



# RAISING UP

The good news at Helping Up Mission



Nurturing Nature  
see page 2 for more

## God Is Not Done With Kristi



“Before HUM, I didn’t think that I had options. Now, my life is unlimited.”

Kristi, age 47, was born and raised in Houma, Louisiana. Many of the stories that we share at the Helping Up Mission begin with a troubled childhood full of early availability of substances, dysfunctional families, and the desire to “fit in.” Kristi had a good life.

time, I thought our relationship was “normal.” Soon, I began sneaking out and going to bars with my friends. I liked the “buzz” feeling that alcohol gave me and thought that I had a great life!”

“I always had a lot of friends,” recalled Kristi. “I was a good student, and I made the honor roll. The biggest issue I had to deal with while growing up was the culture shock of moving to Maryland at 15. Starting new was a hard adjustment. My sister especially had a tough time. We became very close to and relied on each other. We struggled with our inherited religion and chose to leave the church. I struggled with getting right with God for years after.”

“It took me a while to recognize that our relationship was not ideal. I moved out, rented a new place, and started to attend night classes. Eventually, I met a new person, and I remarried at 23. This time I was going to do things right. What started as an occasional glass of wine, mixed with my new love of pain pills, and I began to struggle.”

“I remember finding a bottle of my dad’s alcohol while in high school and getting “toasty” with a friend, but other than that, I didn’t drink. I graduated from high school and went to trade school with the hopes of becoming a dental assistant. At 18, I got married, and that was my first “intro” to the “real world.” My ex-husband was controlling and mentally abusive. He insisted that I have no outside contact with the world. At the

“After the birth of my first child at the age of 24, my addiction went crazy. My alcoholism became so bad that I would hide my child’s diapers - to have a reason to go to the liquor store. I drank every fancy bottle from my husband’s international liquor cabinet and replaced the spirits with water. My addiction caught up with me, and one day I passed out from mixing the pain pills with alcohol. When I arrived at the hospital, the doctor told my parents I was dying. My liver was shutting down. My mother flew me from Frederick, MD to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, where I entered a four-month-long coma!”

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## NOW IT'S UP TO US Dan's Monthly Update

Dear HUM Family,

One of the realities we face daily at Helping Up Mission (HUM) is how best to meet those we serve at the nexus of their need and their own readiness for change. In the complexity of addiction, trauma, and homelessness—we may perceive a person to be at “rock bottom” but so many of us resist help when we need it most. Our goal at HUM is to be there with open arms when those we serve are truly ready.

It got me thinking about our name and history—for the past 138 years, our focus has remained on being there to offer some “help up” to those in need. As Kristi shared in this month’s newsletter story, the door to transformation and recovery begins with surrender and acceptance of that help. In those critical moments when recovery and life itself often hangs in the balance, Helping Up Mission is now better positioned than ever to respond:

- The HUM Intake hotline (410-929-6999) is being answered 24/7 by a peer in recovery ready to listen and offer next steps to enter our program.
- HUM’s outreach team hits the streets with a mobile outreach bus offering food, compassion, and case management several days a week to encampments and areas where those battling addiction may congregate.

Your generous support enables our team to be there when those we serve are ready to make a change. Transformation happens daily here at HUM because of faith, compassion, and a whole lot of support from you—our community of hope.

Because of you, HUM can answer the call, swing open the doors to our programs and say help is on the way. Thanks for standing with us to offer help and hope to those we serve.

Serving with you,

Daniel

## Nurturing Nature

Whether our clients are careening down a mountain bike trail at Patapsco State Park or gently grooming horses in Equine Therapy, the ladies and gentlemen in our Spiritual Recovery Programs experience the outdoors. These structured breaks from the chaos of “city life,” help maintain a sense of nature’s curative power. Thanks to you and our partners for making these trips nurturing trips possible!



How’s your spring cleaning coming along? This spring, make a fresh start and leave a lasting impact by creating your will in support of Helping Up Mission. Get started today! <https://giftwise.com/helpingup>

\* Donations of women's clothing and toiletries have wonderfully overwhelmed us and will be paused until July 1st (at least).

"After I 'woke up' from my coma, I had to relearn how to walk, talk, and dress. As my son was taking his first steps, so was I. After all of this, all that I wanted to do was get 'messed up!' My husband told me that 'he couldn't do it anymore!' We separated, and I discovered I was pregnant with my second child. Desperate, I entered an outpatient rehabilitation program to maintain my addiction. I did what I could to get the drugs I needed. I lost my unborn child at eight months pregnant, yet I had to deliver full-term. I felt like I failed. I wanted to be numb and escape reality."

"All of my lying and deception caused my guilt to set in. I was constantly in and out of 'rehab.' I started losing faith in the system. During this time, I had a second son. His father and I were not together, so we shared custody. When my son was 7, his father moved him to Kentucky without permission, and a custody battle ensued. I

found myself alone in my apartment during COVID and started drinking again. His father passed away before the custody case, and I brought my son back to Maryland. The reality set in, and I questioned if I could raise this child. I stopped doing everything a mother should do, just to drink."

"When I finally had nowhere to go, my father (Joe Keller, who runs nightly recovery meetings at Helping Up Mission) was ready to evict me. One night, he came home and said he knew of a place in Baltimore. He provided me with no details! I arrived at Helping Up Mission (HUM) angry and 'cussed out' everyone in the program office. On the day that I was phasing into the Spiritual Recovery Program, a staff member walked into my room and asked me to go to the chapel. FINE! God, show me why! Soon, I started showing up for classes. I began to reconnect with God. I thought that God was done with me

because I was done with me. So, I followed what I thought God wanted. I began to get my life back in stages. To think that I was done with God, and now I carry around a Bible!"

"Today, I can go home, watch TV, cook, and do laundry on weekends at home. Before HUM, I didn't think that I had options. Now, my life is unlimited. The staff asked me to be the intake intern, where I support HUM's 24-hour hotline. Before, I didn't know who I was. I am learning who and what I am, a single woman. I will graduate from the program this July. I am going to be the best mom that I can be. If I pray for my future, I know I am following the right path. "

"Thank you for everything you do for HUM and our benefit. It is not just the clothes you give us - I am so grateful for the knowledge and rehabilitation!"

To read more of Kristi's story, visit [helpingupmission.org/stories/kristih](https://helpingupmission.org/stories/kristih)

## Focus on Recovery – Marjorie J. Brown

Assistant Director of Spiritual Life, Center for Women & Children



When I think about Kristi, and her focus on recovery, the scripture Isaiah 61:1-3 comes to mind. Some of the text's key facts that the prophet Isaiah conveys are, *"He was sent to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to comfort all who mourn, and to give beauty for ashes..."*

As Kristi continues to grow and develop, she is being rehabilitated and restored from the ashes of her addiction, and daily turning her ashes into a beautiful life of recovery. In her words, Kristi says what worked for her is, "...I began to reconnect with God!..." This is a life-changing mindset and declaration as she learns to commit to a pathway of wholeness, peace, healing, and transformation. He discovered and uncovered the tools necessary for her road to recovery.

Through her many calamities and vulnerabilities, Kristi exchanged the ashes of her addiction, left them at the cross, and now flourishes in the beauty and pathway to peace, inner healing, therapeutic and pastoral counseling, and reconnecting to a Christ-centered lifestyle. In accepting her beauty for ashes, she is liberated from the slavery and bondage of addiction and immersed in a life-changing culture of God's healing power of transformation and wellness. She knows God is not finished with her yet. She is so grateful as she continues to learn how to exchange beauty for ashes each and every day, as part of her connecting up to an Almighty God who delivers and sets free! I conclude with this powerful and liberating scripture in Galatians 5:1, *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."*

## Give At-risk Kids an Unforgettable Summer

You can help a disadvantaged child have fun and learn about God's love at Camp Wabanna. Sponsor a child today!

You can imagine how difficult life can be for girls and boys growing up in Greater Baltimore's toughest neighborhoods.

The fear and uncertainty of their lives is overwhelming. They're surrounded by violence, addiction, and homelessness. Life for these children isn't as much about thriving as simply surviving.

Among them are children of the men and women in our Spiritual Recovery Program. And, now more than ever, *these kids need an escape from the harsh realities of life.*

**Sponsor a child for a life-changing experience at Camp Wabanna!**

**\$51** will provide **HALF A DAY** at camp

**\$102** will provide **1 DAY** at camp


**\$306** will provide **3 DAYS** at camp

**Camp Wabanna is a one-week Christian camp where boys and girls can:**

- ✓ Experience nature in a way that's impossible in the city
- ✓ Play, make new friends, and build self-esteem
- ✓ Enjoy 3 nutritious meals a day (which some don't always get at home)

Please open your heart and sponsor a child for summer camp today. You'll help change a young life forever! Simply visit: [helpingupmission.org/camp](http://helpingupmission.org/camp)

 **Find us on Facebook at** [facebook.com/Helping.Up.Mission](https://facebook.com/Helping.Up.Mission)

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## DONATE NOW

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 **410.675.HELP**

**Donate your car:**  
[helpingupmission.careasy.org/](http://helpingupmission.careasy.org/)

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## The Importance of Celebrating Women's History Month



Throughout March, the ladies at our Center for Women & Children engaged in special events to celebrate Women's History. Pamela Wilkerson, Director of the Center, reflected, "We celebrate Women's History Month annually during the month of March to highlight the many contributions of women to events in history and now! The importance of celebrating Women's History Month allows us to reaffirm our commitment to advancing opportunities for women and girls in our communities, our country, and our world."

"Here at HUM's Center for Women & Children, we continue to celebrate and uplift women. We believe our greatest calling is to **INSPIRE** each woman who comes through our doors through rediscovery, empowerment, engagement,

support, and love to live out loud, despite the many challenges they may have faced in their lives. We are committed to encouraging and motivating women to regain their identity, dignity, and God-given purpose."

"Women's History Month reminds us that as women, **we are life-givers, mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, friends, leaders, and "solutionists"** in a world looking for answers. We are creators, innovators, supporters, and world-changers. **We are women celebrating women unapologetically and on purpose!"**

During the final chapel service of March, we were honored to witness Dr. Lonise Bias, an internationally known motivational speaker, trainer, consultant, and family life coach. Dr. Bias, the mother of legendary Maryland basketball player Len Bias, provided an uplifting speech about following God.



### Our Mission

Helping Up Mission provides hope to people experiencing homelessness, poverty or addiction by meeting their physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs.

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