

VOICE of compassion

"He will
respond
to the
prayer
of the
destitute."

Psalm 102:17



In giving, you
become God's answer
to their prayer.

“Suppose a man or woman needs clothes or food and one of you tells that person, ‘God be with you! Stay warm, and make sure you eat enough.’ If you don’t provide for that person’s physical needs, what good does it do?”

James 2:15-16

Dear Friend,

At last, the seasons have changed and summer is here!

I’m grateful for those of you who don’t need reminding that need knows no season. You already believe that when people are hungry, we should feed them. And when they’re in need of basic human services, we should provide them.

You remember and generously respond to the hundreds of men and women who arrive at our doors each day by volunteering your time and lending your financial support. It is you who provide for the physical needs of those who seek help at Cherry Street.

With the continued challenges communities in our region are facing, this summer we’ll need your help more than ever. I’m confident in asking for your continued support. I know that you’ll stand with Cherry Street all the way as we respond to the need around us.

Make no mistake: lives will be changed because of your faithful giving. One such life that has already benefitted from your generosity is Jenny’s. In this month’s *Voice of Compassion*, you’ll discover how your contributions to Cherry Street gave Jenny’s mom a Mother’s Day she never expected to have again after her daughter became addicted to heroin. You’ll also meet Gregory, whose life was transformed at Cherry Street.

Thank you for observing James’ exhortation by enabling us to shelter, feed, clothe, and share the love of Christ to all who seek our help—at Cherry Street.

Restoring Hope,



To learn more about Cherry Street, visit *The Voice of Rescue* at www.cherrystreetmission.org, *President’s Blog*.

Email: danrogers@cherrystreetmission.org | Phone: 419-242-5141 ext. 231

Photo © Jim Rohman



Dan Rogers
President and CEO

Front Cover:
Your generosity provides basic needs, such as nutritious meals, to families like Barbara’s.



Desperate no more, thanks to you!

“I know there’s a reason God didn’t let me die.”

Desperate times, it’s been said, call for desperate measures. Late last year, Gregory, *aka* Sarge, was contemplating the most desperate of all: *suicide.*

In 1995, after 25 years in the U.S. Army, Sarge retired to Maumee and found a job. Laid off, he took another. Laid off again, he began working at the Jeep plant—only to be laid off a third time in 2008. “I looked for work, but couldn’t find anything,” recounted the 62-year-old veteran of Vietnam and the first Gulf War. Behind on house, car, and credit card payments, Sarge was deeply depressed.

“The Devil kept saying to me, ‘Why live like this? Why don’t you just take your .45 [gun] and kill yourself or jump off a bridge?’” So Sarge destroyed everything he owned, from his birth certificate to his furniture, then drove to London, Ontario. Asking God to forgive him, he downed 65 prescription sleeping pills.

“Next thing I remember, I was riding on my way to the hospital,” Sarge recalled. “I spent two weeks on kidney dialysis, and another in the mental ward while the hospital contacted the Veterans Administration in Ann Arbor to make arrangements for me. But when I drove to Ann Arbor, I discovered that the VA didn’t have me in their system.”

Sarge had nowhere to go, so the VA contacted Cherry Street. When he arrived here on December 23, we arranged for him to be hospitalized for an infection, then welcomed him back to our Monroe Street men’s facility on January 5.

“I was told about *Ready For Life*, so I attended all the classes and a Bible study and started going to church,” a now-upbeat Sarge explained. “RFL’s ‘Thinking for a Change’ helped me turn my anxiety and depression around, while ‘Survival Skills for Men’ taught me that if I need help, there are places that will help me.” After graduating from RFL, he resumed his job hunt, but also finds time to maintain front-door security at our Madison Street facility.

“Cherry Street has changed my life,” he stressed. “The doctor said I should be dead [from taking 65 pills], but I know there’s a reason God didn’t let me die. Before, I was not a stand-up Christ person; now we’re the best of friends. As a sergeant, you take command and order people around, but God is teaching me humility. My Devil Sergeant is saying, ‘You’re going to tell them,’ but Jesus is telling me, ‘Be nice, kind, trusting.’ It seems like Jesus is winning the battle.”

And who better to know how the battle is going than a veteran named Sarge?

Your gifts to Cherry Street give veterans like Sarge—who comprise more than a third of the homeless people we serve—the opportunity to hear the transforming message of Jesus Christ and build new lives for themselves. For Sarge and his comrades-in-arms, we thank you!

Because of You!

- On May 13, just three days after Mother's Day, 75 women—the highest number ever—sought shelter at the Sparrow's Nest, putting us at 147 percent of our 51-bed capacity.
- That's just one example of the unprecedented level of need we've seen this year at Cherry Street.
- Recently, we sent many of you an urgent appeal to cover a projected budget shortfall of \$300,000 caused by the skyrocketing demand for our services.
- You have responded with characteristic generosity.
- To date, you have cut that projected shortfall by a third.
- We are humbled by your response, and the ongoing support of all our donors who help us care for the men, women, and children in our community.
- On their behalf, thank you!



▲ **The Creek overflowed!** Thanks to Cedar Creek Church and Kroger, Cherry Street received 16,206 pounds of food—that's eight tons—and 1,000 pounds of toilet paper and hygiene supplies in April. Kroger supplied 15,000 grocery sacks to Cedar Creek, which handed them out to the thousands of people who attended services on Easter weekend. The caring folks of the Creek brought their sacks back the next weekend, full of blessings for the hungry, hurting people we serve each day. As you've blessed them, may God bless you, Cedar Creek and Kroger!



◀ **Giving Back to our Community.** In May, The Andersons partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a family in need. The Andersons invited some of our RFL gentleman to come on board and help. (Above, back row, guests: Ed, Tim, Mike — a Cherry Street service coordinator — Sarge, and Greg pose with, front row, Dick Anderson and the Vasquez-Fordham family, recipients of the house.)



▲ **Dozens for dozin'.** With more women than ever before seeking shelter at the Sparrow's Nest, a recent gift from Heritage Church of God was especially welcome. The church met our need for new pillows—seven dozen to be exact. As welcome as those 84 pillows were, even better was the boost our guests got from knowing that people they've never met care about them. Thanks, Heritage! (Above: Diana, a guest at The Nest just couldn't refuse the comfort of so many pillows.)



▲ **Easter 2009: Celebrating Hope Restored.** Thanks to generous volunteers and donors like you, Cherry Street guests enjoyed food, fun, and fellowship as they celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We served 412 holiday dinners at our Madison Food Service and Community Center, the Sparrow's Nest, and Good Samaritan Outreach Center.

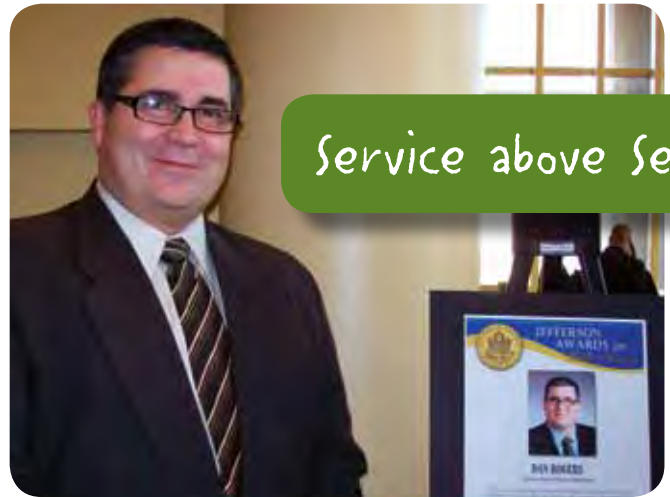
Guests and volunteers also had the opportunity to worship together during Easter services at each site. Children of the Sparrow's Nest guests enjoyed a delightful egg hunt, courtesy of the Villarreal family and their friends. And—perhaps most important—our guests knew they had a place they'd be welcomed and loved on the holiday, thanks to your willingness to be the Lord's hand extended.

(Above, volunteers, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ladd, were on hand to serve lunch to our guests at Good Samaritan. This was the first time we served Easter lunch at Good Sam for our neighbors in the Old South End.)

If you're interested in donating supplies, please contact Ashley Shaffer at 419-242-5141 or at ashaffer@cherrystreetmission.org.

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Brenda Torres at 419-242-5141 ext. 228 or at btorres@cherrystreetmission.org.

In May 2009, an average of 68 women sought safe shelter and care at the Sparrow's Nest, compared to 38 ladies in May 2008; this is a 79% increase. On May 13, we had 75 ladies, the highest number in our history. Your support is vital to providing services to these ladies.



We thought you'd like to know that Cherry Street President and CEO Dan Rogers was one of 13 Toledo Jefferson Award winners recognized for doing extraordinary things to better our community.

Dan was honored for his work at Cherry Street, and in particular for our Ready For Life program, which uncovers the reasons guest participants become homeless in the first place, then provides them the tools and support they need to move from homelessness to independence. The program has a phenomenal 74-percent success rate.

"I was honored to win, but the real credit goes to Cherry Street donors," Dan told the *Voice of Compassion* in a recent interview. "They provide the resources that make our work possible."

Dan also volunteers time to the South Toledo Adopt-a-Block initiative, Toledo Area Ministries, WLMB-TV 40, the Toledo/Lucas County Homeless Board, and the Toledo Area Alliance to End Homelessness.

The Jefferson Award was originated by the American Institute for Public Service to honor individuals for outstanding public and community service. Dan received the award at a dinner held March 11 at the Park Inn in Downtown Toledo.

Annual Spring Banquet Highlights Guests' Success

ANNUAL SPRING BANQUET 2009

A record 640-some friends of Cherry Street attended our Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet at Gladioux Meadows on April 23. They heard firsthand from two Ready For Life graduates how their support helps transform lives.

Tales of success

Victor, now an engineer and lead designer on the 3-D [computer] modeling of a \$200 million facility being built in Topeka, Kansas, told banquet guests that he found himself at Cherry Street after losing his 20-year marriage and nearly everything else to alcoholism. Ironically, he'd once volunteered at Cherry Street. "When I volunteered there, I was successful," he said. "I wondered how something could go so wrong in people's lives that they'd end up homeless. When I ended up at Cherry Street, God tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'This is how.'"

Banquet guests also heard the heart-warming story of Jenny, a Ready For Life alumna who graduated with honors from the University of Toledo in May. (See page 8 for more about Jenny.)

◀ According to Vice President of Development Rodney Schuster, banquet guests made donations and pledges that enabled us to fully match a challenge gift of \$15,000. We also acquired 36 new monthly donors that evening.

Thanks to supporters

President and CEO Dan Rogers thanked banquet guests for their generosity, reporting that in 2008 they'd made it possible for Cherry Street to serve nearly 300,000 meals to the hungry, minister to more than a thousand men and women at our Monroe Street facility and the Sparrow's Nest, and serve hundreds more at our Education and Career Center.

"The challenges ahead are daunting," Dan explained. "Double digit unemployment is being mirrored in double digit increases at every point of entry at Cherry Street. But with your continued interest, we will stand on the corners of our community and bring the curative work of life transformation to all."

Dan also discussed Cherry Street's involvement in initiatives to prevent homelessness, among them collaborations with churches to strengthen parents and families, as well as efforts with community leaders and organizations to promote urban agriculture.

The "better future" of our community

Quoting from Isaiah 61—*He has sent me to provide for all those who grieve in Zion. . . . They will renew the ruined cities . . . that He might display His Glory*—Dan told Victor, Jenny, and the other 40-plus Cherry Street guests in attendance that God intends them to be the rebuilders of our society: "It will be your renewed minds that will renew a city. We see in you, as God sees in you, inevitability."

"When you support Cherry Street," he told banquet guests, "you support the better future of our city and region. Your cause and my cause go beyond the next meal, beyond the next night's day, beyond one more broken life. You and I, we have a further horizon."

"On that horizon, homelessness and poverty are reducing; low birth weights, decreasing. Our young



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Renewing Minds

spring banquet 2009

- ◀ President and CEO Dan Rogers (top left) honors Maria Thompson for volunteering at Good Samaritan for over ten years.
- ◀ Lydia (bottom left) and Lasha were among the 40-plus Cherry Street guests who greeted and registered banquet attendees, then sat with them during the banquet.

men are staying in school instead of populating places of imprisonment; women are off the streets and in places of commerce; our veterans, ravaged by the sounds of war, are living out their days in peace; our elderly are in safe places of housing; parents are once again honored by all sectors of society; and the family is once again whole.

“On the horizon we speak of tonight, the river of humanity that once flowed with grief is blessed by God’s mercy and runs through the tributaries of our communities as a life-giving force once more. That’s what Jesus was talking about when He read Isaiah 61 in the synagogue as recounted in the Book of Luke. His promises, released through the renewed minds of Cherry Street guests, are our hope, our future, and our certain horizon.”

“Good will come to him who is generous.” -Psalm 112:5

If you’d like to help Cherry Street help the helpless and share the Gospel with them in the coming months, please mail us your gift, along with this completed form.* You may also donate at www.cherrystreetmission.org.

**May God richly bless you
for your generosity!**

*If you are donating to honor or memorialize someone, please include their name, and the name and address of the honoree or family of the person you’re memorializing so we can inform them of your kindness.

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These generous organizations and individuals made our Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet possible:

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VOICE of compassion 7



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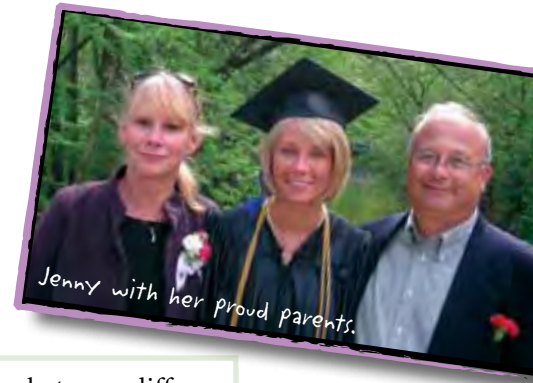
From Homeless to Hopeful

If you're a long-time reader of *Voice of Compassion*, you may remember a story we ran two years ago about a young woman named Jenny.

A heroin addict since her mid-teens, Jenny had been in and out of rehab several times. At age 19, she went through rehab one more time, and made plans to return to the University of Toledo, where she'd completed a year of college before dropping out because of her drug problem.

Jenny's mother, however, was afraid that her daughter would start using again when she left her small hometown in Eastern Ohio to go back to school. In 2006, she contacted a mental health professional in Toledo who said that the Sparrow's Nest might help Jenny maintain her sobriety.

It did—and Jenny gives all the credit to God. "I accepted Jesus Christ at the Nest for the first time," she said, "and that made all the difference."



And what a difference it made! On May 10—Mother's Day—Jenny graduated with honors from UT with a degree in finance and a minor in business law.

So remarkable was her journey from addiction to success that two local TV stations featured Jenny in news stories. In one, Jenny's mom said that it was the kind of Mother's Day that she at one point never thought she'd see with her daughter again.

Jenny's story is amazing—and you helped make it possible through your continued support of Cherry Street.

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