

The MorningStar *Chronicle*

JANUARY 2024

MorningStarMission.org

A New Year of Blessings

Thank You for the Good You Do!



MorningStar
Mission^{TV}

From Kevin to You



Building on Blessings

Dear Friend,

I have great hope that 2024 will be a wonderful year for the men, women and children served by MorningStar Mission. That's because we're building on the many blessings of 2023.

With your help, over 26,000 guests found shelter and support during a tough year. Those who completed our program now qualify for better-paying jobs and can look forward to having homes of their own.

Families who struggled to make ends meet came to the Mission for meals and goods from our pantry when their paychecks didn't stretch quite far enough. They also benefitted from donations of furniture, clothing and other goods. Boys and girls got fully stocked backpacks to start their school year.

Overall, you helped provide a solid footing for our guests to stand strong and persevere. You also gave a head start for their sons and daughters, breaking the cycle of poverty and underemployment in our community. Most of all, you provided an opportunity to know Jesus Christ and follow Him all the way to Heaven.

I hope you will continue to bless more of our hurting neighbors in this new year. And if you've never come to MorningStar Mission, please make it one of your resolutions! We love to meet our friends and show you all the good you do.

In His Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Watson".

Kevin Watson
Executive Director
MorningStar Mission

*Truly He is my rock and my salvation;
He is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

— Psalm 62:2, NIV

In Loving Memory

All of us at MorningStar mourn the passing of Steven Lader into the presence of the Lord Jesus. Steve was a dedicated Board Member for over 20 years and helped lead the organization to success. He will be deeply missed.



Your legacy will leave unlimited possibilities.

You may have heard of the “Butterfly Effect.”

The saying goes that when a butterfly flaps its wings, it can cause a hurricane in another part of the world. Given time, every movement makes a difference, no matter how small it may seem.

Just one gift to MorningStar Mission can change a person’s life. And when you remember MorningStar in your will, you can help people facing despair for years to come. In God’s hands, a kindness today can be multiplied like a butterfly effect, having unlimited possibilities ... even eternal

ones. The Gospel presented to a person with an open heart can, and often does, lead to eternal life as a child of God.

If you are interested in making a big impact down the road, contact your financial adviser about adding MorningStar Mission to your will, and let us know! **If you would like to learn more, please contact Kelsey Teegen at 815-722-5780 or k.teegen@morningstarmission.org.**



And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called to His purpose. – Romans 8:28

Kids Experience the Joy of Giving.

This past Christmas was a little merrier for kids in our community, thanks to the Will County Sheriff’s Department. For 20 years, deputies have teamed up with MorningStar Mission to take 50 boys and girls Christmas shopping.

The annual Shop with a Sheriff event takes place on the first Saturday of December at the New Lenox Walmart. Each child is assigned his or her own deputy to shop with, and given a donated \$100 gift certificate to buy presents for their families and other loved ones. They come back to the Mission for lunch and to wrap their gifts with help from volunteers before returning home.

Correctional Deputy Erin Vascik has been involved with the program since she joined the force 18 years ago. She says, “I feel like I get way more out of it than the kids do. Every year, something humbles me.”

The children are encouraged to choose something special for themselves, as these may be the only gifts they get. Erin relates that one seven-year-old boy wanted nothing more for himself than Goldfish crackers and Hawaiian Punch because he never got that at home.

“I know this experience touches the kids,” Erin says. “The holidays can be a rough time for them, so we give them an opportunity to shine.”



Events

**Sunday
February 4**
Annual Meatloaf
Competition
Double J Sports Bar

**Tuesday
March 26**
Easter Basket
Distribution

**Sunday
April 21**
Annual Ladies Luncheon event
Jacob Henry Mansion
To benefit our Women & Family Center.

Contact Kelsey at k.teegen@morningstarmission.org with any questions.

A Father, Remembered.

“He had a joy I’d never seen in him before.”

One of the hardest things Mike Welsh ever had to do was deliver the eulogy at his father’s funeral. He was comforted by the presence of people who had loved his dad — the staff and residents of MorningStar Mission, where Bob Welsh had lived and worked for the last eight years of his life.

“I had to tell his story the best way I could,” Mike says. “He cared about people. He had a big heart. And he was funny.” For many years, those qualities were overshadowed by Bob’s alcoholism. Over time, he lost his marriage, his job, his driver’s license and his home. But he never lost the love of his only son.

When Bob hit rock bottom at 60, Mike didn’t bail him out. He brought him to MorningStar Mission. “Now there was a chance for him to be sober,” Mike says. “Eventually, he apologized to me for the drinking and everything, and we slowly built our relationship back. Now, my dad was there for me. And he never asked for anything.”

Bob had a talent for organization. That and his “big heart” made him a natural to work at the Mission’s front desk, welcoming guests and getting them registered, and coordinating pickups and deliveries. “He was the main guy everybody would go to,” Mike says. “It was the perfect job for him. He stopped thinking about himself and started thinking about others. He had a joy I’d never seen in him before.”

One day, Mike visited his dad at the home he lived in on campus. “I’d never seen him so happy,” he recalls. “I noticed there were boxes, like he hadn’t finished unpacking. He always had stuff in boxes. I looked up and saw the picture of Jesus on his wall, and I thought, ‘He’s never going to be fully home until he’s with You.’”

Bob went home to Jesus just days later.

“God answered my prayer for my dad to find peace and happiness,” Mike tells us. “It was great to be proud of my dad, to know he hadn’t wasted his life. He had just turned 68, and I’d had the best eight years of my life with him. I’m so grateful.”

