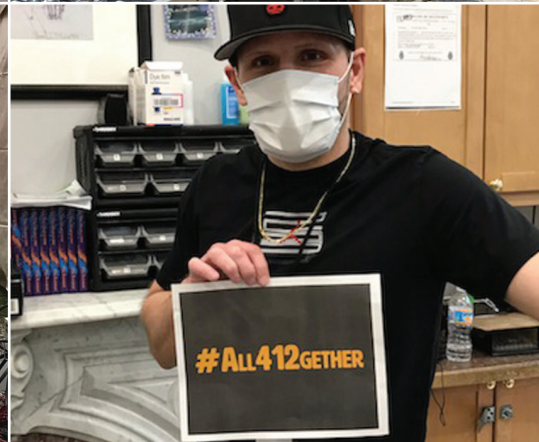


LIVING *by the* LIGHT

Published for Partners of Light of Life Rescue Mission

SPECIAL ISSUE SUMMER 2020



Hope & Healing During COVID-19



Letter from Jerrel



Dear Light of Life Family,

What an indescribable year 2020 has been thus far! **Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Light of Life continues to be a place where hope and healing meet.** In January we could not have imagined that in a few months nearly all the businesses on the North Side would be shut down. Service providers across our area limited their services or shut their doors. Yet, the homeless and hurting men, women, and children in our community remained in need and became more desperate for services. Many found themselves at our door and we have been blessed to be able to provide critical resources, like hygiene kits, food, and shelter. This allows us to connect with them on a deeper level, building trust so that they feel safe enough to get any additional help they need. As you can guess, Light of Life will continue to remain open! **We have been recognized as an essential, life-sustaining service provider by the state of Pennsylvania and know that if we're not here, many of those in need would suffer because they do not have other options.**

I want to take a moment to celebrate our city! I love being a Pittsburgher; home of the Steelers, Pitt, and the 3 rivers. We have a long history of rising to the occasion when called upon. We have had our share of tragedy but have learned that after each event, we emerge stronger as a community. **Pittsburgh is where hope and healing meet.** Through this current crisis Light of Life has never been alone on the front lines. Daily, we have seen the ways people have stepped up to donate time, money, and resources to assist those in need.

Last year, our team worked hard on rethinking our brand to reflect what truly happens here at Light of Life. **With that project, emerged a new logo that will launch this fall, along with an updated tagline – Where Hope and Healing Meet.** Light of Life is more than an emergency shelter and meal ministry. It is a place that welcomes people exactly as they are. At Light of Life, the hungry and hurting find community. They find healing through the hope of Christ. Keep an eye out later this year as we make a special call for your stories and miracles from over the last 68 years. As we move into this next exciting season at Light of Life, we'd like to celebrate where we've come from and all the ways God has been faithful, and we recognize so much of that begins with you.

God has selected the perfect time for the completion of our new building in Winter 2020. **After more than 25 years of deferred hope, the completion of the new building will provide increased ministry capacity for the hungry and hurting at the greatest time of need since our inception in 1952.** We will have an increased ability to reach the hurting through our day room and expanded kitchen services. Our shelter will have more space for our homeless guests and for the first time in our history, we will be able to provide a safe and warm place to stay for the homeless women with children in our community.

Thanks to your prayers and partnership, we will provide more hope and healing than ever before.

In His Grip,

Jerrel T. Gilliam
Executive Director

While the city quarantined during COVID-19, we kept our

In addition to stringent cleaning measures, here are some of the changes we made during COVID-19 to ensure safety:

MEAL MINISTRY

We saw an increase in guests joining us for breakfast and dinner this Spring. We altered procedures within our meal ministry to practice social distancing and are taking precautions, including but not limited to:

- Extending mealtimes and opening additional seating areas so that guests can spread out while they eat.
- Providing takeout boxes to women and children, as well as anyone who requests them or shows signs of illness.
- Portable hand washing stations and porta potties on site.
- Thoroughly cleaning dining areas between each meal shift.
- Working with 39 organizations at our food pantry to provide food for hundreds of men, women, and families that they serve.

"It [COVID-19] has been a different and stressful time, but the Mission has helped me feel a part of something and gave me a regular schedule to bring back stability."
– Carissa H.

"Light of Life has kept me emotionally together during the COVID-19 pandemic. Without their support, I don't feel I would have made it through this. Along with their generosity and making sure the kids and I have what we need."

– Krysten S.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Our Emergency Shelter continues to remain open for those in our community in need of a place to shower and sleep. We are taking every precaution possible to keep the shelter clean and practice social distancing, including cutting number of guests allowed inside.

STREET OUTREACH

Our Street Outreach team makes daily rounds to the homeless camps in the area and provides them with soap, hygiene products, disinfectant wipes, water, and any additional resources that they may need.



A glimpse into our Donation Center Pantry – it is full of fresh fruits, veggies, meat and other pantry items.



Our Women and Children's staff member, Aleshia, delivering goodies to families in need during COVID-19.

doors open to provide essential services to those in need.



Some members from our program staff here at Light of Life – they are true heroes and love our clients and guests so well!

“The virus caused me to be depressed, but I think it would be worse if I was not here. The Mission has made me feel safe.”
– Charlie W.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

We made schedule changes for the men, women, and children in our Residential Programs to ensure their safety and continue to serve them. Here are some of the things we are doing:

- Women's Program
 - Home visits and online education and homework for women and children.
 - Packets delivered with activities for kids and resources for women.
 - Check-in calls from our staff every other day.
 - Food and toiletry delivery as needed to women in the program.
 - Resident travel restrictions.
- Men's Program
 - Volunteering with our Street Outreach team and trash clean-up in the community.
 - Virtual and smaller group meetings with staff.
 - Resident travel restrictions.



Street Outreach staff and volunteers worked hard to organize and distribute care kits to take to the homeless camps during the pandemic.

“During COVID-19, the impact on me was tremendous. I've learned kindness and compassion at another level. The staff here went way above and beyond to keep us safe and healthy. I respect the staff here. They are truly a blessing as well as the Light of Life.”
– Jim D.

“Light of Life helped me a lot. There were times my refrigerator was empty and thank the Lord the staff showed up with food. It has made this crisis easier on me.”
– Antonia T.

Special Thanks

Our Light of Life family would like to thank our staff, volunteers, clients, and guests who have risen to the occasion and pulled together to assist our community and neighbors in need in a safe and loving way. In addition, thank you to all our partners who have donated resources to us during this pandemic. All of our community partners, donors, and volunteers went above and beyond during this season.

In March and April,
the Mission:



25,845
MEALS

Served 25,845 meals
(A 128% increase from last year)

80K



Gave away over 80,000 pounds
of food to those in need in our
community through our food pantry.



Provided 842+ boxes of food
and hygiene items for families
and individuals in need.



Partnered with 39 organizations
to provide food every week.



Continued to provide shelter
for 125-150 men, women,
and children every night.

Opening New Doors Capital Campaign Update



9 years ago, Craig Schweiger became the Executive Director of Light of Life. From the beginning he demonstrated his care for the growth of the organization, he increased our financial stability and most importantly he wanted to honor Christ through his leadership in our community. Craig stepped down from CEO of Light of Life on June 30th. However, he will continue to assist us through counsel and support of key projects as opportunities present themselves.

Craig says, "I first thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I also thank our staff, our board of directors and you, our many supporters who have shown endless compassion for the homeless, addicted and lost in our city. I will also remember the nine years I served at Light of Life as the fullest years in terms of my faith and walk with God. I served for a special purpose and that is now complete."* Please join us in celebrating Craig's faithful years of service and pray for God's continued blessings on his future endeavors.

We are also thrilled to share that we have been able to continue construction throughout COVID-19 and expect to be in the building by winter. Our fundraising goal for this campaign is \$20 million. So far, we have raised \$11.3 million through foundation grants, individuals' gifts, and pledges. **Based on our current projections of additional funding towards the project, we will need to raise \$4 million from the community at large to reach our total goal and complete the project.** If you're interested in being more involved in the campaign, contact Philip Spina at pspina@lightoflife.org or 412-803-4152 or visit lightoflife.org/opendoors.

We know that with your help, we will be able to provide hope and healing to more hurting and homeless neighbors than ever before.

**A full letter from Craig Schweiger can be found at lightoflife.org/farewell-craig.*



Event Updates

Good Friday Outreach Recap

While our Good Friday outreach looked different this year due to COVID-19, we are so thankful to have still been able to serve those in need. On April 10th, 6 cars of volunteers delivered meals for 473 residents at 9 local high rises in 1 hour. At the Mission, 30 volunteers spread out across several shifts to observe CDC social distancing guidelines to prepare food and pack, deliver, and serve members of the community.

Each of the boxed meals included fish, vegetables, au gratin potatoes, rolls, pie and sweet tea as well as a personalized note from Light of Life donors and volunteers! Thank you for making this outreach possible even in uncertain times.



Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless Recap

This year, the Tunch & Wolf's Walk for the Homeless went digital! Participants were able to sign up for our virtual step challenge, both individually or with a team, and compete to get the most steps. The platform also allowed our walkers to fundraise, just like in years past!

We missed the fellowship and the Pittsburgh BBQ this year, but Tunch, Wolf, and a few surprise guests hosted a livestream on Facebook on May 23rd. If you missed it and would like to watch the replay, visit Light of Life Rescue Mission on Facebook.

In total, participants raised over \$80,000 for the homeless and hurting men, women, and children in Pittsburgh. Thank you to each of you who walked, donated, watched, and shared!

Next Up:

Yinzer 5K – Summer 2020 – The Yinzer 5K may look different this summer, but we will still have the event in some way, shape, or form.

Annual More than a Meal Gala – Spring 2021 – We are not sure what the Gala will look like in the midst of COVID-19, but we hope to celebrate with you next Spring.

To stay up-to-date on our events, please follow us on social media or visit our website at www.lightoflife.org

 @light.of.life.rescue.mission

 Twitter: @lightoflife Instagram:

 @lightoflife

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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