



RAISING UP

The good news at Helping Up Mission



Day Trips *see page 2*

"I always had pretty walls and beautiful surroundings. Today my walls are beautiful again."



Carla's Room is Beautiful Again!

Carla, age 49, was born and raised in Cecil County, Maryland. "It was good being me as a little kid," Carla recalls. "I did not like Barbie dolls and stuff like that. I was a tomboy, but my bedroom was really pretty. I had pictures of horses, puppy dogs, kitty cats, and arranged my closet in a rainbow. I was the oldest of three sisters and we were always together wherever we went. I was taught to protect my sisters. But when I was 8, I was sexually abused. I felt responsible for my sisters, and I thought that I was going to get in trouble. So, we did not tell anyone. I went into my room, and I remember ripping down all my pretty pictures. It became dark black and hard to understand. I had resentments and I did not understand why."

"I grew up as a rebellious little girl and when I was 12, I smoked marijuana. I told my family at the dinner table that I smoked 'weed' and what were they going to do about it? I was emotional, angry, and hurt. I did not know what to feel. I did not feel like I fit in, and as I grew older smoking 'weed' made me feel

good. I started dabbling in other substances as I grew older. At age 18, I got pregnant before I graduated high school. I started drinking heavily and gained a lot of weight. I turned to drugs to lose the weight and when I was 24, I started using heroin. I quit drinking completely. The heroin made me feel okay, and it was controlling my weight."

"Heroin and incarceration eventually took me away from my family and my kids. When I was locked up, I was okay, but when I came home, I would continue to use drugs. I spent years back and forth like that. I overdosed on heroin 21 times and had to be revived with Narcan 21 times. Once again, I was in a real dark place."

One night while waiting for drugs Carla was attacked by kids with baseball bats. "They beat me up really bad and I had to get rushed to a trauma center. The girl giving me my CAT scan recognized my name, but not my face. We went to high school together. She

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NOW IT'S UP TO US

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NOW IT'S UP TO US Bob's Monthly Update

Dear friends,

Over these past years, I have written to you many times about our hopes and dreams to create the new Center for Women & Children—and you have stood beside us in prayer and friendship to help make this dream a reality.

As I write this letter to you today, the women in our Spiritual Recovery Program at the Chase Street Center are packing their bags to move to the new Center! The clients and staff are taking pictures off the walls and packing boxes in preparation for the move which is taking place this month. This feels like the true capstone of many years of effort!

In our feature story, Carla shares the story of how she always liked her room to be beautiful as a child, but once she was sexually abused, she tore down all of the pictures and went into a place of darkness. By doing so much hard work in our Spiritual Recovery Program, Carla is now ready to make her room beautiful again—and this time, she is hanging her own artwork on the walls around her bed—a celebration of her journey and her future.

A story like Carla's is at the heart of why we created the new Center—to help shepherd women who have lived in darkness toward a new life — one in which they recognize that they are worthy of beauty.

Lent is a season of the year when we often set aside extra time to reflect on the life of Jesus Christ, and to give thoughtful consideration to His teachings, sacrifice, suffering, death—and ultimately the joy of His resurrection—which brings us eternal life. So I ask you to please join me this season in praying for all the women who will find a new life for themselves at the Center for Women & Children.

With gratitude,

Bob

P.S. As the weather gets warmer, I hope you will come for a visit to the new Center for Women & Children—and see what a beautiful place you have helped to create!

P.P.S. If you know someone in need of our services, they can learn about admissions at <https://helpingupmission.info> or call our new 24-hour hotline at 410-929-6999.

Day Trips

Our clients are often given the opportunity to breathe some fresh air and escape from the confines of city life. Recently, a group of our men layered on the warm winter gear and spent the day hiking the snow-dusted trails of Sugarloaf Mountain. "It was peaceful and serene, and it was the perfect time to let your mind relax while taking in all of nature's beauty," a smiling Brian recalls. There is nothing like the great outdoors!



Hiking in the snow



Peaceful and serene



The sense of accomplishment



Together they conquered the mountain

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!!

To read more of HUM's latest news, events, and info; including media coverage of our new Center for Women & Children, visit: <https://helpingupmission.org/news>

asked me if I wanted to get treatment and I said yes. I went to a treatment center, to a detox center, and back to a 28-day recovery program."

"When I was getting discharged from the 28-day program, I told the lady that I needed something more. I was homeless and destined to return to the methamphetamine lab that I was living in if I did not seek more treatment. I could not go to another month long, or even a six-month program. I needed something to transform my life and that is when she told me about Helping Up Mission (HUM).

HUM puts together the spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of recovery. I never put those three things together. I enrolled, did my black-out period, and went back home to Cecil County to see my grandson. But when I got back home the same life pattern began and soon, I was isolating and not returning phone calls."

"Finally, Women's Program graduate Cindy got a hold of me and asked me where I was. I told her that I was in Cecil County at my meth dealer's house and that I wanted to come back. Please come get me! Cindy said, 'I am on my way!' When I came back, I had to go into another 28-day program which really helped me.

"Most of the time my fear comes out in anger. So, if I am angry, it is because I am fearful, and I become protective. It leads me back to being a little girl and not knowing how to deal with that feeling. I do not want to be hurt again. Now, it is important for me to tell others how I feel. God has done a lot in my life, and He has surrounded me with people that love me and accept me. He loves me no matter what with His Grace and mercy. I call out to Him when I am troubled knowing the consequences could be death."

"I have hope now. I want to go to school for art. God did not give me this

talent to just do nothing with it. I have a creative side and I like to express myself with color. I think creatively. Now I have a clear mind and can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe I can do art therapy to help little kids through traumatic experiences."

"HUM provides real friendships, real relationships, and real love. I am in a safe and healthy environment where all my needs are being met. It is life-transforming not having to want for anything. Without the donors' love and concern this would not be possible. My sponsor Kelly is my beacon for teaching me the way she learned recovery."

At the end of the day the most amazing thing in Carla's journey brings us back to childhood. "I always had pretty walls and beautiful surroundings. Today my walls are beautiful again. They are filled with things that I drew. It is serenity."

To read more of Carla's story, visit helpingupmission.org/stories/carla

Focus on Recovery – Donna Mercer, Women's Chaplain



At Helping Up Mission's Center for Women & Children, many of the women arrive in a fragile condition. They bear the evidence of life spent in darkness; wounded from battling abusive relationships, human trafficking, and/or street life. For some the battle has lasted years. Common are the scars of self-harm inflicted through substance abuse and efforts to cope with chaos. Carla bears scars from the attack she endured.

But many of the wounds carried through these doors are not visible, nor have they progressed to scarring. These wounds of the heart come through trauma, betrayal, social stigma...the list of causes can seem endless. When Carla returned to her "same life pattern," shame pushed her deeper into darkness. Another wound. Through her time in the Women's Spiritual Recovery Program, she began the healing process through the word of the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Although the scabs were beginning to rip away, she knew that she would have to brave the shame and return to the place of healing love. She was quickly welcomed back.

Through the Christ-centered programming available at the Center, women are moving from pain to healing. Scars begin to form over old wounds. The love of Jesus expressed through our staff, volunteers, and others on the healing journey applies the healing balm to the deepest heart wounds. As community surrounds the wounded, the scars bring evidence of new life! New tissue covers physical wounds as a sense of safety, rest, good nutrition, and clinical care are provided. Hearts are strengthened through spiritual, emotional, and psychological healing. These wrap-around services bring the wounded to a place where they can experience the resurrection power of God. The scars which formed as healing from harm now display the new life of recovery.

"So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

2 Corinthians 5:17

Give Easter Hope and a Meal – Just \$2.05

The hope of Easter is alive and well at Helping Up Mission. We see it in the lives of men and women each and every day.

Through the power of the resurrected Christ, people who were once “dead” in addiction and homelessness are being transformed from the inside out. They are new creations!

Because this transformation often begins with a hot, nutritious meal served with respect and dignity; we ask you to share a special gift to **help struggling men and women this Easter season.**

\$2.05 is all it takes to provide a meal and Easter hope.

How many people will you help?

\$38.95 to feed and care for **19** people.

\$77.90 to feed and care for **38** people.

\$155.80 to feed and care for **76** people.

Your generous gift will help **“set the table” with delicious meals and a path for guests to discover new life** through our Spiritual Recovery Program.

Please be as generous as you can. Together, we will help vulnerable neighbors rise out of homelessness and addiction.

Simply visit helpingupmission.org/Easter

Thank you... and happy Easter!



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NOW IT'S UP TO US

Heart to Serve – Kim Lewis



Providing support for the men



Teaching the choir



Leading therapeutic art classes



...and Board Member

Helping Up Mission (HUM) is a community where volunteers play a meaningful role in the recovery process. Kim Lewis, affectionately called ‘Miss Kim,’ a self-described ‘people person,’ has been a loving member of the HUM community for more than 12 years.

In 2010 after hearing HUM CEO Bob Gehman on the radio, she decided to volunteer. “I’m a musician and an artist. When I walked into the building – such a beautiful space – I felt the Lord. So, I dived in. I started with teaching art two hours a week. Teaching them something they’ve never done before, like how to paint or sing or write. I love working with the men. Some are struggling so much, but they have a light in their eyes. You can’t stay at HUM and not do a lot of different things. When I come into the building, I hear, ‘Miss Kim, can you teach me...’ and I teach another class.” Having been in music ministry all her life it was natural for her to start a choir and teach music. “The main thing I love about volunteering,” she says, “is that I can make my own hours as long as I’m consistent. (The men) need to know when I’m there and available.”

“When they first come through the door, they don’t know what to expect, so they have to get their sea legs. At the beginning of the program, there’s a 45-day blackout period, when they are away from everyone, even those who helped them, so they can get their heads on straight. Sometimes they don’t make it the first time, but they come back. The drugs out there are so dangerous. We do our best to help them with tutoring, serving food, writing resumes. It’s rewarding in so many ways.”

Thank you ‘Miss Kim’!



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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