

MESSENGER *of* HOPE

News of hope from Modesto Gospel Mission

OCTOBER 2015

They helped me realize that I matter

Growing up in a broken home, Steffan was a broken boy. There was a hole in his heart that yearned to be filled with acceptance and affirmation. Trying to fit in, he started smoking marijuana and drinking at a very young age – and ran with the wrong people. How far down did Steffan go before God lifted him up?

Steffan's story continues on page 2!

"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

— PHILIPPIANS 4:13

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From the heart of Kevin



Everyone has a story

I'm realizing more and more that every person who comes to us for help has a story. So many of them would never have imagined five years ago that they would ever be homeless. They are people just like you and me who have hit hard times. I am often convinced that "there, but for the grace of God, go I."

As we prepare for our Thanksgiving Banquet and Bundle Up, we're looking forward to spending time with our guests and hearing their stories. We want them to feel there is somebody here who really cares. The Mission staff will be moving among our guests, and so will the wonderful volunteers who will be here to help make Thanksgiving special for Modesto's homeless.

We could not do without the volunteerism and support that is offered to us on a daily basis. Last year, more than 144,000 hours of valuable time were donated! To put that in perspective, if we paid \$10 per hour for that time, it would cost the Mission \$1.4 million! We don't take this gift for granted. Our supportive friends—volunteers, donors, prayer partners—are a treasured gift from God. That includes you!

May God bless you for caring,

Kevin Carroll

Kevin Carroll, Executive Director

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A slow downward spiral led to homelessness

Trouble was brewing in Steffan's life from the very beginning. He grew up in a broken home and was bounced around from parents to grandparents. "I grew up around alcoholism and drug abuse," he says. Lacking stability and structure, Steffan yearned for the reassurance of attention and affirmation. Not surprisingly, he started smoking marijuana and drinking in his early teens. "I was reaching out to other people who were into the same kind of thing," he explains.

Fast forward. Steffan has his high school diploma and a job in a cabinet shop. He's functioning as a young adult...but partying is his priority. For the next few years, Steffan would slowly spiral down into a dark place. "I was using all my money for drugs and alcohol. And partying," he says.

Reality check

During the party years, Steffan lived here and there, "couch hopping" from one family member's home to another. Staying with friends now and then. "Eventually that kind of support ran out," he says. It was a reality check, and not a pleasant one. "I was out there on the streets, finding places to sleep...trying to be safe," he recalls. "There were nights it was pretty scary." Steffan was scared, in more ways than one. Sure, the dangers of living on the street frightened him. But so did the alternative. "I was scared of applying myself and coming to the Mission," he admits.

One step at a time

Finally, Steffan's desire to change overcame his fears. It was late summer 2013 when he took a courageous step and joined the New Life Program at Modesto Gospel Mission. Once he did, things began to change. "I met Christ here...I have a relationship with Him. And through Him I can do all things," says Steffan serenely. "And at the Mission, they've helped me realize that I'm worth something and that I can accomplish things." In working through the program, Steffan felt God's call to prepare for rescue ministry. "It's just really great to help someone else, to see them get out of the same kind of thing that I was doing," he says. As his conviction grew, Steffan took another step and entered our Rescue Ministry Training—a year-long "program within the program" that is preparing him for the work God is clearly calling him to do.

As Thanksgiving approaches, that broken place in Steffan's heart is healing and he is so grateful. To all of our supportive friends he would like to say, "Thank you for giving what you have for someone who didn't have much at all."

► Your steadfast support helps people like Steffan find hope and the help they need to begin a new life. Thank you for caring!



At Modesto Gospel Mission, Steffan found what had been missing in his life. "I met Jesus," he says. "I have a relationship with Him."

Blessings for our homeless neighbors!

Great Thanksgiving Banquet and Bundle Up

A great way to thank God for the blessings He's given you is to share them with someone in need. By helping us get ready for our annual Great Thanksgiving Banquet and Bundle Up, you'll do just that! Scheduled this year for Wednesday, November 25, this is one of the biggest events of the year here at Modesto Gospel Mission. And one of the best opportunities to work together as a TEAM (Together Each Achieving Much) to share the love of Jesus Christ by serving those in need. Please, will you partner with us to make this day memorable and even miraculous for our hungry, homeless guests?

A Thanksgiving meal and more

Picture this: our Mission cafeteria, packed with hundreds of hungry men, women and children enjoying a traditional Thanksgiving dinner of turkey and dressing, mouth-watering side dishes and a delicious slice of pie. After eating their fill, our guests are escorted by staff and volunteers into the room next door, where they are invited to pick out a selection of warm clothes—jackets, gloves and scarves.

Now you know why we call it the Great Thanksgiving Banquet and Bundle Up! It takes a community to make this happen, so please reach out with Modesto Gospel Mission and help us give our hungry, homeless and hurting neighbors a reason to give thanks.

Help us reach our goal by year-end...850 Partners of Hope!

Because of your generosity, Modesto Gospel Mission is here to bless our neighbors in need—not just on Thanksgiving, but all year long—thank you!

Monthly support of Partners of Hope members helps provide a steady income, and allows us to budget more effectively.

The commitment of Partners of Hope members ensures emergency services like daily meals, hot showers and safe shelter to our comprehensive New Life Programs are always available to those in need. Regular donations also help us streamline our administrative costs, allowing even more resources to go directly to helping



At our Great Thanksgiving Banquet and Bundle Up, our guests are treated to a holiday feast and the gift of warm winter coats and more.



More ways you can help

Banquet Items

- Turkeys
- Stuffing mix/Celery
- Salad, Ranch dressing
- Green beans/Onions
- Potatoes/Gravy mix
- Rolls/Butter
- Pumpkin pies/Cool Whip

Bundle Up Items

- New or gently used coats for men, women or children. All sizes!
- Hats, gloves and scarves

Bring your donations to 1400 Yosemite Boulevard by November 24. If you are interested in volunteering or having a collection bin at your church or business, contact Katie at 209-225-2952. Thank you for sharing your blessings!

provide refuge, recovery and restoration for the people God sends to us.

Why give monthly?

As a Partner of Hope, you'll help provide a much-needed source of dependable income that will keep us going throughout the whole year. Plus, you'll receive fewer mailings, which means reduced costs overall—and less paper clutter for you! As a thank you, Partners receive an insulated reusable bag.

► We are asking God to provide 850 Partners of Hope by December 31, 2015. Will you help us reach our goal? Sign up now at modestogospelmission.org or contact Anastasia Carroll at 209-529-2908. Thank you!

Upcoming Events

Get involved and make a difference!

October 28
Fall Gala—5:30 p.m.
Gallo Center for the Arts
Join us for food, a performance by Danny Gokey, a silent auction and more...all for a great cause!

November 12
December 10
Open House—5:30 p.m.
Come for a tour! Learn more about the Mission and how you can be involved.

November 25
Great Thanksgiving Banquet and Bundle Up
3 p.m. at Modesto Gospel Mission.
Be a volunteer and make it a great Thanksgiving for our guests—and for you!

December 5
Celebration of Lights Parade
We need volunteers to help put together our float. Please call Katie at 209-225-2952 if you are interested in helping for this event.

December 12
Spirit of Giving Run
Bring canned goods for a raffle ticket. A generous percentage of the proceeds go to Modesto Gospel Mission. Volunteers needed!

December 23
Happy Birthday Jesus Party
12 p.m. at Modesto Gospel Mission. Volunteer and help give our guests a family-style Christmas they won't forget.

Learn more and volunteer now! Please contact Katie Smith, Volunteer Coordinator, at 209-225-2952 or katie@homelessmission.org

How to simplify your life

In his book *Simplify*, Bill Hybels asks, "What would my schedule look like if God were in charge of it?" God designed humans for work and rest, but a lack of balance can clutter our soul. The good news is, there's a way out:

1. Streamline your schedule. Remember, *every time you say "yes" to something you're saying "no" to something else*. This practice will help you see more clearly what (and who) deserves your time.
2. Strengthen your relationships. There are three themes in Proverbs: *trust God, care for others and live as a person of peace*. Applying these themes can simplify the way we talk and act, rooting us in love.
3. Invest in eternity. Thinking long term unclutters our lives today. What kind of legacy do you want to leave? Many Christians choose to give to ministries like Modesto Gospel Mission that align with their personal values, during their lifetime and even in their Wills. Developing an eternal perspective can help us to live soberly now, and plan to bless lives for eternity.



For the full version of this article, ask for a FREE copy of "5 Steps to an Uncluttered Soul" by simply checking the box on the enclosed reply card or by contacting Anastasia Carroll from Modesto Gospel Mission at 209-529-8259 or acarroll@homelessmission.org—or bless your family today with a God-honoring Will at www.christianwill.org/modesto

Did you know?

- In the past year, homelessness in Stanislaus County increased approximately 15%
- 983 people are homeless in Modesto; of these, 589 are unsheltered adults
- 6.7% of the homeless population are families with children
- 8.7% of the homeless population are veteran families
- Nightly, close to 500 people continue to sleep in areas of our community such as streets and sidewalks, parks, abandoned buildings, dumpsters and under bridges without the safety you help to provide here at Modesto Gospel Mission

Thank you for helping to fight homelessness in Stanislaus County!

* Resource: Stanislaus County Homeless Count January 2015

MY FALL GIFT

Yes, Kevin! I'll help Modesto Gospel Mission provide Thanksgiving blessings for our hurting neighbors this fall.

I'm enclosing: \$15 \$30 \$50 \$150 \$_____

I would like to become a monthly giver. I will give a monthly gift of \$_____. My first gift is enclosed.

Please send me a FREE copy of "5 Steps to an Uncluttered Soul."

Please make your check payable to: Modesto Gospel Mission

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

APT _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ @ _____

27906-3

Your gifts at work

January–August 2015

Meals Served:

More than 11,031

Nights of Safe Shelter:

More than 4,612

New Life Program

Graduates:

12 (by end of December)

Hours of Youth and Child

Care: More than 5,984

Our Board of Directors

John Villines

Caren Burhans

Dick Monteith

Ken Darby

Leona Korock

Sandra Edwards

Jeremiah Williams

Rod Garcia

Get Connected



**MODESTO GOSPEL
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REFUGE • RECOVERY • RESTORATION

P.O. Box 1203
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To give a gift by credit card, please visit us online at donate.modestogospelmission.org or call 209-529-8259.

Thank You

Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.