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A LETTER FROM FRANK

When people come to the Muncie Mission they are often at the lowest point of their lives. Other options have been exhausted. They arrive with their defenses alert; feeling like no one really cares. The standard luggage for most arriving guests is a black plastic trash bag.

Here, their physical needs are met first. They’re given clothing, a warm meal, a secure place to sleep, life skill training and more. After a few days of nutritious meals, they begin to feel better and see how our staff cares for them and will often express a desire to learn to live a new way, to begin a new life.

In the past few years, hundreds of men have arrived. Some needed immediate or temporary relief; others entered the recovery program to address deeper issues and start anew. Among that number were Scott, David, Dustin and Steven. Two had arrived upon release from jail. One came from a different city by bus, and another walked to the Mission.

For the past year these men have faced the difficult work with counselors to address addiction, emotional and spiritual needs. Early in the program a tumor was discovered on Dustin’s brain and required surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. It’s been a difficult year for him but our staff has been by his side. This past January, friends, family and the community filled a local church to capacity to celebrate as these men graduated from the Muncie Mission Program.

Because of your partnership, these lives which were once broken now have new life. They’re all currently involved in local churches. Scott, who has musical training, was asked to be the director of the Easter choir at his church and is working toward a college degree. David is living in his own apartment and involved with his church. Both Dustin and Steven are working at the front desk of the Mission. Steven’s story is included in this newsletter and Dustin’s was featured in the previous one. Dustin’s health continues to improve.

These men are examples of residents who come to the Mission, whose lives can be changed. Many of you have also invested in their lives. On behalf of our residents, thank you. You are making a difference!

Gratefully,

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WALK A MILE

Walk a Mile in My Shoes 2016 was a huge success. Not only did we meet our financial goal but we exceeded by reaching $94,600 net, we praise the Lord for this bountiful harvest. We’re pretty sure this was the coldest Walk a Mile in 12 years however; that didn’t stop the thousands of walkers from showing up. Around 2,200 people were in attendance. Those that braved the elements were quickly reminded how difficult it must be for the homeless and those families in desperate situations.

The importance of the revenue from Walk a Mile in my Shoes is considerable. This winter an 85 year old record was broken; 80 residents checked in. Last year we prepared and served over 85,400 meals, which represents a 13% increase (10,000 more meals) over 2014. As well, our family service division made a huge impact on families in need by providing over 50,000 food items. Because of your generous outpouring of care we can continue to build hope, hope for a better tomorrow for homeless individuals and families in need who are served in our community.

Congratulations goes to Early Bird winners: Tom Parsons won the Meijer $50 gift card and Rikki Morton won the $50 iTunes gift card.

The Golden Sneaker Award for the Largest Attendance team was secured by “Cowan Community” with 85 walkers in attendance and the Top Fund Raising team was “Mary Blue” rising over $8,602.
“Hell. Hard.” Those are the words 47-year-old Steven Croyle uses to describe his journey out of addiction at the Muncie Mission. Fresh from a seven-month stint in jail, Steve literally had nowhere else to go. He had been evicted from his apartment and his belongings had been discarded because of bedbug infestation. Feeling lost and alone, Steve searched for a place to call home. His stepmother suggested that he go to the Muncie Mission, but after leaving jail, Steve did not want to endure yet another structured environment. However, being court-ordered to complete an addiction recovery program made coming to the Muncie Mission, where that was available, more palatable.

It wasn’t just about the physical addiction to drugs; he’d been through withdrawal in jail. He was sober, but he still hurt. The pain didn’t come from the shattered hip in 2005 for which he had been prescribed pain pills. Pain came from memories of being paid for rides with heroin by a so-called friend when he could no longer afford the pills. It came from being so desperate for drug money he stole from his mom’s bank account. Steve discovered that real healing would take digging deeper than ever before. He had to tackle the reasons the addiction took hold in the first place. He had to uncover the pain behind the addiction that he had been numbing with drugs.

Early in his stay at the Mission, Steve heard Bible verses that rocked his world: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1:2-4).” This passage resonated with Steve and he recognized truth that day. He began paying attention during chapel and devotions and started asking questions … lots of questions. Steve was burdened with the addiction, loss of his possessions and loneliness. He thought being “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” sounded pretty appealing. The questions continued, both about faith and about how he had hit rock bottom in his personal life as he became more involved in chapel and bible study.

Answering these questions was by far the hardest thing he’s ever done. He uncovered the truth behind his pain when he went through the recovery program at the Mission. Steve tells people that he is grateful that the Liberty Street Recovery Program isn’t a “slap a Band-Aid on it” approach. He learned to address the root causes of his addiction. He found that it provides men with resources for overcoming addiction. Although difficult and painful, the program pointed him to the only real solution: a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Since graduating the program and sharing his testimony to many people, Steve’s family has recognized a deep change in him that has prompted questions about attending church. Through his struggle and being pointed to Christ, he now points others to Christ through his testimony. His family has gone from being victims of his crimes to being his biggest supporters. Steve is grateful for this change and now has a way to deal with the pain behind his addiction, resting in Christ. He recognizes that all of these things happened through the grace of God at the Muncie Mission.
On Friday, January 15th, 2016, 22 men moved through our program at the Muncie Mission into different phases. Four of them graduated the program completely. Dave Dishroon, Steven Croyle, Dustin Kirby and Scott Wykoff (pictured above) are the program graduates. These men all shared their testimonies and are now ready to move forward into their new lives. We invite you to attend the next ceremony and help show community support to the next set of graduates. Just being there could make all the difference in the world to them and you. It truly is a blessed experience.

THE MISSION NEEDS HYGIENE ITEMS!
Due to the increasing number of people we serve, the Muncie Mission is in need of hygiene items. We need men and women’s deodorant, shampoo and soap. Toothpaste and toothbrushes. Your help is greatly appreciated!