

Upcoming Events

- September:**
- Atlanta activist Robert Lupton (see article in this newsletter) serves up an intriguing look at "Toxic Charity" Sept. 25 at our Annual Banquet at the Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville.
- October:**
- Our "Ministry Update and Thank You" luncheon for donors and volunteers will be held Oct 11.
- November:**
- We will again host our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner the Sunday before Thanksgiving. It's open to anyone in the community and often serves close to 200. We count on generosity and dozens of volunteers to make it happen. Our biggest need: Turkeys and pies.



Thanksgiving Dinner

Benchmarks

- 106 men exited shelter January through June, with only 2 cases of recidivism
- 77 men found jobs: 75 percent
- 73 men found housing: 69 percent

15th Annual Golf Scramble

Nearly a hundred West Michigan golfers teed off on June 25 in the 15th Annual Guiding Light Mission Golf Scramble at Centennial Country Club. John Steensma of Grand Rapids carded a lucky hole-in-one. The event raised over \$15,000 toward the New Life In Christ program, emergency shelter and the ongoing needs of the addicted and homeless. Thanks all!



Golf Outing



Raised over \$15,000!

'Toxic Charity'

Banquet speaker explores ways that helping can hurt

The impulse is natural. It is even seen as noble. But in Robert Lupton's view, the act of giving often does more harm than good.

The long-time Atlanta urban activist calls it "Toxic Charity," the title of a 2011 book that questions deeply-held assumptions about how to help the needy. Lupton, founder of FCS Urban Ministries, will speak on the subject at the Guiding Light Mission Annual Banquet Sept. 25 at the Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville.

He cites a Christmas eve decades ago as he lingered in the home of a low-income inner city neighbor and her children. With a knock on the door, a well-dressed family with young children was ushered inside as they proceeded to dispense neatly wrapped presents.

No one except the mother noticed that the children's father had left the room in shame.

"I was witnessing a side I had never noticed before: how a father is emasculated in his

own home in front of his wife and children for not being able to provide presents for his family," Lupton writes.

The church scrapped its adopt-a-family program. Instead, donors contributed gifts and parents from the neighborhood were invited to a charity store where they could purchase them at a bargain price.

"Anything that diminishes dignity is working against God's purposes."

"God has created us with dignity. Anything that diminishes that is working against God's purposes," Lupton said.

He recounted a mission project to a remote Honduran village in which residents had to walk for hours each day to obtain clean drinking water. Mission volunteers dug a well and were cheered as saviors.

The following year, mission volunteers found the women again walking for hours for their water. The well was



Annual Banquet speaker Robert Lupton

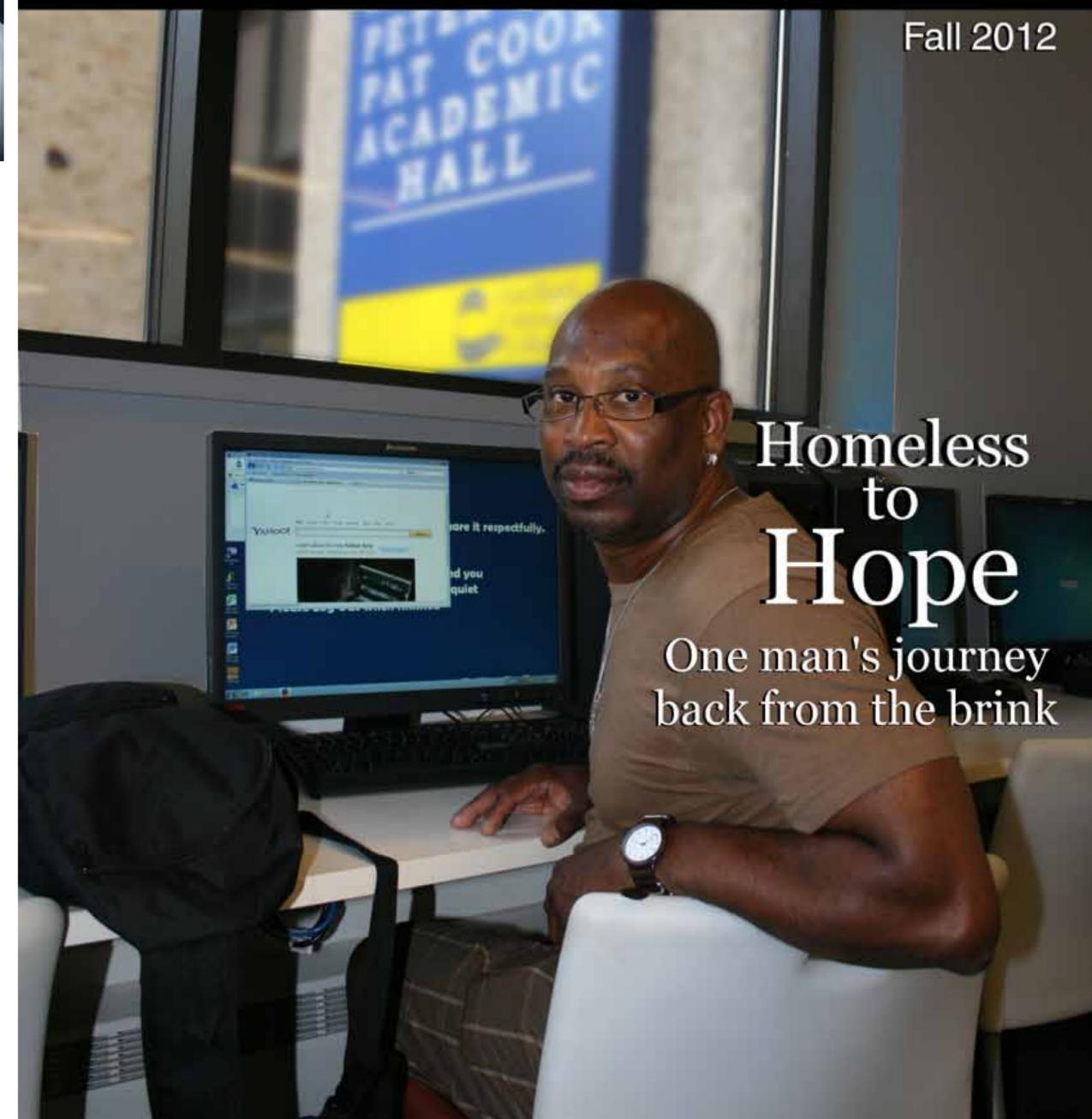
guiding light mission

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TIMES

Fall 2012



Homeless to Hope

One man's journey back from the brink

GUIDING LIGHT MISSION

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255 S. Division Ave. Grand Rapids MI 49503 • www.lifeonthestreet.org

GUIDING LIGHT: OUR MISSION

Guiding Light Mission exists to create a healing experience that allows individuals to discover a new life in Christ. We expect re-engagement in community. We provide food and shelter to all and resources to men that support their social, physical, spiritual, and intellectual needs.

To Give: Jessica Manfrin - [616] 451-0236 ext. 13
To Volunteer: Katie Hop - [616] 451-0236 ext. 14

A Hand Up

“We love nothing better than to say goodbye.”

Did you know?

We have changed.

We still shelter men in crisis, just as we have done for decades. Feed them, provide a warm bed and shelter from the storm. Offer spiritual sustenance.

But we now expect something in return. And why wouldn't we?

God instills in us all the gifts we need to succeed. It is our mission that those who walk through our door have every chance to do so. With His help, with the aid of thousands of volunteers and your generous contributions, we do more than ever to guide the way back.

That means building resumes. Learning the importance of being on time. Accountable. Responsible. Discovering that others will not trust you if you do not first trust yourself.

We expect our men to take active part in keeping our Mission clean and well maintained. To respect both staff and residents alike. We expect them to look for jobs and other places to stay. Call it a cliché if you like, but we are all about a hand up and not a hand out. This is not a home. It is a way station on a road to something better.

Our Annual Banquet speaker, Robert Lupton, has a lifetime of experience with this. It has taught him that to give and expect nothing in return is ultimately to rob a man of his dignity. We might feel good in the giving, but are we merely striving to please ourselves?

And so this journey leads back out that door and into the wider world where we all belong. Our graduates, if you will, can walk with heads held high, a paycheck in their hand and a place to call their own.

Yes, we love our residents. But we love nothing better than to say goodbye.

We call it rescue, recovery and re-engagement. It is who we are.

And we can't do it without you.



Stuart Ray

Executive Director: Guiding Light Mission



Hope

Former Guiding Light Mission resident finds his way from crime and addiction to faith, academic pride and renewed family ties

Life's routine looks different to Todd Johnson these days than it did a few years ago.

With his own apartment, volunteer commitments and a chosen career path, he is busy for all the right reasons. Not long ago he was busy scrounging for drugs or alcohol as he wandered the streets of Grand Rapids.

“I feel great. I don't look over my shoulder,” Johnson explains.

Instead, Johnson, 49, looks straight ahead as he marks four years of sobriety that include four months in Guiding Light Mission's rehabilitation program. He is among dozens of Mission graduates who traded the imprisonment of despair and addiction for independent, constructive lives.

And that is the result of a consistent and growing Mission emphasis, says Mission executive director Stuart Ray.

“God has provided each of us very special gifts and talents. Guiding Light Mission is helping men discover these talents and take those special gifts back in the

community.”

He believes there is no past so dark that cannot be overcome with faith, motivation and a desire to change.

Johnson is living proof. “I woke up with a piece of steel pointed at my head,” he recalled.

That was eight years ago in Indiana, the day a drug deal went wrong. His former partner tracked

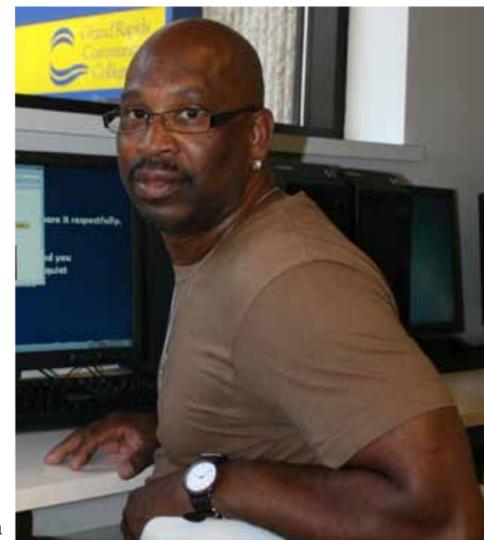
“It's not an ‘I’ program. It's a ‘We’ program.”

him down, put a gun to his head and marched him out in a dark alley where Johnson was sure he would meet his end. A car pulled into the alley, its headlights momentarily distracting the would-be shooter.

Johnson struck his rival and took off running, eventually winding up back in his home town of Grand Rapids. He would spend years on the streets, homeless, estranged from family.

In 2009, he checked into the treatment program at the Mission. He rediscovered his faith.

He learned he needed to be accountable,



Todd Johnson takes pride in classes at Grand Rapids Community College

to himself and others. He learned discipline.

“It's not an ‘I’ program. It's a ‘We’ program,” he said.

Johnson proudly maintains his own apartment in Grand Rapids. He volunteers at the Mission and served an internship at a Grand Rapids drug rehabilitation house. He is taking classes at Grand Rapids Community College that he hopes will lead to a career as a counselor.

And he is back on good terms with his mother and family members. A smile lights his face.

“My Mom is proud of me now. We talk every day. Now they have respect for me.”

Where there was doubt, he feels an unseen hand at work in his life.

“I knew there was a God but I didn't believe it until some things happened.

“There is a God.”

Step by Step

His father was dying of cancer.

And though Belmont resident Frank Bross had long considered himself a Christian, he did not deem himself truly saved until the final months of his father's life.

“I never really grasped that God wanted a personal relationship with us through Christ, not just an intellectual one,” recalled Bross, 67.

His father died in 1978. That year marked a new commitment by Bross to the works of faith. Church connections called him a year ago to Guiding Light Mission.

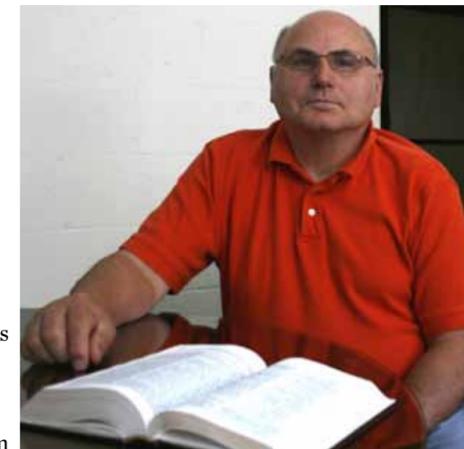
He is among hundreds of volunteers who are critical in making the Mission what it is.

“I don't even think we would be able to function without them,” says volunteer coordinator Katie Hop.

Bross teaches Bible

lessons. He also mentors men, guiding them in a one-on-one relationship through the transition from dependence or homelessness to a positive life.

Step by step, this modest, retired forklift driver draws on lessons from his own life to point the way to a better path.



Frank Bross enjoys helping others as a volunteer at Guiding Light Mission

“The biggest reward is to see the fellas grow in the Lord and come to the Lord and service.”

As one of 14 children growing up in Berrien County, Bross discovered at a young age he was not the center of the universe. He learned about courage and humility from three special needs children he and his wife adopted after they were married in 1991.

“They are always more willing to speak from the heart,” Bross said.

As a mentor, he might take a resident to a

Whitecaps baseball game. They might go down the street for a cup of coffee and a candid chat about choices.

“I don't want to sound pious but the biggest reward I get from this is to see the fellas grow in the Lord and come to the Lord and service.

“We are going to get out of the Christian life the same thing we get out of the natural life. We get as much out of it as we put into it.”

Did You Know?

•Guiding Light Mission welcomed more than 400 different volunteers the first six months of 2012

•In 2011, volunteers donated 12,536 hours. The mission is on track to log 14,180 hours for 2012

•Volunteers include a retired archeologist, bank vice president, college professor, firefighter, lawyer and magician

•Volunteers are kitchen servers, mentors, chapel speakers, Bible study leaders, class leaders, tutors, office and legal assistants

•Donated items include clothing, personal hygiene items, blankets, medical supplies and food

•24 different organizations have donated time and effort