

TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2018

Topeka Rescue Mission • 600 N. Kansas Avenue • Topeka, KS 66608-1240

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FACILITIES: 785-354-1744

Hope Center for Women & Families #8
Men's Shelter #0
Distribution Center x366
Thrift Store 785-235-9094
TRM Boutique on the Blvd 785-478-5744
Children's Palace 785-730-8810



PROGRAMS: 785-354-1744

Dining Services x322
Food Distribution x366
Education & Mentoring x338
Volunteer Services x393

COMMUNITY:

NET Reach 785-783-2535 x106
Operation Street Reach 785-230-8237

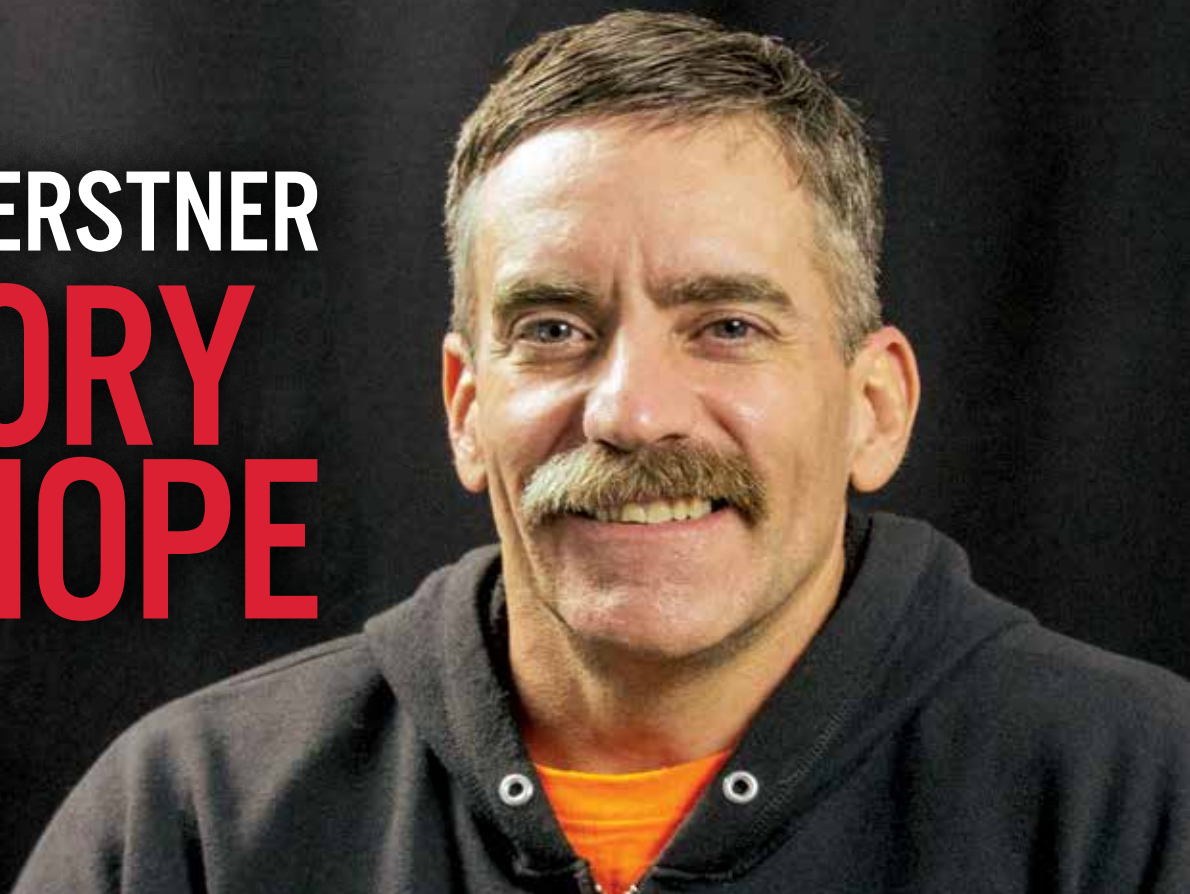
DONATIONS:

Monetary: 785-354-1744 x316
Material: 785-357-4285
Food: 785-357-4285

website: TRMonline.org
email: trm@trmonline.org

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PRE-SORT INC

ANDY GERSTNER STORY OF HOPE





ANDY GERSTNER **STORY OF HOPE**

Hi everybody, my name is Andy Gerstner. I'd like to share a little about my walk with the Lord, how at times I've strayed but how he is faithful to seek me out, even in the darkest times of my life. I was brought up in a blue-collar home. Dad was a mechanic, always working on cars or trucks and mom managed a deli. She always had her hands in something - cooking or serving people. I came from a good home here in Topeka, was brought up in church and graduated from high school. Unfortunately, when I was about 14, I started making some bad decisions and hanging out with the wrong crowd. Without even knowing it, the decisions I was making began setting the course for my life. I was 17 and driving under the influence when I got a DUI, which started some legal troubles and more bad decisions.

I first came to the Rescue Mission in 1995 after separating from my wife. I found the Rescue Mission to be a very welcoming place, a comfortable place where I could get my life back in order and start making better decisions. Over the years, I have taken refuge at the Mission during times where I found myself homeless and in need of guidance. I could

always count on the Rescue Mission for necessities like a safe place to sleep, food to eat, toiletries, a listening ear and guidance to help me on my path. I've always enjoyed the chapel they have every night and always got a lot out of each service. I've been a part of two Christmases at the Rescue Mission and that's been a very meaningful time in my life, helping

me get back to the true meaning of Christmas.

In 2008 I made the decision to join the Servants in Training (SIT) program, which is the year-long program the Rescue Mission offers. Nell Ritchey was the director of the SIT program at that time and she was a great teacher, friend and mentor. I really admired how she

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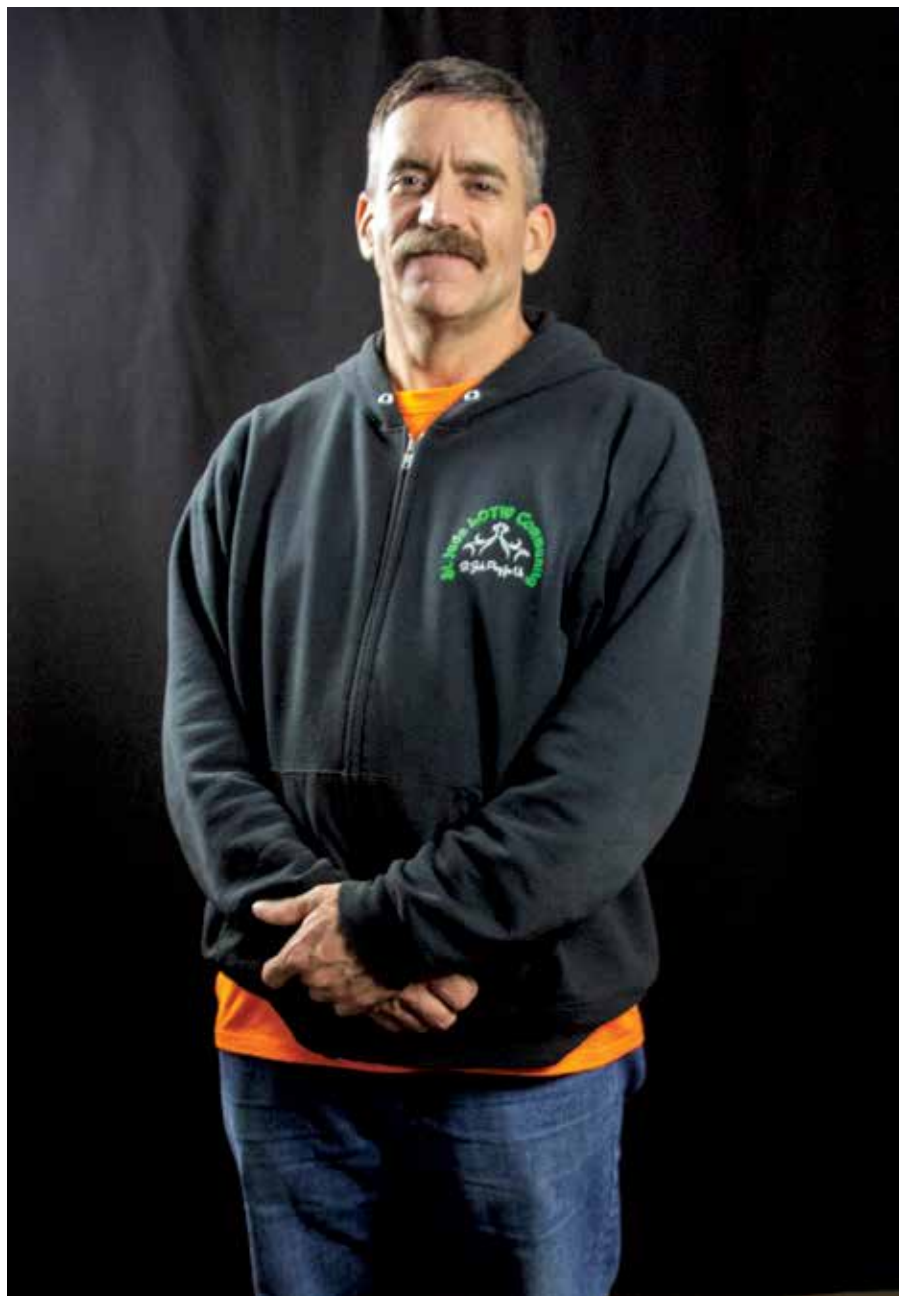
used her gifts and so freely shared those gifts with everyone. The biggest challenge I faced at the mission was learning to live with other people and their different personalities - some who were going through the same struggles as me, some different. Despite these challenges, there's always a peace around the Mission that I believe comes from prayer. I graduated the SIT program in February of 2009 along with four other people. At that time my walk with the Lord had grown, so I was sharing my gifts and God's love with others and myself. There have been some times in my life when I wasn't able to love others well because I wasn't really loving myself. The Rescue Mission taught me how to do that and show others how Jesus changed my life and gave me the opportunity to let my light shine.

I have been at the Mission now for four months and am currently the supply coordinator at the Distribution Center. I help fulfill supply orders for the shelters and the kitchen. I also stock a lot of shelves with food and help distribute it out, which is always a joy for me. I love to see firsthand the people from the community that the Rescue Mission is able to assist. It's a joy to work here - to be able to do as Jesus taught us - when you see those in need, you give them a drink, some food to eat, shelter and most importantly - tell them that Jesus loves them.

I will be moving out of the Mission soon because I was accepted at Oxford House. I will be able to take the next step in my life and I'm very grateful to the Rescue Mission for once again showing me how to be the hands and feet of Jesus. *(UPDATE - since Andy shared his story he has achieved his goal. He is now living at Oxford House!)* †



Andy Gerstner is the supply coordinator at TRM's Distribution Center. A recent graduate of the SIT program, Andy credits TRM with helping him love himself and others as the Lord has called him to do.





SHOWING LOVE. BRIDGING GAPS. MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

by Barry Feaker

The work of TRM Ministries requires many collaborations and partnerships to be the hands and feet of Jesus serving people experiencing homelessness. One of those partnerships is with Cornerstone, an organization focused on providing transitional and affordable housing. Let's start at the beginning ...

I came to the Rescue Mission in April of 1986 and soon found that the Rescue Mission was facing some very serious financial challenges. Things were so bleak that it looked like we might actually have to shut our doors. We struggled along until October of that year before finally beginning to see a financial turnaround. It looked as though 1987 would be a better year, however, while we were struggling financially, there were other things brewing.

During these early days it was primarily me and some homeless folks running the Rescue Mission. At the same time another organization was starting up in Topeka - the Topeka Family Shelter. Father Etzel, a priest from Meriden, came to Topeka to establish this new shelter focused on sheltering homeless families. The Rescue Mission already had a small shelter for homeless families and never considered that there was a need for another organization to serve homeless families. This new shelter

was run primarily by the Catholic church while the Rescue Mission was primarily funded by Protestant churches. I soon learned there was a division between the Catholics and the Protestants and a competition began to swell – there was real concern and outright resentment for this new organization starting up. Why would they do this to the Mission?

It didn't take me long to

recognize that Father Etzel had a heart of gold. He and I developed a working friendship and one day he recommended that I meet with a group of regional priests and priests from the Topeka area. I agreed and will never forget the experience. The day of the meeting I walked into a house owned by the Catholic church. Picture a room filled with all these men dressed in black suits and white

“Cornerstone’s relationship with TRM Ministries goes back to the founding of Cornerstone in 1986. We started out with a group of citizens concerned about the growing number of homeless among working families with children. Originally, we were a family shelter. In 1990, we started doing what we do now which is helping the homeless and providing affordable housing. We have grown to 175 housing units and 23 of those are dedicated to our homeless housing program. We’re honoring Barry with the Otto and Jane Schnellbacher Lifetime Service award—TRM Ministries is a fantastic partner and referral source. That’s more than a 30-year relationship with the Topeka Rescue Mission.”

– Chris Palmer, Executive Director, Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc.

collars . . . and me. I wasn't Catholic. I wasn't one of them. I felt they were also uncomfortable wondering how I was viewing them. In the middle of all this uncertainty was Father Etzel. He was an incredible ambassador for Christ, an incredible ambassador for unity. Tough questions came my way regarding things they had heard about the Mission. Miscommunication and misperceptions abounded. Father Etzel stood in the gap of these misunderstandings and misinformation. In an incredibly gentle way he helped to bridge an expansive gulf. His intervention opened up an opportunity for me to get to know some of the priests and set the stage for future collaborations.

After this meeting, Father Etzel and I began to process and consider what would be best for our community. We arrived at the idea that Topeka Family Shelter, currently known as Cornerstone, would be well suited to be transitional housing for people coming out of the Rescue Mission. Together we began to build a system in our community. I'll never forget when TRM built the first building. We had a dedication banquet and after I finished speaking and showing pictures of what had been accomplished, Father Etzel, dressed in his cassock and collar, came running up to me and in front of a banquet room full of over 400 people, threw his arms around me telling me how much he loved me and how honored he was to be able to work with me. The relationship between our two organizations was

cemented in love and collaboration.

Over the years Cornerstone has been nothing less than stellar. One of my most memorable moments happened one winter when a couple and their tiny daughter came to the Mission. What I didn't know at that time was that they also had three older daughters that had been removed by the State. They were methamphetamine addicts. Because of their meth addiction they were a very difficult family to serve. The father's poor behavior resulted in me removing him from the newly formed Hope Center, our family shelter, multiple times. He said I kicked him out eight times before he finally had the light bulb come on. During their stay their tiny 1 1/2-year old daughter Amy and I became very, very close. She was so tiny I could carry her around on one arm. It took months of working continuously with this family to help them realize the opportunity for a different future. Their hard work resulted in them moving into one of Cornerstone's first brand-new transitional four-plex housing units. I attended the dedication they were having for this transitional housing. I walked into a home full of people and some refreshments. It was an awesome, beautiful and clean 2-bedroom place in central Topeka. As I walked in, little tiny Amy came running up to me, threw her arms around my knee and gave me a big old leg hug. She looked up at me with her big brown eyes and said, "Barry come with me." She took my hand and walked me into another room. There was a bed. There were some

"The Topeka Rescue Mission has been critical to the success of our transitional housing program. Our transitional units represent 23 of our 175 housing units. It is important that those folks work with agencies and are starting the process of getting back on their feet before they are referred to us since our program is only 6 months long. We work with them on becoming stable renters. More than 80% of our referrals for this program come from TRM Ministries. You're a wonderful partner. Your former guests do very well in this program."

**– Chris Palmer, Executive Director
Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc.**

dolls, a bedspread, pretty curtains and some decorations on the wall. "This is my bedroom!" she said. I'll never forget that day. It was one of the most memorable, if not THE most memorable moment of my 32 years of working at the Rescue Mission. To see that little girl happy . . . well, fast forward to 2017, that little girl graduated from Seaman High School and I've continued to keep up with her family.

Stories like Amy's wouldn't have been possible except for Topeka Rescue Mission and Cornerstone coming together – bridging gaps in love and respect. It wouldn't have been possible without a priest named Father Etzel from Meriden who showed his love in spite of opposition. May God continue to bless the relationship between our two organizations and make it possible for us to all continue helping others realize a different and brighter future. †



Every \$25 you spend at the Boutique or Thrift Store helps shelter 3 people for a night.

Don't Miss This!



For every \$10 you spend, get a punch. Collect 5, Get \$10 off your next purchase of \$10 or more.



CURRENT NEEDS LIST

FOOD ITEMS:

Gallon Cans of Vegetables & Fruits / Coffee / Sack lunch items (i.e. granola bars, fruit cups, pudding cups, snack crackers)

SUPPLY ITEMS:

Baby formula Similac Advanced and Similac Sensitive / Diapers & Pull Ups – size 3 and up
Dish Soap / Arm & Hammer Super Washing Soda / 20 Mule Team Borax / Fels Naptha Laundry Soap
Fans / Baby Powder / Baby Wipes / Can Openers / Potato Peelers

HYGIENE/HEALTH ITEMS:

Shampoo, Conditioner, Shower Gel - Hotel size and larger / Razors (Men's and Women's) / Hair Brushes
Kids' sunscreen / Mouthwash – Large and Small bottles / Hand Sanitizer – large

CLOTHING:

Summer Clothing for Men, Women & Children (clothing and shoes can all be used) / Shoes – All Sizes

FURNITURE (in good condition):

Furniture – i.e. Couches, Recliners, Loveseats, Dressers, Tables, Mattresses, etc.

Large & Small Appliances – i.e. Washers, Dryers, Ranges, Freezers, Refrigerators & Microwaves