

# TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2022

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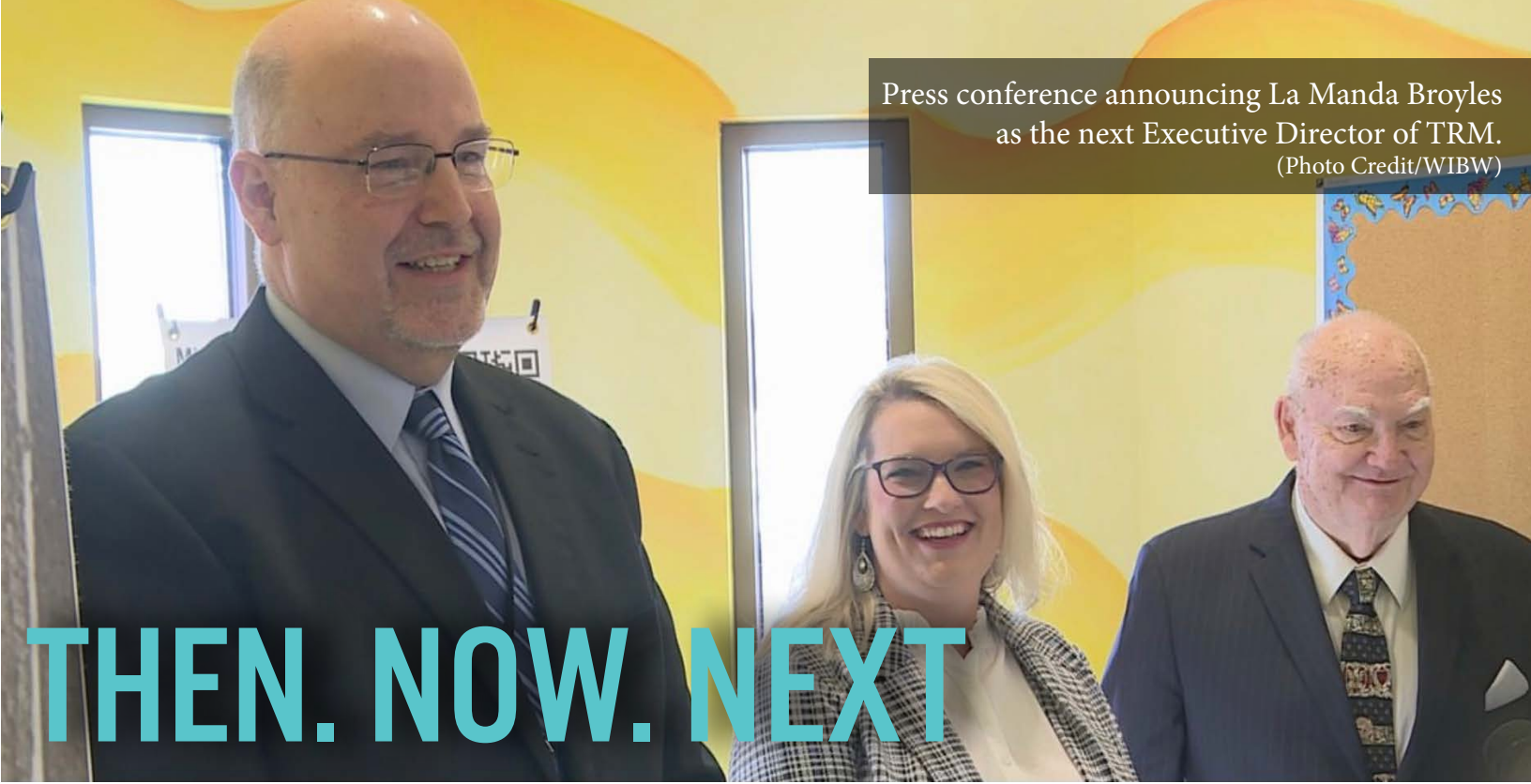


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# THEN. NOW. NEXT

***In this newsletter we highlight an interview with Barry and La Manda detailing the upcoming leadership transition taking place this month at TRM. For the full interview, please listen to the “Our Community, Our Mission” podcast from February 22, 2022!***

***Barry, when did you start thinking that your time at TRM would begin to change?***

BARRY: April 21st of this year will mark my 36th year as executive director at TRM. I started in 1986. I love TRM and I've loved this journey, but there comes a time when you need to start thinking about handing the ball off to the next generation. I began really thinking about it about five years ago, knowing that some day this day would come, and two years ago I began seriously asking questions about who the next director might be. I was really challenged by it, knowing that it could be very hard to find the right replacement. It's a unique position - there are not a lot of

people who know how to do it, or want to do it once they learn what the position involves. Early in 2021 I just felt the peace of the Lord and heard him say, “I'm going to show you who will be next.” And sure enough, last April He made it very, very clear the “who”.

***La Manda, as you ponder on the role you're walking into, why is it attractive to you?***

LA MANDA: I would say, why wouldn't it be? When you are a follower of Christ, one of the main things that you should be commanded to do is love others. To what extent and what capacity depends on what the Lord has called you to do. And when I look at

the work TRM does, day in and day out, I think it can be summarized by “loving the one in front of you”. Sometimes that is a guest, sometimes it's a homeless neighbor on the street, and sometimes it's a fellow staff member. I have always loved people, I've been a people person and loved to socialize not just with people I know, but even in the grocery store, Walmart, the gas station. We have opportunities all around us to make an impact on someone even if it's something small. So having the opportunity to come work at TRM, regardless of the position, was a way where I could say, “I can really love on people all the time.” That's the backbone of what we do here.

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***Could you share from your perspectives how God led you to this transition and how you both heard from Him what was supposed to happen?***

BARRY: When I came to TRM God made it very clear for me. It wasn't written in the stars, but it felt close. And I was so grateful, because throughout the years I've always fallen back on how clear that was, so I asked God to also make it that clear when it was time for me to go. All these years I've stayed with TRM, come thick or thin, good or bad, just knowing that it wasn't time to go because God hadn't made it that clear.

But at the April board meeting last year - it was my 35th anniversary - I just felt like the Lord said, "La Manda is the next director". I looked over at her during the meeting and thought, "What?" It hadn't occurred to me before. But as the meeting went on, I heard it again, just peaceful and affirming. Before the meeting was over I heard a third time, "La Manda is the next director."

I took it home with me that

night, mulling it over and praying. Two days later I got a text from La Manda - I don't think I'd ever gotten a text from her before - asking me to call her. I called right away. La Manda told me she believed she had heard from the Lord during our board meeting, and believed God was directing her to leave her position with Topeka Public School Administration and come work at TRM.

I was stunned. Not too stunned, because we've been around long enough to see God's hand, but it's always so exciting to see His hand at work. She asked if we had a position available for her and said she would do anything - work in the kitchen, on the maintenance team, wherever we needed her. I didn't tell her what I had heard from God, but I asked her how she knew He wanted her to come work at TRM. She said, "Barry, I heard from God three times." The exact same amount as me. I met with her and her husband that weekend and had them tell me their story. At the end of our talk I told her I had also heard from God three times, that she would be the next executive director.

but sometimes I can doubt. I think that God, in a gracious way, wanted to pave the way so that there wouldn't be doubt for myself, for Barry, and for our community. I feel like God has honored that from the start.

***As you think about this transition and all the people it impacts, from our guests to our staff, volunteers and community, what is the most important thing you want to focus on during this time?***

BARRY: When you get to this place, you think about the priorities. Helping people who have invested in TRM - whether they are a former guest, volunteer, donor, or everybody who served at TRM for three and a half decades - we want to help them know it's going to be okay, and it's going to be even better than it was. I've said, and I mean it, that La Manda is assigned by the Lord to take this investment and build upon it, just like I did when I first came here. God is not in the business of maintaining. He's a Creator, and that's what we've seen Him do over the last 36 years at TRM. We are on the front lines of creativity, of how we address darkness and build hope. God is going to continue to create and improve His love here at TRM.

***La Manda, what is the biggest or most surprising thing you've learned in this process and your time at TRM?***

LA MANDA: One of my biggest takeaways has been to really

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Barry reviewing archives with La Manda.

***La Manda, talk about how you felt during that time. Why did you believe it was God?***

LA MANDA: I think one was because I was so unprepared for it. My heart is to always be obedient to God,

trust in the Lord. We have to trust in Him every day at TRM - that we will have donations, have food, have volunteers show up. And the Lord works that out. When you look at what we are able to accomplish every single day at TRM, we couldn't do it alone. It takes the community to provide for what we need to do. There have been a couple times that I've caught myself worrying, and then I remember God's got this, and he's got this through his people. Not just the staff, but the entire community. The person who writes that check that we turn around and use to bless others, that truckload of food that we get in, those bed frames and mattresses that we use for the people who are getting housing. I know this will take me to a whole other level of trusting the Lord, and that we will continue to do His work.

***Barry, what are your plans for your continuing relationship with TRM?***

**BARRY:** One of the things that has been important throughout the history of TRM is to be flexible to meet new needs as they arrive. In the last 36 years there have been significant changes in the needs of our community with those challenged by homelessness and hunger. There are more people that need help. More needs for education, training programs, hunger relief, trafficking interventions, etc. We have tried to learn, adapt, and unite the community to build a platform for the next generation to build upon. I felt it was time to transition to a new generation, to build upon what we have already done. To be ready to

assist the community in every way we can. I recognize that we all have our particular contributions in particular times in our lives, and I felt like I was ready to help facilitate the success of the next generation in rescue ministry. The best way for me to do that is to be there with them, helping to assist, to coach, to encourage and guide the younger generation that is coming alongside us.

***We want to thank Barry and La Manda for their passion and dedication to the work of TRM and following God's call, and we want to thank all of you, our faithful supporters, for staying by our side during this time of transition. We are excited to see what God has in store for the years to come at TRM! †***



You are invited to join Topeka JUMPs annual Nehemiah Action Assembly on Monday, May 9th at Washburn University's Lee Arena at 7:00 PM. Come together with over 30 faith communities from Topeka and Shawnee County to unite in the fight for more affordable housing and services for individuals and families dealing with Mental Health Crisis.

More information can be found at our website [www.topekajump.com](http://www.topekajump.com).

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