

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 OPENING NEW DOORS



Dear Friends,

This year, we were faced with a global pandemic that would change life as we knew it. From the onset of the pandemic, our services were not only needed by more of those in the community, they were essential.

Thanks to the support of our generous partners, neighbors, staff and volunteers, we were able to not only keep our doors open, we increased our services to expand our reach of help.

We were on the frontlines preparing meal boxes, distributing hygiene kits with items such as hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes, setting up cleaning stations, implementing Telehealth initiatives, offering vaccination clinics and COVID-19 testing.

As the pandemic continues and the eviction moratorium is lifting, our work continues. Our services will always be essential. In Pittsburgh, 21.5% of residents go without healthy food every day and this number is expected to double during the mass influx of COVID-19 cases. In 2020, because of your support, we were able to help those in need by serving 101,164 meals. In our city, Women and Children are the fastest growing homeless population. Because of generous partners, we were able to open a new facility on Voeghtly Street which houses our new Women and Children's Shelter.

We are called to help our neighbors in need. Your contributions help in every step of their journey with programs including housing, education and employment, recovery and more.

From all of us at Light of Life Rescue Mission - Thank you.

In His Grip,

Rev. Jerrel T. Gilliam

Executive Director

The Light of Life Rescue Mission lost a great friend this year with the passing of Tunch Ilkin. His selflessness was prominently displayed to all that walked through our doors. Tunch dedicated himself to serving those who needed it most. He believed in God's grace and hard work in finding the way through. For 35 years Tunch tackled the critical issues head on with an open hand and an open heart.

Tunch was a hero to so many. He often said that once you walk through the doors of Light of Life your life would never be the same. We know that anyone who met Tunch was never the same.

Our hearts are broken, but we know he is with our Loving Father.

Allow me to paraphrase 2 Timothy 2:7-8

Our (my) brother Tunch fought the good fight, he finished his race, and kept the faith! Now there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness which the Lord Himself, the righteous Judge will give to him on that Day. And not only to him but to all of us who love the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Please continue to keep his family and friends in your prayers.

We will honor Tunch's legacy by dedicating the cafeteria in our new Ridge Place Building to him.

May we all be inspired by his life, unwavering Faith and his magnificent heart to live out our lives in full devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else matters!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Stories3	Leadership11
Changing Lives7	What's Next13
Financials9	

TARA'S Story

I came to Light of Life for help and I knew I needed it. I needed to get help because it wasn't just that I was a drug addict or the other things that happened to me during my lifetime... I needed my spirit to be fed. ??

B orn into a broken home in Pittsburgh's Hill District, Tara resorted to the streets to escape the problems brought upon her by her environment. Her mother and father struggled with drug and alcohol addiction. Her parents' dependency and inability to provide care led to her being taken from her home and involuntarily moved into the foster care system.

- "I didn't get the love and affection from home," Tara says. "I was never told I was loved."
- As a young girl dealing with traumatic experiences from her childhood, Tara felt abandoned and wrestled with knowing her worth.



At 14 years old, void of a nurturing family and support system, Tara saw selling her body as the only way to provide for her and her sister.

Tara became pregnant with her first child at 19, shortly after she graduated from high school.

Following the birth of her daughter and gaining custody of her younger sister, the young mother entered an abusive relationship with a man heavily involved with drugs.

Tara says that's when her drug use began; it started out as recreational use before devolving into a full-blown addiction.

She had her second and third daughters in her 20's before marrying another man addicted to drugs. Her addiction quickly spiraled out of control. Tara soon found herself repeating the cycle of drug abuse in her family.

Tara began to recognize the pain in her children's eyes after she would use. She knew she needed to make a change. "I came to Light of Life for help and I knew I needed it." Tara says. "I needed to get help because it wasn't just that I was a drug addict or the things that happened to me during my lifetime. It was none of that because I was already mentally, emotionally disturbed. I needed my spirit to be fed."

Tara's urge to use had become so strong that she once again found herself on her way to buy drugs. Her daughter Ashley started screaming loudly, begging her mother to quit.

"When I came to the room and my daughter was on the floor crying like, 'Mom, when is it ever going to be enough? Do you want to die as a result of this disease?"

The distressed outburst by Tara's daughter pierced her heart so much — it gave her the drive to seek treatment.

Tara courageously went to Family Links to start her journey to recovery.

During her stay there, she began hearing about all of the programs offered at Light of Life.

Tara asked a judge to court mandate her to the Light of Life Mission so she could receive the spiritual detox she knew she so desperately needed.

During her six months in the program, she discovered God's healing and redemption for her soul. Tara says the Mission's programs taught her to create self-affirmations, which greatly helped her to break the cycle of addiction within herself. Tara so desperately wanted to break this cycle so her children, grandchildren and anyone else who follows behind her can be free.

After years of commitment to staying clean, Light of Life offered the program graduate the opportunity to be a case manager for the women and children at the Mission.

I thank God I'm able to come back to Light of Life and be of service, says Tara. If it hadn't been for Light of Life — I don't know where I would be. ??

BILL'S Story

B his drug habit would cause him to end up in a homeless shelter, but he's thankful he walked through Light of Life's doors because it served as a mirror to him.

Born and raised in Bristol, a town outside of Philadelphia, Bill's addiction covered up the trauma from his childhood. The youngest of nine children, he turned to drugs at an early age to numb his pain of being sexually abused as a child and his parents' divorce. His addiction quickly spiraled out of control, causing him to lose

66 I walked into Light of Life hopeless, not knowing where tomorrow would lead. And today, I look forward to my tomorrows. **23** 6 When I finally reached the end of my road, just tired of being sick and tired, God spoke to me as I was laying on the floor. He told me to get up and look at myself ??

everything. He dropped out of high school, got dismissed from the Navy and lost his marriage.

"I brought my addiction along with me," said Bill. "I put it first and everything else second, including God."

Unable to handle the weight of his mistakes and toll of his decisions — he cried out to God for help.

"When I finally reached the end of my road, just tired of being sick and tired, God spoke to me as I was laying on the floor. He told me to get up and look at myself. I knew right then, there was something greater for my life."

The moment of divine intervention marked a turning point and gave Bill the courage he needed to go to rehab. For a fresh start, Bill moved from the Philadelphia area to Pittsburgh to start his recovery journey.

During his time at a treatment facility, Bill says he laid down his power to addiction.

"The first time I surrendered my life to God, I was in a rehab and I remember sitting on my bed, praying and something came over me and said, 'Get on your knees and say an honest prayer."

When Bill fell to his knees and cried out to God, he found a puddle of tears below him. In that instance, he knew if he stayed in his addiction — it would only lead to death. After he left rehab, he spoke with a counselor who told him about Light of Life. Once he arrived at the mission, he became part of the Life Recovery program. "I got into the Life Recovery program and that's exactly what it was. It allowed me to recover a life...not my life — because my life was in shambles."

In July, Bill graduated from the program and currently works as a house leader for men's transitional house.

Looking back at his journey, Bill said he's humbled and honored to encourage other men who desire to break free from the bondage of addiction.

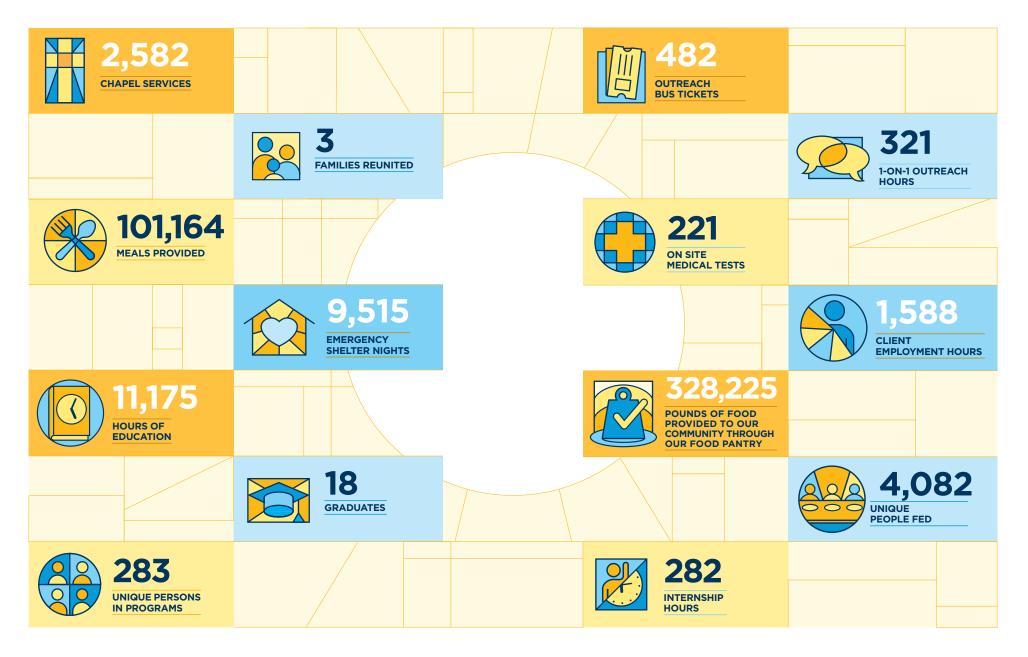
"I couldn't lead myself for my entire life and now, I'm asked to lead other men and help them with their recovery."

Today, Bill is thankful knowing he has a restored relationship with family, friends and most importantly, God.

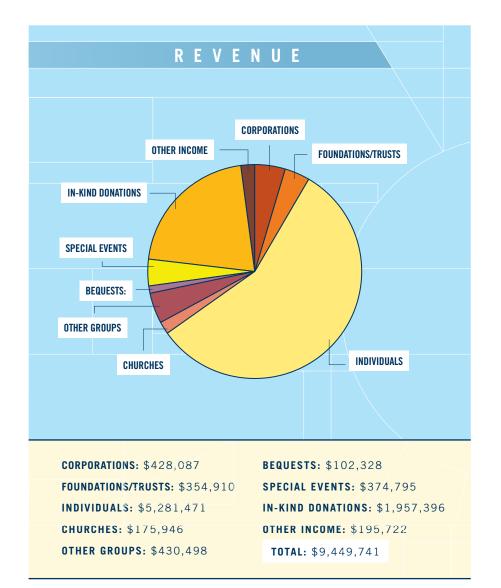


SINCE 1952, LIGHT OF LIFE HAS BEEN A SAFE REFUGE FOR THE HOMELESS AND HURTING PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. THANKS TO THE PRAYERS, COMPASSION AND GENEROSITY OF OUR SUPPORTERS, WE ARE MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED BY HOMELESSNESS, ADDICTION OR ABUSE.

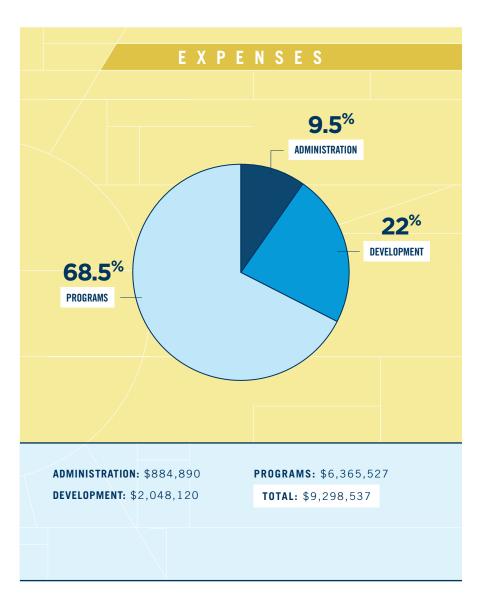
CHANGING LIVES



FINANCIALS



*In December of 2018, we launched a \$20 million capital campaign to 1) construct a new shelter that will enable us to expand our services and 2) renovate a building we purchased in 2012. The extra fundraising expenditures due to the capital campaign have impacted our expense ratios and our rating. This is a normal occurrence during capital campaigns. We anticipate the campaign lasting three years.



We take financial stewardship seriously at Light of Life, and seek to ensure that every dollar we spend is making a significant difference and enabling us to better serve those who come to us in need. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Director of Development, Doug Smith, at 412-297-1041.

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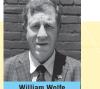
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Allegheny Health Network Director, Systemwide Division **DONALD L. FOSTER** Manor Associates Principal

TUNCH ILKIN* South Hills Bible Chapel Director of Men's Ministries



Glenn Grane









Richard L. Roadarmel

Rebecca Fatica

Tamiko Dawkins









Chris Chaney

Stephanie L. Herring

Rita Huckle

Edwin J. Kairis









Natalie Kreter, Esq.



Ralph Miller



Leonard Petrancosta

Donald Tucker







*Deceased





Gash Abebe





RENOVATION UPDATE

ast February, we were blessed to open our new shelter on Voeghtly Street. This new building has been a dream of the Mission for 20 years. It allows us more space for programming, shelter, dining and more. For the first time in our history, we now have a family shelter for women and children.

Women and children are the fastest growing homeless population in Pittsburgh. This new facility allows us to serve more of those in need.

The shelter also includes a men's shelter, chapel, kitchen and dining area that allows us to triple our capacity. Our guests now have more time during meal times and dine with dignity.

This building was opened during the onset of the COVID-19

pandemic and we are grateful to have been able to open a facility during this critical time that allows us to in-crease our services.

However, we are not all the way there. Our needs continue to grow and we need more space to offer to those in need. We are beginning renovations on our Ridge Avenue building that will be home to the Men and Women's Life Transformation programs, dining room, chapel, emergency shelter and office for space.

This building is set to be completed Q1 of 2023 but to finish this project, we need your help.

We have \$5 million left to raise for the renovation.

With your help, we would be able to bring hope and healing to more of our neighbors in need.





If you're interested in getting involved in the campaign, email Philip Spina at pspina@lightoflife.org or call 412-803-4152.

