

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

SPRING 2019



EASTER AT LIGHT OF LIFE

STAFF & CLIENT EASTER CELEBRATION

On Wednesday, April 17th clients, staff, and program graduates gathered together for one of Light of Life's most treasured traditions to share an Easter meal. Roughly 80 people spent time sharing food, fellowship, and prayer.

Staff and clients took turns sharing what the cross means to them. One client expressed gratitude for Light of Life and the hope of Christ. "I'm just grateful to have friends. Two and a half months ago I didn't have any. Now I have a friend in Jesus."

GOOD FRIDAY MEAL

The Mission opened its doors on Friday, April 19th for the annual Good Friday meal. Volunteers and staff served over

During the Light of Life Good Friday celebration over

1,000 meals

were served to Mission guests and delivered to 15 local high-rises.

1,000 meals to Mission guests and 15 local high-rises. This year, the chapel was reserved as a quiet space where meal guests could come to pray and be prayed for. Outside in the tent, guests received toiletry kits, played games with volunteers, and enjoyed live entertainment. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped bring hope and joy to our neighbors in need! Our ministry would not be possible without you!

TRAINING WITH A PURPOSE

At Light of Life, recovery is about more than sobriety. It's about overcoming past hurts through the love of Christ, finding community, and developing healthy habits and skills. We encourage the men, women, and children we serve to work on their spiritual, mental, and physical health.

Homeless populations often have higher rates of diabetes and other health risks due to a lack of access to healthy and balanced meals. Our Men's and Women's Recovery programs have offered health and wellness classes for many years, but this spring program staff were excited to launch a new partnership with Adventures in Training with a Purpose.

Each Tuesday, men in our recovery programs spend about an hour and a half focusing on their physical health. They spend the first half of the class learning health topics such as nutrition, mindfulness, and stress reduction methods. Then the men are led through a custom workout with balance and strength training moves that are tailored to their individual skill levels. The goal is to equip the men with exercises that work for them and that they can continue to practice outside of the program.

Adventures in Training with a Purpose challenges the class to exercise their faith and their bodies. The group spends time in devotionals and the class has a unique focus on lifting



one another up and encouraging each other to accomplish goals. While working on balance, the men are told, "hands up, eyes up." The tip is meant to help stabilize the body during a challenging move, but it also serves as a reminder that by lifting their eyes to God they can find stability in life's challenging moments as well.

EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sherry Rorison
Director of Programs

The Light of Life community is thrilled to announce that Sherry Rorison has been promoted to Director of Programs. Sherry led the Women and Children's program for twenty-eight years and we look forward to seeing the ways her leadership continues to bless the ministry in her new role.



Jerrel Gilliam
Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that Jerrel Gilliam is our new Executive Director. We are grateful that Craig Schweiger will continue to lead our Capital Campaign efforts.



Sunday, July 14, 2019

The Great Lawn across from Heinz Field
North Shore

- Registration at 8 a.m.
- Lil' Yinzer at 8:30 a.m.
- Yinzer 5K at 9 a.m.

NEW LOOKS FOR SPRING



Thank you to Pittsburgh Barber School, Hair Enhancements of Pittsburgh, Andrea Naplen, Kat Lopez, and Kelsie Boring for donating your expertise, time, and supplies to help give our men and women a fresh new look this spring.



UPCOMING EVENTS

■ **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. Visit lightoflife.org/walk for more information.

■ **July 14th – Yinzer 5K.** Yinzer like to run, n'at? To sign up, or for more information, visit lightoflife.org/yinzer.

■ **July 11th – 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 8th – More than a Meal Gala & Fundraiser, 6 p.m. at the UPMC Club at Heinz Field.**

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!



Clockwise from top left: Light of Life staff pose for a group photo outside the Mission; volunteers serve in the kitchen; live music performed on Good Friday; a group from American Airlines takes a quick break from serving to say cheese!; staff and clients attended the Pittsburgh Prayer Breakfast; Mission guests enjoyed a delicious pasta dish with fresh veggies.

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LIGHT of LIFE
rescue mission
Food. Shelter. Hope.

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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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Honorary Members
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Tunch Ilkin



MELINDA'S STORY

Melinda has been volunteering with Light of Life for over four years. She got her start in the kitchen at the Mission but after seeing the impact of the annual Thanksgiving Box Project this past November, Melinda realized she was called to help in the Donation Center on Ridge Avenue. Now she enjoys stocking shelves and organizing the food, furniture, clothing, and other household items that come through the Donation Center. “I felt anxious to get things done, but I realized it’s never going to get done. Relax,” Melinda says. “It’s all about the people.”

“[It’s] a place you can go not just for shoes or a coat, but for freedom,” she says. “Here, I’m in my element.”



Assistant Manager of the Donation Center, Lydia Nelson, Melinda, and Food Pantry Coordinator, Jessica Duca.

left delivered. “[It’s] a place you can go not just for shoes or a coat, but for freedom,” she says. “Here, I’m in my element. I can’t wait for Thursdays.”

If you’re interested in volunteering at the Donation Center please email volunteer@lightoflife.org.

RELOCATION UPDATE


This March, City of Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority unanimously approved Light of Life Rescue Mission’s purchase of their 234 Voeghtly Street property.

This is where we plan to build our new 24,000 square feet satellite site as part of our relocation project. Light of Life Rescue Mission’s relocation project is for two North Side sites. One site will be the renovation of the Ridge Avenue location, which was purchased in 2012. The other site will be the new construction on Voeghtly Street, below the Veterans Bridge. Plans include relocating all current services from the North Avenue facility and the addition of a woman and children’s emergency shelter within the two locations. Our new facilities will provide a better place to help serve the poor, addicted, needy, and abused with the love of Jesus.

the most challenging being to align community support for the relocation and development of two homeless shelters. Only He can work in the hearts of others and it has been amazing to watch over the years. God’s timing is perfect and the waiting has made seeing this historic moment arrive so much sweeter! We ask for your continued prayers as we move toward groundbreaking as soon as possible. Our hopes are it will happen before the end of May.

Thank you for your ongoing support during this time. Your prayers, giving of your time and finances, and commitment every step of the way has strengthened and encouraged us during the toughest of times. We will be sure to keep you updated about the ongoing progress of the relocation project and development.

As you may know, this relocation has been in the works for 25 years with many obstacles that had to be overcome. God has been with us through all of the difficult processes, with



JOIN THE BEACONS OF HOPE COMMUNITY

Your monthly gift can help provide consistent resources for the homeless, hungry, and addicted men, women and children in Pittsburgh. By becoming a member online, you will receive special program updates and be the first to know about events and volunteer opportunities. Visit www.lightoflife.org/give or call 412-258-6183 to sign up or for more details.



SPIRITUAL RETREATS

This February, men and women in our recovery programs left the North Side of Pittsburgh to gather in worship, fellowship, and learning at their annual spiritual retreats.



WOMEN'S RECOVERY PROGRAM

60 current clients and alumni traveled up to Slippery Rock for a long weekend of rest and reflection that centered on the theme, Be Still. The women received binders with the weekend’s teachings, but Director of Programs, Sherry Rorison strives to accommodate all types of learning at these retreats. Information was also delivered through skits, music, and crafts. The women spent time creating picture frames to build on the teachings and represent what it means to Be Still. “I can’t, He can, I’ll let him,” became a mantra for the weekend.

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Through morning and evening devotions and small group discussion, the women found strength and encouragement in each other. Part of this was by design, as alumni of the program were matched up with current clients to come alongside and mentor the women. But another part, just happens naturally in the Women’s Recovery Program. During a moment of reflection, the women were asked to come to the front of the room and give their hearts to God. One woman in the program couldn’t bring herself to stand and before she knew it, the rest of the room had gathered around her to pray. “To me, that’s what we represent,” Sherry says. “We’re all sisters in Christ.”


MEN'S RECOVERY PROGRAM

The men’s spiritual retreat takes place at Family Guidance’s Promise Camp twice per year. This winter, the retreat featured teachings and group discussions on recovery and relapse prevention. The men engaged each day in community-building activities, devotion, worship, prayer, and experiential learning exercises, which helped to reinforce and demonstrate the lessons in a tangible way.

During one of this year’s teachings, the men were asked to hold a plate in their hands, bend down to pick up a pool ball, and place it on the plate of the man standing next to them. As the plates filled with pool balls, they grew increasingly unstable and difficult to balance. This represented the struggle and instability of recovery.

This year’s retreat was eye-opening for many as the group learned about post-acute withdrawal. For some, this vulnerable state that happens later in recovery can cause shame and discouragement as they think they are failing to get the details of their lives together. Unlike early withdrawal symptoms, which are primarily physical, post-acute withdrawal affects a sufferer’s sense of identity. Stress, inability to sleep, and trouble focusing are all symptoms of this stage of recovery as the man or woman wonders who they are without the substance. Men on the retreat were encouraged by this lesson and learned some coping strategies that can help.



 Please pray for the men and women in our programs as they work through recovery.