

CHRONICLE

Good News About Changing Lives

"They Said to Come on Home"

How your support helped Ray find grace, mercy and open arms.

When Ray's marriage of 23 years fell apart in 2011, Ray fell apart too.

"I started hitting the hard liquor to deal with my pain," he says.

He moved in with his sister to try to move on with his life. But after a while, "She got tired of my drinking and told me I had to leave."

*"If not now, then when?
If not me, who?"*

With no place to go, Ray was suddenly homeless. While out for a walk one Saturday afternoon, a stranger approached him and said, "You look like you're in bad shape. You're going to church with me tomorrow."

Figuring he had nothing to lose, Ray agreed. At church the next morning, he met a guy who was in the 180 recovery program at MorningStar Mission. The man told Ray what a difference the program had made in his life and invited Ray to come along.

So Ray, again figuring he had nothing to lose, said, "Okay." He walked through the doors of the Mission, hoping for a life-changing experience.



Thank you for helping people like Ray during this holiday season!

And it was . . . for a while. "Then I crashed and burned," he says. He moved back in with his sister, but his drinking was out of control.

So he tried the Mission again. And again he "crashed and burned."

After those two relapses, a staff member from the Mission ran into Ray and suggested he try once more.

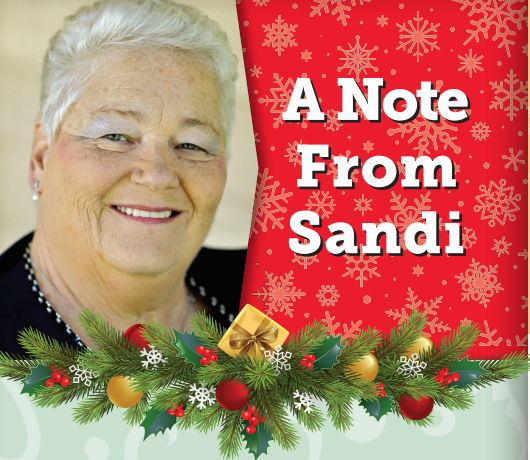
"I said, 'Nah, man, I'm not ready for it,'" Ray remembers. "But I started walking down the street

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A Note From Sandi

“... and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”

— Luke 2:7

Dear Friend,

The young couple was essentially homeless, with nowhere to turn. They went door to door, seeking shelter, but there was no guest room available for them.

Joseph and Mary essentially spent that night on the streets, like many homeless people do right here in our own community. Christmas night, in the dirt and the filth, because there was no guest room available. Can you even imagine?

At MorningStar Mission, thanks to your support, we will always have room. And, of course, there's always room for Jesus.

Come, all you who are weary and need rest. Our doors are open.

Merry Christmas,

Sandi Perzee
Executive Director

*Helen is grateful
for your support
of the Mission.*



"God Led Me Here"

This single mom says MorningStar is helping her get back on her feet.

Helen, a single mom with an 11-year-old daughter, gave up her home and job in Missouri to move to Chicago to help a family member.

But things didn't work out the way she had hoped, and they ended up homeless.

"I didn't know what to do," Helen says. "I'd never been homeless before. A friend told me about MorningStar, and I called and told them about my situation. And they invited us to come."

Since arriving at the Mission early this year, Helen has been working hard to get her life back on track.

She says a typical day includes morning prayers, meetings throughout the day, counseling sessions, and working toward independence. She says the Mission staff does a good job in equipping guests for stepping back out into the world.

"They 100% help us achieve our goals," Helen says. "They give us motivation. They remind us to not give up, to keep going, even during the pandemic."

Once she's ready to move along, Helen intends to go back to college to get her degree as a registered nurse.

"I don't know where I'd be without MorningStar," she says. "They really help us out. I think God led me here for a reason."

Thank YOU for giving hope to single moms like Helen!



Bringing Christmas Joy

Stars of Hope is a gift to struggling families.

At the end of a difficult year, children deserve to wake up on Christmas morning and find some gifts under the tree. But not all families can afford it.

That's why the Mission's *Stars of Hope* program exists — to ensure that children from low-income families receive Christmas presents. Qualified families can register at MorningStar to receive food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and to participate in *Stars of Hope*. Over 200 children and 78 families will benefit this year.

"It's an awesome program," says Pam Passolano, who has volunteered with the Mission and *Stars of Hope* for years. "And the whole community is willing to help out by providing gifts. It's amazing how generous people are."

Parents or guardians of children 17 and younger can fill out a form with gift suggestions for their children — one a necessity (often clothing) and one just for fun (usually a toy). But some families are so strapped financially that they end up asking for two necessities per child — for example, a pair of shoes and a winter coat.

Each child's wish list becomes a star that donors then adopt. They purchase items from the star and drop them off at the Mission, where families pick up the gifts in plenty of time for Christmas.

Passolano says her entire workplace and her women's Bible study at church get involved, buying gifts for 12 to 15 children every year.



It takes many volunteers to run the Stars of Hope program, where bicycles are a popular gift for children every year.

If you'd like to buy gifts for the *Stars of Hope* program, please contact the mission at 815-722-5780. You'll receive complete instructions when you pick up your star or stars.

Stars of Hope can only happen with the generous support of friends like you. Please consider participating this year. You'll bring the joy of Christmas to local children. Thank you!



(continued from front page)

"They Said to Come on Home"

and thinking about it. I thought, *Well, if not now, then when? If not me, who?* So I turned around and I came back to the Mission."

Third time's the charm? Ray thinks so. And with good reason.

"This is my third shot," he says. "But I'm more motivated this time. And here's why: The doctor told me I have cirrhosis of the liver, and that I can't have another drink. He said if I started drinking again, it would kill me."

Ray is grateful that the Mission gave him not just a second chance, but a third. That kind of grace and mercy can go a long way toward changing a person.

"If it weren't for the Mission, I'd probably be dead," he says. "But they welcomed me back with open arms. They just said to come on home."

Thank YOU for giving people like Ray the opportunity to "come on home" and turn their lives around.

'Tis the Season

Your support and local partners bring glad tidings to families in need.

There's always a lot happening around the Mission during the holiday season. Here are just a couple of yearly highlights happening in your community:

- **New Lenox Cares**, sponsored by the New Lenox Police Department, is an event to help children purchase gifts for their families during the holiday season, as well as to have a positive experience with a local police officer. Tentatively scheduled for Saturday, December 5.
- **Shop with a Sheriff** is an event with the sheriff's office to help at-risk youth have a positive experience with a Will County sheriff's officer and help them afford gifts for their families during the holiday season. Tentatively scheduled for Saturday, December 12.

For more information about our holiday events and how you can help, please visit our calendar of events page at morningstarmission.org/events. *Thank you!*

Christmas Dinner Supplies Needed

For our annual Christmas Dinner for our guests and community, we rely on donors like you for the following items:

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • TURKEYS
(17–18 LBS) | • SALAD DRESSING | • FLOUR |
| • HAMS (8–10 LBS) | • CANNED SOUP | • CAKE MIXES |
| • BAG OF POTATOES | • PASTA | • ICING MIXES |
| • CANNED VEGETABLES | • PASTA SAUCE | • BAGS OF CANDY |
| • CANNED FRUITS | • COFFEE | • PACKAGED COOKIES |
| • CANNED CRANBERRIES | • TEA | • COOKING OIL |
| • BREAD | • JUICE | • KETCHUP |
| • PEANUT BUTTER | • MILK | • MUSTARD |
| • JELLY | • EGGS | • SALT |
| • CEREAL | • STUFFING MIX | • SEASONED SALT |
| • OATMEAL | • PANCAKE MIX | • PEPPER |
| | • CRACKERS | • GARLIC POWDER |
| | • SYRUP | • CHILI POWDER |
| | • SUGAR | |

Please check our website MorningStarMission.org for the latest updates on our holiday needs for donations and volunteers.

IN HONOR OF

Bill Davis — John Davis
Tom Hounihan — Anne Flaherty
Heather Jonker — Susan DeVries
June Mueggenborg — Ann Scanlan

IN MEMORY OF

Anthony Aroch — Diane Budzinski
Anthony Aroch — Sandra Aroch
Anthony Aroch — Diane Morris
Anthony Aroch — Greg & Sharon Spiess
Robert Bagus — Pamela Topa
Pam Condon — Patrick Condon
John DeGroot — Kathleen Stanson
Mike Dovin — John Wettergren
Kay Etter — Norma Hnilo
Joan Flatt — Paul DeFelice
Joan Flatt — Jodi Little
Wilburn, Mabel & Sherry Huckaba — Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hoerner
Nello Isabellie — Larry Wiers
Judy Johnson — Maryleah Fleener
Ginger Kennedy — Ruth Hoehn
Ginger Kennedy — Jack & Becca Arkins
John Kvicky — Gloria Kassel
Robert Laib Sr. — Bonnie Schmitz
Mary Ann Malloy — Joseph Malloy
Dennis Maulding — Peggy Kendall
Thomas McKay — Mary-Claire Ross
Mary Nell Leet — Terry Leet
Mary Parker — Careese Hutton
Carole Preiss — Melissa Gillis
John Russ — Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hoerner
Lucy & Georgette Schmidberger — Georgette Vota
John Suich — Thomas Suich
Richard Tantillo — Lisa Wrobel
Larry Walsh Sr. — Patrick McGuire
Homer Warren — Susan Munguia
Gino — Mary Guzzo
Ralph — Catherine Procaccio

I WANT TO PROVIDE MEALS AND MORE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

YES! I want to help provide warm meals, shelter and care this holiday season. Here is my gift of:

- ☐ \$19.84 to provide 8 meals and other assistance.
☐ \$32.24 to provide 13 meals and other assistance.
☐ \$62.00 to provide 25 meals and other assistance.
☐ \$_____ to provide as much care as possible.

Please detach, complete and return this form along with your most generous donation. Make your check payable to MorningStar Mission.

To give online, visit MorningStarMission.org or to charge by phone, call 815-722-5780. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt. *Thank you!*

MORNINGSTAR
MISSION MINISTRIES

350 East Washington St.
Joliet, IL 60433-1150
MorningStarMission.org

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