the Mission throughout the day for men, women and children to come for a jacket, winter accessories, blankets and toiletry kits. The chapel was open with live entertainment to share the Christian meaning of Easter.

Thanks to your support, we had the opportunity to share the hope of the resurrection of Christ this Easter season!



174,515 MEALS PROVIDED!

Thanks to your donations Light of Life was able to provide 174,515 meals to our community during the last six months (October 2017 – April 2018).

We thank you for your generous help!

TUNCH & WOLF'S WALK FOR THE HOMELESS

You made the 16th annual Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless a great event on May 26, 2018. It was a beautiful day and over \$100,000 was raised for the Mission! We appreciate your generosity.

Thank you to our all of our sponsors!

Title Sponsor:
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Babb Inc.
Marjorie Peters
Geno Levi Salon
K&L Gates
Mark Ratti, ReMAX
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And all of the others who helped make Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless possible!

A special thank you to **Green Apple** and for providing the picnic food for all to enjoy afterward **Pittsburgh BBQ Company** and **Silver Star Meats**.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

In February, the women in our Women and Children's Program, as well as some graduates of the program, took a spiritual retreat to get away from their day to day lives in order to get refreshed, spend time with God, and let go of a lot of things that have been holding them back. It's always one of the most impactful experiences in the program.

The theme of this year's retreat was, "Beautifully Broken, Perfectly Scarred". The scripture they focused on was Romans 8:28, which says, "And we know that in ALL things GOD works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

Here are a few quotes from the women about their experience:

"I realized I was so stuck in the past I could not move forward. Today I am working on moving forward."

– Danielle H.

"I thought back and reflected on my brokenness and how I became broken, I am truly amazed that I am still alive and I know that I know it is only through God's grace and mercy that I am here Beautifully Broken." – Chrissy M.



"I realized there is a place in Heaven for me. That I only need to believe in Jesus Christ and that he died for my sins and it is that simple." – Antonia

"I realized that I am permanently scarred from my life's experiences and yet that's my blessing — in my scars is my healing." – Marge N.

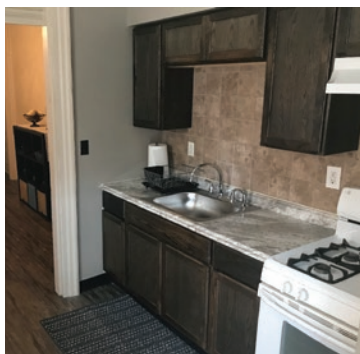
"In all my broke I know that God can put me back together again and there is value in my brokenness."

– Brittani P.



Every day this summer we have a water jug on our front steps. Anyone who is thirsty is welcome to stop by for a drink of water.

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APARTMENT FOR MEN'S PROGRAM

This Spring brought an exciting new opportunity for Light of Life! We partnered with a local landlord and renovated an apartment on the North Side for men who are at the end of the Life Recovery Program. The intention of this apartment is to allow for more independence while preparing to transition from Light of Life.

"Our vision is that when we move late-phase guys into an apartment, they will only stay 6-8 months," said Inger Muhlenkamp, Director of Programs. With this increase in freedom, they still have requirements around staying connected to the Mission and meeting with their financial accountability partners.

There are 2 bedrooms with room for 3 men to sleep and live comfortably. During the week of May 21st, a few of the men who are currently working, going to school or looking for work moved in and got settled in their new place.

"It's nice, comfortable, it's homey. It reminds me of being home," said Cavell, one of the men currently living there. "Sitting out on the porch I'm starting to get the feeling of being out on my own again and the responsibility that goes along with it."

We are grateful for Peoples Natural Gas, who defrayed the cost of furnishings and sent volunteers to decorate the rooms and stock the pantry.

Please keep the men living in this apartment in your prayers. We are excited for what God has in store for them as they prepare for their next steps!



TEAM LIGHT OF LIFE



Congratulations to everyone who ran for Team Light of Life in the Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon on May 5-6! A total of 91 runners raised over \$70,000 for the Mission. In the 6 years that we have been an official charity of this marathon, Team Light of Life has raised \$491,788! You are incredible!

For those of you considering running any of the marathon weekend races for Light of Life in 2019, contact Brenna at bgallagher@lightoflife.org or 412-258-6128.

DONATED SHOES



Wagner Quality Shoes in Lawrenceville brought donated shoes to the Mission on May 9th.

Fifty-two people who needed shoes came to the chapel, were fitted, and received a pair of shoes. The remainder of the shoes were given to Living in Liberty and distributed in the following days to those who had a need.

SAVE THE DATE

MORE THAN A MEAL GALA & FUNDRAISER

**Tuesday, October 16, 2018
at 6:00 pm**

Hyundai Club West at Heinz Field

**www.lightoflife.org/gala
for info and tickets**





Saturday, June 16, 2018

Registration at 8 a.m.

Lil' Yinzer at 8:30 a.m.

Yinzer 5K at 9 a.m.

The Great Lawn across from Heinz Field
North Shore

Presented by



REGISTER NOW FOR THE YINZER 5K

Yinz like to run, n'at? Show off your Pittsburgh pride in your finest black and gold or dress up as your favorite Steel City landmark! Prizes for race winners and best costumes.

Register at www.lightoflife.org/yinzer

Pre-registration cost is \$35 per runner.

Day-of registration will be available beginning at 8 a.m. on Saturday and will cost \$40 per runner.

Questions? Contact Kelly at kpirl@lightoflife.org

Proceeds benefit Light of Life Rescue Mission.

NEEDED ITEMS

- Men's belts (casual and dress)
- Deodorant
- Bath towels
- Twin sheets
- Men's underwear in all sizes

Items can be dropped off at 635 Ridge Avenue on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 1–5 p.m. If you cannot drop off at that time, please contact Mike at mmills@lightoflife.org or 412-608-0671.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Tuesday, June 5th and Wednesday, June 13th, Tuesday, July 10th and Tuesday, July 24th, Tuesday, August 7th and Tuesday, August 21st – 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.
- **June 16th – Yinzer 5K & Lil' Yinzer.** For more information see article above.
- **July 19th – Day of Hope Picnic from 12–6 p.m. at West Park across from the Mission.** Join us for a day of service projects, free food, Christian music, stories about how God is changing lives, and access to various community resources.
- **October 16th – More Than a Meal Gala & Fundraiser,** 6 p.m. at the Hyundai Club West at Heinz Field. For more information and tickets go to www.lightoflife.org/gala.

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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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