Spring clean your closets!

There are so many ways to give to the Mission—and so many reasons to do it. Many of the people who come to Buffalo City Mission arrive with only the clothes on their back. They’re worn out, dirty and hungry. After a hearty meal, the first thing they need is a shower and some clean clothes. What an encouragement a new pair of pants or a brightly patterned shirt is to someone in need! It can be the beginning of hope—the fresh start that can launch a new life.

Donating your gently used clothing is a blessing.

It’s a bargain hunter’s paradise!

The Buffalo City Mission Thrift Store is packed with clothing, household items, small appliances, knick-knacks, linens and much, much more. Treasure hunters will be amazed at our selection of bargain-priced antique and vintage items, too. You’ll also be glad to know that the Mission will be able to use all the proceeds to provide meals, shelter and life-changing recovery programs to hurting people all year round. Visit us at 510 Dick Road in Depew, M-F: 9 a.m.–8 p.m., Sat: 9 a.m.–6 p.m., (716) 681-9128.

Another way to give!
Shop—at our Thrift Store, or our online store at www.buffalocitymission.org

We need and welcome your donations!

Always on our “wish list” are donations of:
• Furniture
• Non-perishable food items such as canned fruit, vegetables and spices
• All sizes of new and gently used clothing for men, women and children

Thank you for the tangible ways you care!

Urgently needed basics:
• Deodorant
• Razors (for women)
• Baby shampoo
• Baby wipes
• Men’s socks
• Men’s clothes (XL, 00L)

Get connected!

Visit us at any of the following sites for up-to-date information about the work you support. Sign up here:
www.buffalocitymission.org

BY THE NUMBERS

January–December 2011

As you can see “by the numbers,” your gifts made a tremendous difference in 2011 for men, women and families in the Buffalo area who are going through tough times. Thank you for helping us provide:

More than 164,505 meals
More than 79,103 nights of shelter
Over 1,147 bags of groceries supplied to poor and needy families

Together we are changing lives in 2012. May God bless you for caring!

BUFFALO CARES

Without a father, André was lost, until his mother’s love brought him home...

André’s mother always adored him, and she raised him to be a good boy. As a child he developed a close relationship with God by reading his Bible every day. But it was the lack of his father’s presence that unfortunately made a stronger impact on his life.

His father was a “hustler”

André’s father sold drugs and traveled all over the country fathering 17 children with different women. When André graduated from college, he let go of his relationship with God and began to follow in his father’s footsteps. He sold everything, from T-shirts to drugs, just to make ends meet. “There was a time when I actually dedicated my life to the service of His [God’s] word and helping people grow in the knowledge of His Word. And I put that down. And that became my utter destruction. The alcohol took over,” André admits.

But his mother’s love proved more powerful

André hit the breaking point after meeting his mother in a Burger King parking lot across from a rundown hotel. He had run out of money, and his mother was finally cutting him off. André says, “When I got in the car, she looked at me, and she said, ‘You know, you scare me.’ I could feel where she was coming from. I had a real sinister, evil look because that’s how I was living. From that moment on, I know I had to be focusing in on true change.” That’s when André came to Buffalo City Mission and recommitted his life to Christ. André tells why our program works when others fail:

Because the one thing true about the Buffalo City Mission, it’s God’s house. Here...people are able to be saved. The Mission provides a place where a man can actually relax. He can eat. He can be housed. He can be clothed. And it can really just change the way he looks at life.

André’s goals for the future include “becoming a permanent fixture in this program to help people.” He also intends to enhance his church family and serve God the best that he can. He adds, “I’m in this ministry and I’m all in. I’ve given my life over to this ministry. That’s my goal, so any way I can help and be productive. This will be a long-term thing no matter what else I do.”

André’s mother has walked with him every step of the way. She’s been present so much at the Mission that the other men see her as their mother too. Many of them feel comforted and strengthened by her presence. That’s what a mother’s love can do!
From the Executive Director

Renewing hope

Isn’t it a special time? I love it because it reminds us all that Christ’s death can renew every one of us, no matter what we’ve done. This renewal frees us from the chains of our old life and gives us hope for the future. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation!”

For the people we serve here at Buffalo City Mission—people with crippling spiritual and emotional “baggage”—this good news is life-changing. When they really get their hearts around this truth, it sets them free to start over. Even so, lasting recovery is hard work. It requires a daily decision to let Jesus be Lord—one minute, one hour, one day at a time. And it takes hard work and tenacious commitment to replace stubborn, self-destructive habits with new ones that transform a heart and fashion a willing soul into the child of faith God meant them to be all along.

In this issue, André and Judy share their inspiring stories of transformation. By their testimonies, we ask our guests about the reasons that led to their homelessness. We asked our guests about the reasons that led to their homelessness. The following is a list of their responses:

- Job loss
- Lack of education
- Lack of job skills
- Legal problems
- Drugs or alcohol
- Divorce
- Released from jail
- Fixed income
- Mismanged money
- Gambling
- Bad decisions
- Strayed from God
- Peer pressure
- Kidnapped out of a friend’s home
- Bankruptcy
- No car
- Family problems
- Domestic violence
- Child abuse
- Home condemned
- Parent in jail
- Sex
- Mental illness
- Injuries
- Bad relationships
- Death
- No child support

At Buffalo City Mission, we understand the facts surrounding homelessness and see every homeless guest as an individual who deserves a second chance. Your giving allows Buffalo City Mission to reach out with comprehensive programs that address these and other problems. By teaching adults and children new ways to cope and live, the Mission can help prevent future homelessness. Isn’t that what you would want?

(All statistics and information gathered from BCM’s website. Studies conducted by the Homeless Alliance of Western New York.)

Mission Highlight

Proud to be a member

Buffalo City Mission partners with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). We’re proud to be a member in good standing. The ECFA is an accreditation agency dedicated to helping Christian ministries earn the public’s trust through adherence to seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship. If you are interested in learning more about these standards, or to learn what other Christ-based organizations are doing to minister to the homeless, please visit www.ecfa.org.

“...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation!”

2 Corinthians 5:17

The reasons for homelessness are varied and complex. Not every homeless person suffers from addiction, mental illness or lack of a work ethic. In fact, in Buffalo only 30% of homeless people residing in shelters cited mental illness as an issue, and only 22.9% said that substance abuse was a reason for their homelessness.

According to a survey conducted by the Homeless Alliance in 2008, 11.4% of homeless individuals residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or permanent, supportive housing have a full- or part-time job. 19.7% of low-income and/or homeless individuals accessing services from various providers such as food pantries have a full- or part-time job.

Most of those people often have to decide between buying food and paying rent, and are one emergency away from homelessness. We asked our guests about the reasons that led to their homelessness.

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Why are we homeless?

What if it happened to you?

Judy opens up about her past

Out on her own at age 16

Life just hadn’t presented Judy with opportunities that would help her get ahead. By the age of 16, both of Judy’s parents had died and she was out on her own. She supported herself by working as a waitress, but in her off hours she drank heavily—just as both of her parents had before. Judy had her first child at 18 and her second child at age 20. By sheer grit and determination, she survived against all odds. She spent the next 25 years looking for a home in the arms of abusive men. She doesn’t like to talk much about that time in her life, but one thing she is grateful for is that it led her to the Buffalo City Mission’s Women and Children’s Shelter, Cornerstone Manor.

God wrapped His arms around her

After 25 years of heartache and addiction, Judy was finally ready to take her recovery seriously. She was living on the streets in Florida, and didn’t have a penny to her name. The city was offering one-way tickets to homeless people so that they could return home. Judy jumped at the chance. Once she arrived at the Shelter, Judy was welcomed with open arms. She received the care she needed to be set free from alcoholism, and has learned how to have a personal relationship with God. The Shelter showed Judy how the Bible could draw her closer to Him. Her favorite Bible passage is Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...” She says, “If you believe and pray and you know that He is there for you, He is. You feel better. You’re happier in every way.”

Having the life she imagined

Judy is sober and has lost all of her need to drink. She is truly a living example of life renewed by God’s love. Her goals for the future include learning computer skills and enjoying her family for a long time to come. She wants to thank donors for helping provide a safe place for women and children to stay.

Judy says, “It’s very generous and very kind.”

Judy’s parents had before her.

Is 2 Corinthians 5:17

Stuart L. Harper
Executive Director

www.buffalocitymission.org (716) 854-8181

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Yes! I’ll help renew lives this Easter season. To provide meals and life-changing care, I’m enclosing:

☐ $15  ☐ $30  ☐ $50  ☐ $150  ☐ $________

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY  STATE  ZIP

EMAIL

TO GIVE A GIFT BY CREDIT CARD, VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.BUFFALOCITYMISSION.ORG OR CALL (716) 854-8181, ext. 429.

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