

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

WINTER 2019



Clockwise from top left: A group from sponsor, Hefren-Tillotson, serving Christmas meals; Christmas dinner; gingerbread houses made by the men in our program; the Outreach team visits homeless camps during record cold temperatures; former Pittsburgh Pirate Josh Harrison donates furniture to Light of Life.

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LIGHT of LIFE
rescue mission
Food. Shelter. Hope.

LISA'S STORY

Lisa C. has been trusting God for decades. A graduate of Light of Life's program 25 years ago, she has had a long journey with recovery, homelessness and faith. After completing the program with her four children, Lisa stayed clean but struggled for many years. She moved to Ohio for thirteen years before returning to Pittsburgh, living on and off the streets at different times. "I had been praying and asking God for my purpose. What do you want me to do? Send me Lord, I'll go. And then Sherry called me."

Now Lisa lives in Sister's Recovery House, an apartment building owned by Light of Life located on Pittsburgh's North Side. She is the House Mom, and the role has been a great fit. "My door is always open," Lisa says. "This is a no judgment zone, because I've been there. So, I kind of understand where they're at and where they're going, and I allow them to think instead of telling them. Because that's the way I had to do it. That helped me get through."

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Sister's House is currently at maximum capacity. Ten women live in community and recovery. Lisa describes Sister's House in two words: sisterhood, and unity. The women attend weekly house meetings, volunteer at the Mission each week, and take turns planning family nights. Lisa particularly loves these evenings of board games, movies, and dinners, and is known to fill up a big bowl of popcorn when the women are spending time together.



Lisa

"We stand up and hold hands in unity and pray. I thought that was very important. And I know God gave me that one."

Through struggles like the death of her son, homelessness, and addiction, Lisa has stayed clean and learned to trust God in all that she does. Thinking back on her time in Light of Life's program, Lisa recalls one spiritual retreat in particular as a breaking point. "You had to look at you," she says of that experience. "It was deep." Now Lisa says she has come full circle, living in Sister's House and leading and supporting the women currently in the program. "[Lisa] really is amazing," says one of the women living in the house, "and her spirit is just beautiful. When she prays I feel it. I just want to cry because I feel the love from her and how she feels it from God."

Please pray for Lisa and the men, women, and children in our programs. Your support and prayers help make stories like Lisa's possible.



249,643
total meals served in 2018!

CHRISTMAS RECAP

Many of the men, women, and children in our programs have not received Christmas presents for years. Light of Life's Christmas Giving Project and Annual Christmas Meal are special opportunities for the Pittsburgh community to show our clients that they are loved and that people care.

12/13

Christmas is a very busy season at Light of Life. This year we partnered with over 60 individuals, churches, and businesses to provide over 1,000 Christmas presents for the men, women, and children we serve. On December 13th our offices on Western Avenue were transformed into Santa's Workshop. The Women and Children's staff partnered with People's Gas, AT&T, and Confluence for the children in our program to pick out gifts for their families.



12/21



Friday, December 21st was the annual Christmas Banquet at the Mission. In the morning, a volunteer team from Highmark helped pack and load over 700 meals for local North Side high rise residents. Over 200 additional meals were served at the Mission while several volunteers and staff sang and shared testimonies in the chapel. Outside, volunteers handed out hot chocolate and Christmas cookies that were decorated by local elementary school students. Our donation tent volunteers provided hygiene kits, Bibles, and over 200 pounds of warm weather clothing to those in need.

12/25

On Christmas morning, our Street Outreach team visited the homeless camps around the North Side to distribute gifts. A volunteer accompanied the team and played guitar while they sang worship songs and prayed with the homeless. One man wept as the group began to sing Amazing Grace. He opened up with staff member Evan Burns, and revealed that he was feeling hopeless and had been planning to jump off the West End Bridge. The team prayed with him, and shared the truth of Jesus' sacrificial love. He agreed to come to the Mission to discuss joining the Men's Recovery Program.

By supporting Light of Life you help equip our Outreach Team to save lives. Would you consider donating \$10 gift cards for restaurants such as McDonalds, Subway, and Giant Eagle to ensure the homeless are fed this winter?





WHAT ARE YOU GIVING TO GOD IN THE NEW YEAR?



This holiday season, clients in our Women and Children’s Program spent time reflecting on the past and looking forward to the future. Using pencils, oil pastels, markers, scrapbook materials, and magazines, they created artwork inspired by a word for the new year. The art is displayed in the Women and Children’s space on Western Avenue to encourage and uplift anyone who passes throughout the year.



If you have questions you’d like us to ask in upcoming issues, email kkepner@lightoflife.org.



HOPE UNVEILED PODCAST

We are excited to let you know about our podcast called Hope Unveiled!

“I didn’t feel like there was a way out—my heart got broken. That was where Christ was able to come in and shine on me.”



The goal of the podcast is to allow clients, staff and volunteers to share their stories of how God is working in their lives. Podcast guests have the freedom to share their stories in their own words and with a certain level of anonymity.

Please share with your family and friends to get the good news out there about how God is changing lives.

To listen online or to see all of the places the podcast is available, please visit www.lightoflife.org/podcast.

WOMEN'S OUTREACH UPDATE

The Women and Children's Program has been blessed in recent weeks with several changes. The basement renovations at Western Avenue are complete, and the staff and clients are excited to have a new space for the growing program. Men from our residential program helped construct features such as chairs, couches, and an air hockey table. A conference room was added as well, to accommodate new program courses.

This December, our Women and Children's Outreach Program moved to a new location. We have already seen the life-changing results from having deeper and more meaningful conversations with the women in a private location. Monday through Friday women can come to this safe location to have

breakfast and lunch, and receive case management. Whether gripped by homelessness, addiction, abuse, or brokenness, our Women and Children's Outreach Program strives to meet women in the community where they're at, provide them with the love of Jesus and help connect them with resources they otherwise would not have access to.

▶ If you are a female and are interested in volunteering with our Women and Children's Outreach Program, please contact **Emily at erabatin@lightoflife.org**

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 Kelly Pirl at kpirl@lightoflife.org or 724-396-4241 to donate or for more details. Thank you!

NEW COMPUTER COURSES

This November 2018, Light of Life clients had the opportunity to take courses through a program called Computer Reach. For four weeks, clients received digital literacy assessments, hands-on training, equipment, and support with the potential to earn a computer upon completion of the program. Eight clients enrolled in courses, and three additional clients tested out of the Level 1 program, earning the certificate and computer without needing to take the classes.



The process began with an introductory session, which included a presentation by Computer Reach staff about the organization followed by the digital literacy screening. Clients could take Level 1 courses such as Basic Computer Skills, Internet Basics, and Using Email and Social Media. Clients who are interested in pursuing more advanced courses can learn

Microsoft programs such as Word, Excel, and Powerpoint, as well as coding and programming. Any participants who excel in these courses have the opportunity to receive training to teach those particular skills.

For two hours each week, participants learned key skills that will help them professionally and personally, but even more importantly, they felt heard and respected.

The course was a fantastic time of fellowship and learning, and our Education & Employment program is working with Computer Reach staff to offer another round of courses this winter. Prior to partnering with Computer Reach, Light of Life Education & Employment staff assessed clients' skills individually and connected them with offsite tutoring. Now, clients can gain foundational skills on-site and in community.

KITCHEN ADDITION

The kitchen staff is excited to start using their new smoker, donated by Costco through World Vision. Thank you to everyone who helped make this culinary addition possible!



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **April 19th – Good Friday Meal.** We will open our doors on Good Friday from 3–6 p.m. to celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. There will be a meal, chapel services, and a coat tent. Anyone who has a need is welcome.
- **May 5th – Dick’s Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon.** Sign up to run for Team Light of Life!
- **May 25th – Tunch and Wolf Walk for the Homeless.** Join former Pittsburgh Steelers and current radio broadcasters Tunch Ilkin and Craig Wolfley for a fun, family-friendly day on the North Shore. For more information email Kelly at kpirl@lightoflife.org.
- **July 14th – Yinzer 5K.** Yinz like to run, n’at? For more information contact Kelly at kpirl@lightoflife.org
- **July 18th – 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.
- **February 20th, March 5th and 20th – Volunteer orientations.** Please first go to lightoflife.org and click on the “Get Involved” tab, then fill out the “Volunteer Application” to register.



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 marathon 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 92 runners finished in 5th place by raising over \$73,000 for Light of Life! 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.

2019 Team Light of Life motivation:

My steps fuel their steps — Away from addiction — Away from homelessness — Toward a hopeful future.

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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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