

MARCH 2024

GATEWAY

RESCUE MISSION



R.I.P MRS. COOPER

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



FROM THE DIRECTOR

REX BAKER

It's a funny thing, this thing we call life, and the people who cross our paths during our journey on this earth. Mrs. Lizzie Cooper has been a regular in my life since my rookie days at Gateway Rescue Mission. However, she wasn't a planned part of my existence. Rather, Mrs. Cooper, as we affectionately called her, was one of those people who just showed up in my life one day and hung around for the next quarter of a century, brightening our days at Gateway while she did the Lord's work.

Mrs. Cooper had two different lives. The first life was that of a businessperson. She would often say that was before Jesus got a hold of her life. After Jesus changed her life, she began helping people in her neighborhood near Jackson State University. I don't know if Mrs. Cooper's ministry ever had a mission statement, a strategic plan, or a fancy logo.

However, Mrs. Cooper definitely lived her life on mission for Jesus Christ. She developed a neighborhood ministry centered around what we just called "Mrs. Cooper's place." She gave out food to the hungry, clothes to folks who needed them, and helped whoever she met. Her work inevitably crossed our paths.

Most days, Mrs. Cooper would pull her big pickup truck into our driveway and honk the horn. Our deskman would load a dozen or so to-go trays into her truck. During hot weather she might ask for a case of water. Around Thanksgiving she would ask for turkeys. We all knew that this food was going directly to help people in Mrs. Cooper's community a few blocks away.

Mrs. Cooper would sometimes ask for a few hundred dollars to help send neighborhood kids to summer camp. Other times she would call me and ask for furniture from our thrift store to help a single mother who had nothing. At times we would be slammed with our own work when

Mrs. Cooper called, but like the persistent widow in the Bible, she kept asking and we obliged.

Every Gateway ragamuffin who crossed paths with Mrs. Cooper knew three things. Mrs. Cooper loved Jesus, Mrs. Cooper loved the unlovable, and Mrs. Cooper wasn't leaving until she got what she came for. Oh, and a fourth thing. We knew what Mrs. Cooper asked for was going directly to the Lord's work.

I've seen Mrs. Cooper pull up with her truck windows down and say to someone from the streets "hey Sugar, come on with me and let's get you fixed up." Mrs. Cooper had a clear, distinct, and joyful voice. She would keep me updated on street gossip, inquire into my health, and would always ask about my family. When she was through talking, Mrs. Cooper would loudly proclaim with a smile on her face "Hallelujah, praise the Lord, and thank you Jesus!"

I knew her health was failing the last few years. Yet, even when she was no longer able to round up the kids for camp, she kept right on dropping by for a stack of to-go plates from our kitchen to take to the people under her care. When I heard Mrs. Cooper had passed, it was one of those moments when you stop and realize another piece of walking, talking history has left this world and is now with Jesus. But our world is just a tad more melancholy without them.

Mrs. Lizzie Cooper never figured into my life's goals and ambitions. Her ministry did not have a line-item in the Gateway budget. However, she made an eternal impact in her little corner of this big world. While I will miss her, I know Heaven is a little louder and more joyful today with her presence, as she is likely right now walking those streets of gold and greeting those who have gone on before her with a smile and a "Hallelujah, praise the Lord, and thank you Jesus!"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rex M. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rex Baker
Executive Director
Gateway Rescue Mission

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



Street Ministry

On behalf of the Gateway crew, we dedicate this picture of a stack of to-go trays to Mrs. Lizzie Cooper. These trays sit in the same spot where her trays would be placed each day for her to come by and pick them up. We should all live our lives to honor God by loving and helping others in the spot where He has placed us in this life.

In keeping with Mrs. Cooper's ministry to the "least of these", our little rescue team of guys in our New Life Program can be seen praying and ministering to folks on the streets. Jeremy (with the glasses) is shown here praying with someone in need of some love, while Randall (pictured standing) is also praying with a person on the streets.



With March already here, we continue to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and provide our New Life Program for men seeking to overcome addictions. Thank you all for helping our ministry continue forward in 2024.

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With your support, we recently purchased a new freezer/walk in cooler to store food for our kitchen. The freezer has arrived, but has not yet been installed at the time of this Gateway chronicle going to print. However, I did find Popsicle, our zany feline mascot, perched atop the cooler walls in our warehouse, making sure the cooler is protected until we can get it installed.

We'd like to give big ole Gateway shout-out to all of you who keep us supplied with coffee. Pictured here are a few of our "program guys" loading up on coffee before a support group meeting. As my daddy used to say "Son, if you never drink anything worse than coffee, you'll be alright." Because of your support, we haven't had to buy coffee in our kitchen in a good while.



CURRENT NEEDS

- **Non-perishable food and canned goods.** We depend on your donations to keep our pantry stocked year-round.
- **Hair-clippers for personal grooming.** (We get some shade-tree barbers in our program from time to time, and they have a ministry of cutting hair for those coming off the streets.)
- **Combs and hair brushes.**
- **Personal hygiene supplies such as body soap, shaving cream, toothpaste, and razors.** The bottles of body wash work well for the men in our New Life Program who are residents with us.
- **Coffee.** (coffee is sort of a standing request.)
- **Your prayers for God's wisdom as we plot our future and for the power of God to set people free from addictions at Gateway Rescue Mission.**

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