

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSION NETWORK

Food, Clothing, Shelter ... and so much more!

JANUARY 2021

**“This place gave
me a whole new
outlook...”**

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**INSIDE: From Cocaine to RECLAIM | G.I.R.L.S. Class on True Love
Become an Anchor of Hope | Make Today Count for Tomorrow**



Introducing RECLAIM

“No one wants to be homeless forever,” says Michael Marshall, The Union Mission’s Transitional Resource Specialist. “People want to change. They want to live normal, independent lives, but sometimes they don’t know where to start. They need help.”

That’s why the Mission has launched RECLAIM, our upgraded transitional training program at the Bashford Men’s Shelter. RECLAIM is designed to prepare and empower men with the information, resources, and skills they need to overcome the issues that led to their homelessness.

Even the name RECLAIM is redemptive, says UMM Associate Director, Rev. William Crawley. The word has several definitions that fit the program’s goal: “to right lives that have gone wrong,” “to recall from improper conduct,” “to regain possession,” “to restore to a previous natural condition,”

and “to rescue from an undesirable state.” Pairing both practical and professional instruction with the wisdom of God’s Word has a powerful impact in preparing men for better futures.

Case Managers refer men to RECLAIM after they have completed 45 days in emergency shelter. A screening interview explains the program goals and rules, ascertains a guest’s next-step plans and initiative, and confirms that his income will allow him to pay a nominal rent for a shared room at first or a single room later.

RECLAIM offers each resident access to a wide variety of classes and resources, and each man’s plan is personalized to his specific needs and hopes. The timeframe for participation varies from tenant to tenant, but 18 to 24 months is common.

Mission staff and community partners teach important life skills. Class

options include financial and credit literacy, wellness and nutrition, stress and anger management, family and parenting skills, job readiness and promotion, rental basics, social services navigation and Social Security or Veteran’s benefits, educational opportunities, good mental health, and substance abuse peer recovery and relapse prevention.

The most transformative change comes from the Scriptural emphasis on relationships with God and with others. “What we offer is practical theology,” says Rev. Adrian Wyrick, RECLAIM’s Spiritual Formation Counselor. Through small group Bible studies in their Man Cave and weekly one-on-one discussions, “we teach the men how we apply Jesus to our lives. It’s about ‘How can I still be me, but a Christian? How can I make wise decisions using the spiritual tools I have?’”

A sense of brotherhood also reinforces the men’s trajectories to independence. RECLAIM can accommodate up to 80 men who all live on the shelter’s upper floors. Community service opportunities and social activities like game nights, movies, and pool or chess tournaments help them develop relationships and a sense of community. As their friendships grow, they encourage each other to do well and stay on track.

“Changing your thoughts will change your direction,” says Michael Marshall, and as the men each work through their different root problems, they experience a powerful, life-changing hope that sets them up for success. “They’ve come here because of their past, but they’re really here for their future.”



From Cocaine to RECLAIM: Sam's Journey

Sam, 64, was a “knucklehead” for too long. Though his housing project neighborhood in Portsmouth, Va. was tough, “I can't really blame the area I lived in. I chose the wild life.”

Sam grew up attending church, but stopped going and dropped out of high school. He started smoking marijuana, then “I did cocaine and was messing around with a little heroin...and girls.” He soon found himself hooked on cocaine.

Sam's longtime girlfriend also had drug problems, and for decades they hid them from her four children. When her job offered them free rehab, she went to treatment, but Sam turned it down. “I should have cleaned up, too,” he says. “That was my choice. I missed it.”

Within a year, she was drug-free and married to a preacher. Sam was homeless and alone, living in vacant buildings. A few times he was jailed for breaking and entering, which made it hard for him to pass background checks for jobs and housing.

“Cocaine: that was the problem for me.” When Sam finally made the choice to quit, “I stayed straight for about a year

on my own,” but he knew he had to get away from the temptation. At a local blood bank, a childhood friend told him about The Union Mission.

Sam arrived in March 2020.

“When I came here, that choice was a LOT easier: to be in a place that is drug-free, no alcohol, with time to think. That's all I needed.”

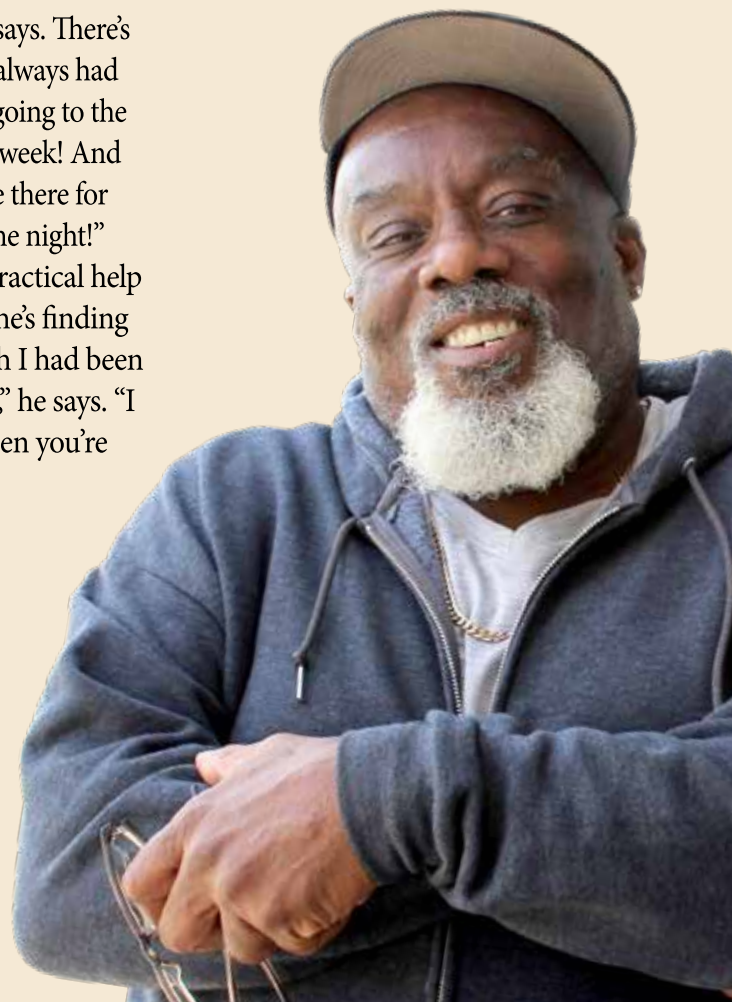
After six months in emergency shelter, Sam joined the RECLAIM program to continue his transition toward a better life. “I never gave myself this kind of opportunity earlier,” he says. “I'm serious about me now!”

“If you want to help yourself or be helped, this is the place to be—the freedom, the FOOD!” Sam says. There's also the faith. “Like I said, I always had church in my life. Here I'm going to the chapel three or four times a week! And every one of the staff, they're there for you any time of the day or the night!”

Sam appreciates the practical help and spiritual strength that he's finding through RECLAIM. “I wish I had been able to come two years ago,” he says. “I know what can happen when you're left alone.”

“When you've gotta come here, you're in a bad place,” but in “a place like this, there's a fresh start! I know I'm gonna have to go back out there to the real world. I ain't got no problem with that, but I can't be naïve about what's going on out there. Still, I know for real now the drugs are not going to be an issue for me. I'm not gonna mess it up. I'm not gonna let anyone else mess it up either.”

“This place gave me a whole new outlook on what I want to do with the rest of my life. I ain't that knucklehead I used to be. I'm looking at my blessings now!”



“Look, coming here, you've got nothing! By the time you get up those stairs, you've got everything you need!”

To read more about Sam's journey, search Stories of Hope on our website, unionmissionministries.org



G.I.R.L.S. Helps Women Discover True Love

Everybody wants to be loved, but if you've never experienced the real thing, how can you recognize the differences between healthy and unhealthy love? Learning to tell one from the other is the purpose of volunteer Malissa Edwards' seven-week class at our Women's Shelter.

G.I.R.L.S. (*Giving Individual Respect and Love to Self*) was originally designed for female inmates at the Norfolk City Jail. Malissa (*above right*) adapted her Bible-based study for our guests, many of whom have known the pain of being in a controlling, neglectful, or abusive relationship.

Malissa shares many of her own struggles: a husband with substance abuse problems, a difficult marriage and divorce, raising her girls as a single parent, the death of a loved one. Through it all, she testifies to God's faithful guidance and support in her life and shares how she overcame her past hurts to live now in love.

Understanding God's true love for His daughters helps women recognize when human love falls short. When they experience that love, they are able to stop looking for love in all the wrong places—or people. "If you are broken, you will attract brokenness," Malissa says. "Our experiences shape us and our decisions. Thankfully, the Lord will protect us from negative

people, but He also loves us enough to protect us from ourselves."

Each session builds on the lessons of the weeks before, and since "love is an action word," each session has self-examination exercises as well. First, the women discuss whether love should hurt and evaluate whether their constant, unreciprocated giving may actually be harming them. Next, they're challenged to identify when they each "lost themselves" and to whom or what. And by focusing on faith rather than fear, the ladies learn to say no and to set healthy boundaries for their new relationships.

In restoration, the ladies accept God's forgiveness and healing, and work to change their past thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. As the women experience real love in a healthy way, they master how to obey the Holy Spirit's promptings not to compromise. It's all a healthy start to loving anew.

"We often miss the blessing of where God is taking us by focusing on where we are," Malissa says, but by accepting God's love and following the Holy Spirit's promptings, a woman can avoid remaking the same relationship mistakes. "Our journey to wholeness encourages and empowers us to tell about God's goodness!"

Staff Needs

APPLY ONLINE AT
unionmissionministries.org

or send resume to Kathy Vaughan at kathy@ummnorva.org.

All applicants must be mature Christians.

Some positions require days, evenings, and weekends.

DAY SUPERVISOR
WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SHELTER

- Full-time, days may vary, 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Experience with children preferred
- Female only

EVENING SUPERVISOR
WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SHELTER

- Part-time, days may vary, 3 p.m. – 11 p.m.
- Experience with children preferred
- Female only

OVERNIGHT SUPERVISOR
WOMEN'S SHELTER

- Part-time, 11 p.m. – 7 a.m.
- Experience with cleaning preferred
- Female only

FACILITIES MANAGER

- Full-time
- Experience in facilities management, communications and construction required
- Only qualified candidates need apply

DRIVER

- Clean driving record
- Experience with box trucks required
- CDL preferred



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NORFOLK, VA 23502
757-627-8686



Thank you
for Your
Generosity!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If the last year has proven anything, it is that our God is always faithful! As we trust in His loving plan through the good and the bad in our lives, we experience His peace and His hope.

We love sharing these blessings of the Lord with our shelter guests, most of whom have experienced the worst year of their lives. They have faced and fought so much devastation: rejection, loss, fear, illness, addiction, financial ruin, even death. But here at The Union Mission Ministries, despite their homelessness, they find the alternative to anxiety and hopelessness.

Sam is one of the many men, women, and children here who is looking forward to 2021. He is a resident in RECLAIM, our new transitional program to help men move toward wiser decisions and permanent housing. Here Sam is building a new life without cocaine. Here he has rediscovered his faith and grown in his relationship with the Lord. Here is where his future begins.

Here is where so many lives start anew, thanks to your generous, sacrificial gifts. This coming year will bring new guests with new needs—and to help them all, we will need your prayers and financial support more than ever! We are eternally grateful for your partnership in our ministry, and that we can count on you, like our God, to be faithful!

Gratefully yours,

Rev. John W. Gray, Jr.
Executive Director

ANCHORS of HOPE ...

As a faithful monthly donor,
you are changing lives!

*"I'm thankful for a bed, food, friends,
peace—everything that a person needs
to feel whole."*

—Marcia

*"The Mission has given me hope again
and has made me open my heart to
God—and I know all is well as long as
I have God."*

—Demetrous

*"The Union Mission has been an
answer to many prayers. The support,
the opportunities, and the heartfelt
care from staff and guests alike has
allowed me to regain my sense of
purpose and given me a new-found
vision of service."*

—"Louisa"

**Become an Anchor of Hope today!
Contact Trudy Rains at
anchorsofhope@ummnorva.org
or 757-692-2498.**

Yes, Rev. Gray, I want to help those in your care find hopeful new lives in 2021!

I've enclosed: \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$_____

I would like to commit to a **monthly gift** of \$_____. My first gift is enclosed.

Method of Payment: Check VISA MasterCard American Express Discover

Card Number _____ CCV Code _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

*Please make your check payable to **The Union Mission**. To make an online donation, go to donate.unionmissionministries.org.*



Please complete this slip and return it to **The Union Mission** with your generous gift. Your gift is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.

01-2021

Make Your Life Today Count for Tomorrow!



Moments after take-off from New York's LaGuardia Airport on January 15, 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 collided with a flock of geese. Both engines lost power, forcing Captain Chesley Sullenberger to make an emergency landing. He told the 150 terrified passengers and five crew members to brace for impact. Ninety seconds later he glided over the George Washington Bridge and the plane splashed down...in the Hudson River! Miraculously, everyone survived. Sullenberger, the last person to leave the sinking plane, became a hero.

We've all heard that "tomorrow is promised to no one," and it's true. Life can change in an instant! In Psalm 139, David noted that God knows all about our lives before they even start: "all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." Life is a precious gift, yet it's humbling to realize we're just one breath away from becoming an empty seat at the table.

But this fact should move us to action, not alarm! Here's how to start:

SERVE OTHERS RATHER THAN YOURSELF.

Every person is born egocentric, but as we grow we learn that our actions can have great impact on others. God honors our sacrifices. Hebrews 6:10a says, "God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown...."

MOVE FROM FEAR TO FAITH.

Many people are consumed with the cares of life, but God created you for peace. As 2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline."

FOCUS ON GIVING, NOT GETTING.

A legacy of generosity demonstrates God's love and impacts others in a meaningful way. As Matthew 6:21 says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Plan your giving to support the people and causes you care about.

AN ESTATE GIFT TO THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES IS A POWERFUL WAY TO INVEST IN ETERNITY.

To create a will that reflects your values and blesses others, visit www.christianwill.org/umm or contact Helen Sommer at 757-627-8686, x504 or legacygiving@ummnorva.org.

Comments / Change of Address:

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PHONE

No person is denied service based on race, creed, gender, disability, or national origin.

Photos are representative of actual Mission clients.

If you would like to donate much-needed supplies, please see unionmissionministries.org/ways-to-give/give-goods. Thank you!

In the event contributions exceed expenses, extra funds will be used to feed, shelter, and care for the hungry and homeless throughout the year.

Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919-807-2214 or 888-830-4989 for NC residents.

THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES

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