

LIVING *by the* LIGHT

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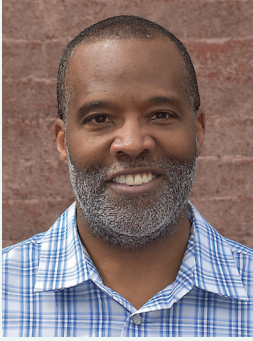


Homelessness—
Education &
Employment

Looking
Forward to
the New Year

Recap—
Holidays at
the Mission

Letter from Jerrel



Dear Friends,

Welcome to 2020! This promises to be a historic year for Light of Life. After 25 years of prayer, effort and many community meetings, we are scheduled to move into our new building this Fall. This new building will increase our ability to serve our guests and clients with dignity and respect.

Although we are excited about the new services, we are committed to strengthening our current programming to provide food, shelter and hope to those in need. The hope portion of our services begins with the bedrock of our mission, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel teaches us that regardless of our mistakes and short-comings, Jesus promises to make all things new, when we repent of our old ways and surrender our lives to Him as leader of our lives! Although life transformation is our most important work, we do not stop once a person has solid spiritual foundation and sobriety.

We have developed an Education and Employment department with dedicated staff to assist clients with finding gainful employment and safe affordable housing. Assessments are given early in a client's journey with us and an individualized education and employment plan is developed to aid the client in becoming successful in their job and housing search. Some of our clients need to complete their GED, while others need to learn an employable skill or trade. Every Tuesday at 10 am, our Education and Employment office is open to the public to assist anyone in need, free of charge. Our staff provide a safe, loving environment for people in need to receive valuable services – including resume building, mock interviews, and online job searching.

Thank you for your support and partnership. Our ministry would not be possible without the donors and volunteers that support us each day to bring the Good News to all that will receive it.

In His Grip,

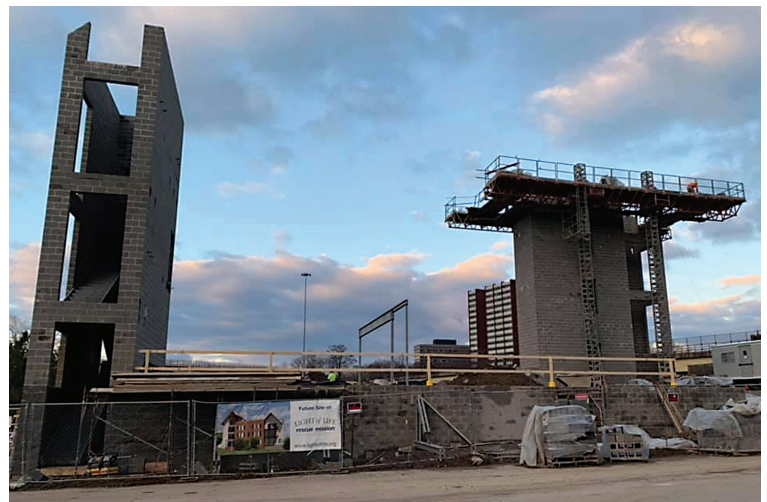


Jerrel T. Gilliam
Executive Director

Capital Campaign Corner

We are so excited to share that the building has started to go up at our new Voeghtly Street location and we are on schedule to open the doors to our new shelter this Fall! This building will house both a Men's Day Center and a Women's Day Center that is open during the daylight hours for those in need.

The day centers enable people to come in off the street. They can wait comfortably for meals, access a computer, charge their phones, engage with Street Outreach staff, relax in a TV lounge, and receive case management. Flexible office space allows partner agencies to have a greater onsite presence, enabling more collaborations and centralized care and support to the community. Our Education and Employment team will have an onsite presence and be able to engage with guests to provide tools, instruction, and support to help them move from the streets to self-sufficient living.



If you are interested in learning more about the Opening New Doors Capital Campaign, please visit www.lightoflife.org/opendoors or call Doug Smith at 412-297-1041.

Homelessness – Education & Employment

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, climbing out of homelessness is virtually impossible for those without a job. For those with limited skills or experience, opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage are very limited. Additionally, many members of the homeless population must combat barriers such as limited transportation and reduced access to educational and training programs.

27% Our analysis shows that formerly incarcerated people are unemployed at a rate of over 27%

600,000
Over 600,000 people make the difficult transition from prisons to the community each year.

The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated people is nearly 5x's higher than the unemployment rate for the general United States population. When they do land jobs, they are often the most insecure and lowest-paying positions.



44% of homeless people have jobs and still can't escape homelessness.

Displaced workers face difficulty finding new employment; when they do find work, their new jobs pay, on average, about 13% less than the jobs they lost.



The lack of access to technology serves as a handicap for the homeless searching for work. In this job market, some knowledge of computers and technology is essential for every field.

Research statistics illustrate that a disability, mental or physical, can result in difficulty acquiring work. In addition to mental illness and substance abuse, incarceration also serves as a barrier for employment. Incarceration can decrease the types of employment available to an individual after release from jail or prison.

Here at Light of Life, we believe that if we empower those we serve to pursue their sense of calling and purpose, they can contribute meaningfully in the community and have a better quality of life. We do this by helping them to identify their calling and build meaningful connections. We have a Continuum of Care that allows us to walk with clients and guests from our initial engagement with them on the street all the way through to them becoming an alumnus of our programs – providing necessary services along the way.

Our Education and Employment team collaborates with both our outreach team and programs staff to provide support to individuals on a case-by-case basis to help the people we serve overcome those barriers and obstacles that they face when homeless and/or formerly incarcerated. Support includes anything from resume and cover letter assistance and job search support to tutoring, and financial literacy. Additionally, once a week, we open our Education and Employment Resource Center to the public where they can come in to use our computer lab.



Our Education and Employment services are classified into three categories. These services are supported through classes, one on one consultations, and volunteer tutors. In many cases, we also partner with local agencies to bring the best quality support to those in need.

Light of Life Education and Employment Resource Center Services		
EDUCATION	EMPLOYMENT	PERSONAL FINANCES & STEWARDSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED preparation • Tutoring in reading, writing and math • Computer skills workshops • Network of job training and higher education programs • Funds to provide needed materials and transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops to identify strengths • Internships • Job search skills, including resume writing, networking and interview preparation • Record expungement • Soft Skills and job retention skills workshop • Funds needed for materials, clothing, transportation, and more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops on budgeting and incorporating money habits in recovery and spiritual growth • Individualized savings and debt repayment plan • Accountability partners

We believe the employment and education services that we offer here at Light of Life help to prepare individuals for careers beyond our programs. We have many program graduates who now work here on staff at Light of Life. Here’s what they have to say about what that means to them:



“Working at Light of Life after I graduated from the program, was nothing but God’s work. He gave me the opportunity to help other women just like me. I believe that He saw in me the heart and compassion to love and give other women hope and strength to move forward in life.”

– Michelle Pace, Case Manager



“Working at Light of Life lets me know that we as an organization truly believe in transformation. Being a former client had no bad impact on my ability to do the job. My experiences in the program made more of a positive impact during the hiring process. I can relate to what our men are going through, and I can help them through their process.”

– Chris Saleone, Facilities Manager



“It means a lot. I love working for Light of Life. One of the main reasons is because it’s truly a Christian workplace and the support I receive from my coworkers goes a long way with my history. I have learned to trust others and share my story and testimony. Before I came here, I lived in an isolated world. Now I’m no way near who I used to be. The people I get to meet here daily makes it unique for me and helps me grow as a man of Christ.”

– Kevin Pitts, Culinary Specialist



“It’s like a dream come true for me to work at Light of Life upon graduating the program as well as an honor to do God’s work. I had some amazing mentors as I went through the Women’s Program and now I’m able to be a part of the Women’s Outreach Center and give back what was so freely given to me.”

– Amber Johnston, Women and Children’s Outreach Specialist

Hear from Our Clients

What are you letting go of in the New Year and/or most looking forward to this year?

"This year I am letting go of the opinions of others regarding my recovery. I am fully embracing and accepting my new way of life. I am looking forward to the woman I am becoming. I am optimistic about my future being full of love and prosperity through my connection with God."

– Chelsey

"I am letting go of sugar. I am most looking forward to graduating college and getting a job in the field."

– Krysten

"In 2020 I'm letting go of all my past pain and hurt. I need to have more God and less of me. So, I'm looking forward to walking in the Spirit with my Father and to obey and follow His will so that I can be successful in what calling He has on my life."

– Careema

"In 2020 I want to let go of doubt. I want to believe in myself more and trust that God will always take care of me and my kids."

– LeAnn

"I'm letting go of my past relationships, my old way of thinking, and procrastinating responsibilities. I'm determined to continue to better myself [in 2020]."

– Jeff



At the end of each year, the women in our program symbolically let go of something they've been holding onto. This could be a grievance, an unhealthy habit, or something else. This year, they wrote what they wanted to give up and then burnt the paper.

"I'm letting go of selfish ways, self-centeredness, but most importantly, alcohol...this year I have to admit is better already. A new start – a healthy one. It's my first year sober in 17 years. I'm gaining sobriety, the Lord, and unselfish ways...I'm putting down anything that will disrupt me moving toward allowing God to work in my life, which I have Light of Life to thank for that – to be allowed to take your time in here is a true blessing."

– Anonymous

"I'm letting go of the past and my use of drugs and alcohol. I am most looking forward to completing this program getting a job and my own place. And to become a productive member of society, be a grandfather to my grandchildren and a father to my children."

– Darrell

Special Thanks

We want to give a special thank you to our longtime volunteer and friend of the Mission, Marian Wilson! Marian has volunteered here at Light of Life consistently for 6 years. She mostly helps in our administrative offices, assisting the Development Team with fundraising initiatives and supporting Accounting and HR. She's also volunteered for events and each year brings a team from her church to Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless! Over the holidays, Marian was instrumental in the success of our Christmas Giving Project and now she is helping with our Valentine's Day project. Marian says, "I enjoy working behind the scenes to support the mission of LOL and am impressed by the dedication of all the staff that I have worked with." Thank you, Marian for your dedication to the mission – many clients and guests are impacted because of your support!



Events Updates



The holidays were a very busy time here at Light of Life! Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we had a lot going on and were able to reach many individuals and families through a warm meal. We received around 1,500 coats for those in need! Your giving brought joy to so many people and that joy brings hope.

Thanksgiving Recap

On the Monday before Thanksgiving, we worked with over 25 local organizations and dozens of volunteers to pack and distribute Thanksgiving boxes to over 1,500 local families in need. Each box included a turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and all the other yummy dinner fixings. A huge thank you to our Title Sponsor for the day – **FedEx Ground!**

During our Thanksgiving Dinner Banquet, we served over 1,000 individuals! Men, women, and children who do not have a place to go for Thanksgiving dinner are welcome to the Mission for a

holiday meal. We had live music playing throughout the day in our chapel and handed out coats and winter accessories to our guests.

Christmas Recap

We held our Annual Christmas Banquet on Friday, December 20, 2019. With your support this holiday, we served more than 900 Christmas meals. Each year we also host a Christmas Giving Project for our guests and clients and thanks to generous donors like you, over 1500 Christmas gifts were provided to women, children and men in need!

Next Up:

Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon, May 2nd & 3rd –

Join our charity team! If you sign up to run any of the races in the Pittsburgh Marathon, we will pay your registration fee! All you have to do once you are part of our team is raise money for the Mission, which is easier than you think! Contact Amy Metz at ametz@lightoflife.org for more information.

Tunch & Wolf's 18th Annual Walk for the Homeless, May 23rd –

Each summer we pack the Great Lawn in the North Shore for Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless. This event is free to the public and includes a 10K walk and a picnic meal complete with two roasted pigs from Pittsburgh BBQ. Join us!

How You Can Help

Good Friday Outreach, Friday, April 10th – Each year, we serve over 1,000 meals on Good Friday! We will need volunteers to help serve meals or pack and deliver meals to our local high-rise partners, as well as bring hope and joy to our neighbors! Volunteer opportunities for Good Friday will be listed soon at www.lightoflife.org/get-involved/events.



Join the Beacons of Hope Community!

Become a monthly giver and join the Beacons of Hope Community. As a monthly supporter, your gift will provide consistent resources for the homeless, hungry and addicted men, women and children of Pittsburgh.

To join, select Monthly Gift under Donate Now at lightoflife.org.

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.

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