

In the Know

Day of Hope

Each summer, Light of Life hosts entertainers and local agencies at our Day of Hope to provide free services for the homeless, addicted, abused, and needy in our community. Originally scheduled for Thursday, July 11, the event was canceled due to inclement weather. But that didn't stop volunteers from serving free food to anyone who wanted some. Groups from CESO and St. John Neumann Church dished out watermelon, burgers, hotdogs, potato salad, and macaroni salad to hungry guests as they waited out the storm inside.



DAY OF HOPE was rescheduled for August 13 from 3pm-7pm



January 2018
Point in Time Homeless Data Allegheny County

783
homeless in Allegheny County

22%
suffering from mental illness

13%
struggling with substance abuse

41%
homeless families have kids 4 years old or younger

15%
veterans — up from 2017

10%
have physical disabilities

★ Events Updates



This summer was packed with fun, family-friendly events. **Tunch and Wolf's Walk for the Homeless** kicked off Memorial Day weekend on May 25th. Over 600 people came out to raise awareness and money for Pittsburgh's homeless. Pittsburgh Barbeque and Post Office Catering provided a delicious post-walk pig roast picnic. The 316th ESC Command unit out of Farrell, Pennsylvania came with their trucks, and several Pittsburgh Steelers of past and present joined in the festivities. We raised over \$100,000. Thanks to all who helped make it happen!

Special Thanks
A huge thank you to Peoples Gas, the Title Sponsor for Tunch and Wolf's Walk for the Homeless in May and Swimming Pool Discounters, Title Sponsor of the Yinzer 5K this July. Without our sponsors, events like these would not be possible. Thank you so much to these two businesses for supporting Light of Life this summer!

Next Up:
More than a Meal Gala – October 8th at the UPMC Club at Heinz Field. For more information and tickets go to www.lightoflife.org/gala.
Thanksgiving Box Outreach – November 25th join us as we pack and distribute Thanksgiving meals to over 1,000 local families in need. Email volunteer@lightoflife.org for more information.
Thanksgiving Banquet – November 28th 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.



The Yinzer 5k took place on July 14th. Twelve Lil' Yinzers started off the morning and over 200 adult runners raced for black and gold glory. Mikey and Big Bob, Sally Wiggins, Miss Pittsburgh, and local artist, Cody Sabol helped judge the costume contest. Participants outdid themselves this year, showing up in their Pittsburgh finest. Top costume of the day went to a runner decked out in a full Mario Lemieux hockey uniform and pads.

How You Can Help
Our women's outreach center is looking for compassionate volunteers to meet with shelter guests who need resources, guidance, support, or simply a person to talk to. Please contact Emily at volunteer@lightoflife.org for more information.



Board of Directors
Chairman
Glenn Graner
Vice-Chairman
Jerril Gilliam
Secretary
George B. Libby, Jr.
Treasurer
Richard L. Roadarmel

CEO
Craig Schweiger
Executive Director
Jerril Gilliam
Members
Gash Abebe
Rebecca Fatica
Stephanie L. Herring
Rita Huckle
Jody Johnson

Thomas Junker
Ed Kairis
Ralph Miller
Leonard Petrancosta
Donald Tucker
David Wilke
Honorary Members
Donald Foster
Tunch Ilkin

LIGHT of LIFE
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.

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

SUMMER 2019



**Same Mission
New Vision
Lives Changed
this Summer**

**Don't Miss Our
Annual More
than a Meal Gala!**



Letter from Jerrel



Dear Friends,

I'm humbled to be writing this letter as the new Executive Director of Light of Life Rescue Mission. I've served the Mission for many years and have a heart for the broken and needy community members that we serve. Although we have faced challenges, through answered prayers, God has showed up in big ways this summer at Light of Life.

This is a historic time for us as we closed on our new property July 5th and are now moving full steam ahead on our capital campaign. I believe we are here at this strategic moment due to the many prayers prayed, the donors that have been so faithful to give, and the volunteers that come alongside our staff and clients to make this ministry a reality.

Thank you for all you have done to contribute to this historic moment. By God's grace, in about 14 months we will be delivering a higher level of care to the broken, lonely, and lost, in Christ's name. We hope that you'll be as excited as we are about what is happening here when you read through the summer recap in this issue.

Please continue to pray for us during this season!

Together In His Grip,

Jerrel T. Gilliam
Executive Director

Three things you didn't know about Jerrel:

- ▶ His favorite Pittsburgh sports team is the Steelers.
- ▶ His favorite meal at the Mission is Turkey!
- ▶ The Scripture that has held the most significance in his life comes from 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Capital Campaign Corner

We have some very exciting news to share with you about how God is answering prayer at Light of Life. On Friday, July 5th, we closed on our new property on Voeghtly Street!



Official Ground Blessing ceremony. Board members, local officials, and many others gathered to celebrate this momentous occasion and pray over the land. The expected completion date of this project is Fall 2020. In the meantime, we will continue to keep you updated with next steps as they transpire. **For more information, call Doug Smith at 412-297-1041 or visit www.lightoflife.org/opendoors.**



Graduation

On Thursday, June 13th, we held our summer graduation ceremony. Twice a year, our staff, alumni, clients, and families **come together to honor those who have successfully completed our programs.** We were thrilled to celebrate clients from the Men's Recovery Program, Women & Children's Program, and for the first time this year, the Outreach Program.

We had a few new and exciting elements at graduation. The evening began with worship by Denise Graves and Amy Volstad from the Extravagant Love Project. The women in our program have been attending a worship workshop with Denise and Amy, and they got to lead worship on stage alongside the pair. It was a powerful few minutes as the Holy Spirit filled the room.

“**God completely cleared the path for me. I didn't have anybody. I was so isolated and depressed, but God placed my sisters in my life.**”

After worship, graduates shared their testimonies. While the circumstances that brought them to our doors varied, the outcomes were the same. Lives were transformed.

For the first time ever, we celebrated two people who came through our Outreach Program. One was a woman named Theresa who came to our meal ministry and began to build relationships with our staff. She was living out of her car when she first came to Light of Life. She said, “every day I would go to Light of Life and try to see Emily (our Women's Outreach Coordinator). It took me a while because of my addiction, but God had other plans for me. I held on. I stayed strong. I stayed clean.” Now, just one short year later, Theresa has a place of her own and is a manager at a major retail chain. She concluded saying, “by His grace, He brought me where I'm at today.”

During this ceremony, we were thrilled to have the first ever graduate from Sister's Recovery House (SRH). We opened SRH in 2017 for single women struggling with addiction and homelessness. April came to Light of Life after being in an abusive relationship and attempting suicide. Through building

relationships with the staff, her sisters at SRH and God, April has been transformed. Upon graduating, she said, “God completely cleared the path for me. I didn't have anybody. I was so isolated and depressed, but God placed my sisters in my life.”

There were eleven graduates total that evening and through their stories, a couple of common factors stuck out. First was God's grace and transformative power. Second was the positive impact that community has on someone's recovery. We believe in community here at Light of Life and are blessed to have a group of alumni that plans events and comes together to support each other beyond graduation. The evening ended perfectly with members of the alumni group giving the graduates their cords and welcoming them into the community.

“**... This place has given me the strength to dig deep and prove to myself I can do better...**”

One graduate was unable to attend, but left a special message. “I am so grateful and thankful for the opportunity and relentless care, help and concern of the entire staff. This place has given me the strength to dig deep and prove to myself I can do better, and this is just a start. I encourage anyone that has means to help this unique program in Pittsburgh with an unmatched team that would do anything to get someone back on track. Society sometimes looks down on the homeless when a temporary situation could be easily solved if people cared. Ignoring one's homeless situation by not caring could be the difference between someone getting out of a temporary situation or sinking deeper to a point of sadly sometimes no return.” We couldn't agree with him more and as a staff, we are so thankful to have caring donors like you to make these special celebrations and life transformations possible.

Hear from Our Clients

What was your favorite activity this summer and what did you take away from it?

“My favorite activity this summer was going to the Deer Park with my children and the other women. The bus ride up there just hearing all the children laughing and sharing their excitement. I was so incredibly proud of how patient my children waited to get organized to get in. I enjoyed watching my children interact with the animals.”

– Chelsey J.



[My favorite activity was] Kennywood. It is good to have Mental Health Program group activities that are recreation based in order to have fun and bond [with others].”

– Jeremy B.

“These field trips help me to see the beauty of God working in my life that I didn't see before. I just love my life today and I know it is God's working and Light of Life who helps me to live again. I love our group and I love all the staff who believe in me. It's what is making me stay sober. And just knowing I can do all things through the Lord.”

– Robin G.



“Camping at Cooks Forest. Bonding in new friendships with staff and clients and enjoying the peacefulness of the wilderness [was my takeaway].”

– Dan B.

“My favorite activity this summer was going to Idlewild. It has been a long time since I've spent time with my son. On that trip, I got to bond with him. I was able to love and hug on him. I learned that he can swim, what his favorite amusement park food is, and I just got to enjoy my son in a way I never have in a while. The most important thing that I took away from this trip is that love is time, attention, and building relationships. Thank you, Light of Life.”

– Crystal S.



A big thank you to the Grable Foundation for funding part of this summers' activities for our Women & Children's Program!