

# The MorningStar *Chronicle*

SEPTEMBER 2025

[MorningStarMission.org](http://MorningStarMission.org)

We are  
thankful  
for you —  
**always!**

"You are a light  
in a dark place."



MorningStar  
Mission™

# From Kevin to You



## Thankful in All Circumstances

Dear Friend,

Thanksgiving Day comes just once a year, but giving thanks happens every day at MorningStar Mission.

When a hurting neighbor comes in for a meal or just to get out of the elements and enjoy some warmth and conversation, their gratitude is plain to see. For those who stay longer to work toward lasting life transformation, every day is clearly a blessing in their eyes.

That's just as it should be for all of us, every single day. Even in the most trying of times, there is always something, however small, to be thankful for. A wonderful way to show your appreciation is by sharing your blessings with others who are less fortunate — which is exactly what you do when you support MorningStar Mission.


You usually read about program graduates in The MorningStar Chronicle, and this issue is no different. But you'll also meet one of our unhoused neighbors who comes to us simply for a place to sleep. When you sponsor a bed at the Mission for just \$37.37 a night, you bless men like Todd as well as men and women who stay with us while working toward better lives in our community. No matter how long they stay, all are important to God and to us.

As you start thinking about your own Thanksgiving dinner in the weeks ahead, please remember MorningStar Mission. Send a gift of support or see what you can do to make the holiday special for the men, women and children here. And always, keep us in your prayers. God bless you!

In His Love,

*Kevin Watson*

Kevin Watson  
Executive Director  
MorningStar Mission



*Give thanks in all  
circumstances,  
for this is God's will  
for you in Christ Jesus.*

— 1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV

# Giving Thanks for a Warm Bed

*Not every man who comes to MorningStar Mission joins the Men's 180 Residential Recovery Program. This Thanksgiving, we will welcome our neighbors who simply come for meals and the occasional night of shelter. They stay for fellowship and join us for chapel. They are loved and cared for as much as anyone who has committed themselves to lasting life transformation. And they are deeply thankful for all of those things.*

Todd has been coming to MorningStar for two years. He has a job, but it doesn't pay enough to put a roof over his head. He likes to sleep in his car when the weather is nice, but he appreciates a warm bed when the temperature drops below freezing. He showers here, goes to work early in the morning and comes back for dinner.

"I hurt my spine and I was out of work for a year," Todd tells us. "I lost my apartment, and I came to MorningStar Mission for someplace to stay." Todd says he cannot join the program because he would have to give up his job and would be unable to make his car payments. However, he is a staunch champion of MorningStar Mission.

"The staff members are my best friends," Todd says. "They're always looking out for you. They know what you're going through. They help you if you want help."

Todd is also grateful for the help you provide through your generous support of MorningStar Mission. "Please keep donating. People here need it."

**Just \$37.37 will sponsor a bed for a guest like Todd, and it will be a real blessing as the nights get colder and longer. Please go to [morningstarmission.org/sponsor-a-bed/](https://morningstarmission.org/sponsor-a-bed/) or scan this QR code to donate now. Thank you!**



## Join our New Lenox Culinary Caravan!

**Sign up for an evening of great food and fellowship with friends of MorningStar Mission. The Caravan starts at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 16.** You will be visiting four area restaurants for food and drink.

Enjoy delicious food, lots of laughs and community connection as you support our work with the hungry and unhoused in all of Will County.

**For more information or to purchase your ticket, go to: [morningstarmission.org/event/joliet-culinary-caravan-2025/](https://morningstarmission.org/event/joliet-culinary-caravan-2025/)**



# You Were Light in a Dark Place to AJ

In our Spring issue of The Messenger, we introduced you to Tom Hounihan, a long-time volunteer at MorningStar Mission and mentor to many in our Men's 180 Residential Recovery Program. In 2012, Tom was a mentor to a young man named AJ. This is AJ's story.



AJ had been addicted to heroin and pain pills for 11 years. "It was very painful physically, emotionally and spiritually. There was a lot of heartbreak," he admits — not only for himself, but for his family.

AJ's wife, Serena, had stood by him as long as she could, but she eventually asked him to leave. "I had to give him to God," she explains. AJ lived in his van for a short time before coming to MorningStar Mission.

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**"I had been in and out of rehab for years," AJ recalls, "and I knew I had to make this work. I soaked everything up and made the most of it."**

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"I had been in and out of rehab for years," AJ recalls, "and I knew I had to make this work. I soaked everything up and made the most of it."

During his six months at MorningStar Mission, AJ developed a close relationship with Tom that continues to this day. He credits Tom's wisdom as a recovering alcoholic with helping him through the program and maintaining his own sobriety for 13 years.

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**"You give people the time and resources they desperately need to get well. You are a light in a dark place."**

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AJ also tells us MorningStar Mission gave him the time he needed to get better. "A 28-day rehab is not enough," he says. "I needed half a year to reset, to get into the Word and prepare to live a normal life. By the time I got home, I was ready."

AJ, Serena and their two children got involved with their church. The children were active in their youth group, and AJ became a worship leader. For the first time in years, AJ says, "Life got fun!"

Since leaving MorningStar Mission, AJ has followed Tom's example and mentored several men. Today, he is busy working, serving at his church and being a husband and father ... soon to be a grandfather!

But AJ knows he wouldn't be where he is today without you. "You saved my life," he tells you. "You give people the time and resources they desperately need to get well. You are a light in a dark place."

See more of AJ and Serena's story! Scan the code with your smartphone for his video testimony.

