



Homelessness — Women and Children

At Light of Life we provide programming, childcare, and critical resources to 38 women and 42 children. Light of Life provides rent, classes and recovery support to single women and mothers to help them restore their hope and transform their lives.

Here are a few ways Light of Life is impacting children and families this fall.

This holiday season, with the help of generous volunteers and donors children in our program were able to safely trick or treat, wearing new costumes that were donated by the Emma Munson Foundation. It was a fun and safe way to celebrate the beginning of fall.

At the end of November, we will be providing **over 1,500 Thanksgiving dinner boxes** to families struggling in our community. Each box contains a turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, green beans, yams, pie and all the other holiday fixings to make their Thanksgiving as homey and full of love as possible.

If you would like to volunteer in our women's outreach center to provide hope and support to women and children struggling with homelessness, please contact Emily at volunteer@lightoflife.org. Please pray especially for mothers and children as we move into the cold winter months.

Special Thanks

We want to thank our longtime supporter and friend Barbara! She has been giving to the Mission for over 20 years. Barbara became a pen pal with John, a client in our program, and they wrote to each other every other week for 9 years. Through their letters, Barbara witnessed John's transformation while he was at Light of Life. She says, "I have seen the good that Light of Life does and because of it, I was blessed and inspired by a friendship for 9 years." Thank you, Barbara, for your consistent support of our mission!

Homelessness Data on Families with Children

47% of children served by Gospel Rescue Missions are aged 0–5
(Citygate)

35% of kids who experienced homelessness in the 2016-2017 school year were aged 1-5.

77.6% of adults with families who experienced homelessness were women.



Children who experience homelessness also experience more mental health problems, developmental delays, poor cognitive outcomes, and depression than their peers.

*Source except where noted: United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Focus on Families with Children report 2018.

Events Updates

More than a Meal Gala



We were thrilled with the turnout of this year's gala on Tuesday, October 8th! The evening took place at Heinz Field UPMC Club and the theme for this year was Never the Same. During the night, guests were able to experience God's transformative power at Light of Life and how through our brokenness, God can create beauty. The evening included a walk-through art installation, dinner, auctions, and graduate interviews. We are grateful to announce that we raised over \$316,000 and had almost 500 people in attendance! We'd like to thank everyone who helped make this event a success, and give a special thank you to our *Title Sponsor* Oxford Solutions and our *Silver Sponsors* Gateway Health and A. Martini & Co.!

Next Up:

Thanksgiving Box Project – November 25th on this day, we pack and distribute Thanksgiving meals to over 1,500 local families in need.

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.

Giving Tuesday – December 3rd a dollar for dollar match will be available on December 3rd. To get your donation matched, you can give on <https://www.givebigpittsburgh.com/>

How You Can Help



Christmas Banquet - December 20th

This annual holiday feast is open to anyone in the community who is looking for a place to celebrate Christmas. We will be feeding over 1,000 meals at our mission and fourteen local high rises. 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.

Holiday volunteer opportunities fill up fast! If you'd like to get involved next year, mark your calendars for September 2020 to check our website about serving on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Physical Donation Needs

We are no longer accepting everyday furniture donations due to space limitations, however if you are interested in meeting the furniture needs of one of our alumni or graduating clients, please contact Mike Mills at 412-608-0671 to learn more about our current needs.

To find a list of our current clothing, bedding, and toiletry needs, you can visit www.lightoflife.org/donate.

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.

Board of Directors

Chairman
Glenn Graner

Vice-Chairman
William Wolfe

Secretary
George B. Libby, Jr.

Treasurer
Richard L. Roadarmel

CEO
Craig Schweiger
Executive Director
Jerral T. Gilliam

Members
Gash Abebe
Rebecca Fatica
Stephanie L. Herring
Rita Huckle
Jody Johnson

Thomas Junker
Ed Kairs
Ralph Miller
Leonard Petrancosta
Donald Tucker
David Wilke

Honorary Members
Donald Foster
Tunch Ilkin

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

FALL 2019



Second Chances

Homelessness among Women and Children

Holiday Festivities at the Mission



Letter from Jerrel



Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your ongoing support in helping us care for the hurting and homeless men, women, and children in our community! November is National Homeless Youth Awareness month, and as a community we are striving to make Pittsburgh a place where no youth will be living on the streets.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently published the results of a study on the long and short-term negative effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on health and well-being outcomes in adults. The study confirmed a direct correlation between early childhood traumatic events and the increased likelihood that adults will become victims of violence, experience poor health, commit violent acts, and even early death. Other studies suggest that among the homeless, 90% have experienced three or more ACEs by the time they reach adulthood.

From this body of work, we can see that a comprehensive approach to combating homelessness must include reaching our children. The ACEs report also carried some good news; a loving, nurturing environment can reverse the long-term effects of early adverse events.

Jesus declares: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus offers hope, healing, and restoration to all those who trust Him. We are excited to share with you in this issue some of the ways that we've been able to introduce Christ to our clients and neighbors through events and programs here.

Thank you for partnering with us as we share the Good News to our most vulnerable neighbors.

In His Grip,

Jerrel T. Gilliam
Executive Director

Capital Campaign Corner

We have made progress on our Voeghtly Street location!

The foundation has been poured at the site and the team is continuing to make progress on the build each day. One of the most exciting parts about this new building is that we will have enough space to open an overnight women and family shelter and common area! The shelter will include 18 beds (6 rooms, with private baths) for overnight or long-term transitional stays. Women and children staying at the shelter will have their own dining area on the floor, as well as a children's playroom, family common area, women's lounge, prayer room, and laundry and staff offices.

We look forward to the opening of our women and children's shelter at our new Voeghtly Street site in Fall 2020. We know that providing a nurturing environment can help reverse the effects of childhood trauma. At Light of Life, we provide a Christ-centered



healing environment that will give a generation of children and adults a new future.

If you want more information or would like to donate to the Capital Campaign directly, visit lightoflife.org/opendoors or call Doug Smith at 412-297-1041.

Second Chances



Brittani is a mom in our Women & Children's program who came to Light of Life in January 2017. Before coming to Light of Life, she struggled with addiction for almost 20 years. She had graduated from college and obtained her nursing degree, but then fell into the cycle of drugs through a boyfriend that she was dating.

Brittani knew things had to change when her 12-year old son felt unsafe living with her. She was living with her mom but was evicted due to her drug use, so she ended up in a halfway house.

When she was in that halfway house, Brittani felt desperate and hopeless. "It didn't seem like being clean was ever in the cards for me." She remembers her son coming to visit her and offering her his Christmas money to help her. That was one of the points where she realized the impact her addiction was having on him. Brittani says that her son was her motivator. "He was the only person who unconditionally loved me and didn't give up on me."

Brittani describes that the most influential time while at Light of Life was when she learned that God forgave her for her past. She says, "once I knew I was forgiven, I could forgive myself." And this realization didn't stop with her. Brittani's son has witnessed God as well. He is now 15 years old and she says that he ministers to her all the time! They go to church together and he has accepted Jesus as his savior and has experienced

“...once I knew I was forgiven, I could forgive myself.”

the Holy Spirit. He tells her that he is proud of her for breaking the cycle of addiction in their family and he plans to continue breaking it for good. Brittani will graduate from the Women and Children's Program this fall and she plans to help other people realize that they are forgiven in Christ, and that they deserve a second chance just like she got.

Brittani says, "I think that [homelessness and addiction] doesn't discriminate. I have lost my nursing license through [addiction]. Light of Life helped me to get my license back and I finally got a nursing job. It's just a relief that I can provide for my son finally on my own. The sky is the limit and things can turn around. We all deserve a second chance – because I'm not the same person I was. I have something to give and it's truly my job to give back. My passion is for people now and it's to teach them how I was able to forgive myself through Jesus Christ. I just believe in second chances."

“The sky is the limit and things can turn around. We all deserve a second chance.”

Hear from Our Clients

What are you most thankful for this year?

"I am grateful for my savior Jesus Christ! My 3 children and everyone that has helped me along the way in raising them! I'm also thankful for the roof over our heads and the food on our table. It's the little things that make the heart grow!"

– Renee U.

"I am grateful for the connections I have made with the women in this program, both clients and staff. I am grateful for the strength and perseverance I have learned through these women. When I feel less than, these women boost me up, reminding me that I am a child of God and that I can do all things through Christ."

– Anonymous

"I am truly thankful to be clean and sober and have the opportunity to change my perspective in life and become a father, grandfather, and great grandfather to my children."

– Darrell W.

"I am grateful for being in contact with my family. Our communication is better because I am here."

– Ray B.



Staff and clients gather to celebrate the ways that they are thankful to God and how He is working in their lives.

"I'm grateful for life and for my children. I'm grateful for Light of Life for always being here for me. I'm thankful for just being able to have a second chance at motherhood and just to be able to get myself back on track. I'm grateful for family and friends that support me."

– Daisha B.

"I am extremely grateful to be able to raise my son and have a chance at a relationship with both of my daughters."

– Nicole D.

"I am grateful for joy in my heart, God, the Light of Life staff, my new job, the other clients, and the relationship with my family."

– Ron A.

The 2019 Christmas Ornaments are Here!

Our 2019 Wendell August Forge Christmas ornaments are in and this year, the design is the rendering of our new building! We are so excited to be expanding our community footprint to help reach more neighbors in need. You can receive one today for a suggested donation of \$25 (pick-up) or \$30 (mailed). If you are interested in purchasing an ornament, visit www.lightoflife.org/ornament.

