

FEBRUARY 2024

GATEWAY

RESCUE MISSION



TAKING MINISTRY TO THE STREETS

OUR MISSION *To offer life changing hope through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to men, women, and children through programs to deliver food, shelter, counseling and discipleship*



Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.

- C.T. Studd



REX BAKER

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ricky started camping out across the street from Gateway Rescue Mission several weeks ago. He had blankets and clothes strung out along the sidewalk for about 15 yards. The Friday before the big freeze hit, we literally begged Ricky to spend the coming nights in our shelter because we didn't want him to freeze to death.

Ricky ultimately came in from the cold and spent the frigid nights warm in our shelter. However, he doesn't like to stay in shelters and as soon as the weather warmed back up Ricky began cursing out Gateway staff and program residents alike and soon went his own way.

Just south of Highway 80, a closed-down tire shop serves as an impromptu homeless camp. Most days a group of homeless people gather round a fire in a 55-gallon drum and sleep in makeshift tents. Further down the street, a camp offset into some woods sports an American flag hung in the trees.

The big question in my mind is why? Why do people choose to live in squalid, third-world conditions when they could find a clean, warm, safe bed at area shelters such as Gateway Rescue Mission? From my viewpoint, it boils down to two primary factors. One is mental illness. You don't have to be around Ricky long to realize that his mental compass is broken.

The other major factor is drug and/or alcohol addiction. Here's an example. We recently helped a lady who was living on the streets of Jackson get reunited with her family in another state. Family members drove to Jackson, picked her up, and took her home with them. A few days later, this lady showed back up at Gateway with her suitcase. The reality for her, and many others, is they would rather live homeless with no thought given to anything other than getting high than live in the real world with a job and responsibilities.

Then at some point, the drugs and mental illness come together and manifest in a life with the individual trapped in a prison without the power or will to escape. To be clear, not every homeless person is a drug addict. We need to be careful not to lump everyone under the same banner. I am merely sharing the factors I see that seem to be driving the increase in homeless people in our community.

Here's what we have started doing at Gateway Rescue Mission. Brad, our energetic New Life Program second lieutenant, took a team of our addiction recovery program residents out to do street ministry. They took care packages to the homeless camp at the tire store and prayed for several people there. Brad texted me later that day that "it was awesome!"

Our focus on street ministry is to get to know the people on the streets. We want to learn their stories and pray for the power of God to change their lives. Something happens when we take someone by the hand, or put our hand on their shoulder, and pray for them. In that moment, the natural connects with the supernatural, opening the door for the potential start of a miracle.

Not everybody stays outside. During the hard freeze our shelter was packed beyond capacity, as we used our chapel for overflow beds. Our New Life addiction recovery program is going full force. It's a joy to see men in our recovery program giving back by going on the streets to pray for a homeless person or helping care for others in our shelter.

It's not our job to save people. That's God's job. However, every donation you make or prayer you offer on behalf of Gateway Rescue Mission means that a hungry person gets a meal. When the temperature drops to 10 degrees, people can get a warm bed. And when God in heaven wants to touch a wandering soul on the streets of Jackson, our team can be there to voice a prayer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rex M. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rex Baker
Executive Director
Gateway Rescue Mission

VISIT GATEWAYMISSION.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW
YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE TODAY



Street Ministry

Our street ministry team has started going out on Monday mornings to deliver care packages to homeless people and to pray with them. Chris is shown on our front cover this month praying with someone at a homeless camp.



Here are some quotes from our team upon returning from their ministry efforts:

“After a short conversation and giving them a care package with blankets, gloves, and snacks, I asked if it was okay to pray with them. The two of them held hands and went to the Lord for prayer. The look in their eyes after calling to the Lord was heart-warming.”—Dalton

“Angie was the second person I met. She wasn’t very talkative but did allow me to pray for her and was thankful for the hygiene supplies and the blanket she received. Then I met Derrick. He told me that some poor choices in life had caused him to be homeless. He was very grateful for the care package and allowed me to pray for him. I’m grateful for these individuals. They helped me come out of my shell about meeting new people and it also helped me realize how blessed I am.—Quinton

I prayed with Michael. I put my right hand on his forehead and prayed for peace that only Jesus can give and prayed for God to intervene in his life. He was thankful for the care package and for the outreach.—Chris

Through your support of Gateway Rescue Mission, prayers are going up to heaven and lives are being changed!!

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Hungry people get good food every day at Gateway Rescue Mission. One Sunday during the cold streak we fed 144 people at lunch. One of my personal favorites is tuna-fish, which we usually serve each Thursday.

Also, we're drinking a lot of coffee these days. We host an addiction recovery support meeting each Thursday evening at Gateway. This is for the men in our New Life Program. No meeting of this sort is complete without a hot cup of coffee. We certainly appreciate the coffee that y'all faithfully supply. Rest assured we faithfully drink it!!

We'd like to give a great big Gateway Shout Out to all who give of your finances, prayers and in-kind donations to support our work at Gateway Rescue Mission.



CURRENT NEEDS

- **Toothbrushes and Toothpaste.** We go through a lot of these and they're a core part of hygiene.
- **Underwear, T-Shirts, & Socks.** These wear out quickly and we're always in need of underwear, t-shirts, and socks.
- **Razors and Shaving Cream.** A clean shave can completely change an appearance and change the way you feel about yourself.
- **Women's Hygiene Supplies.** We give these out to women who come by to eat and request them.
- **Coffee.** Who doesn't need a hot cup of joe? We can always use coffee – and creamer, too!
- **Coffee Creamer.** Not everyone likes it strong! Powdered creamer works best for us as it keeps longer.

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