

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSION NETWORK

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

SEPT./OCT. 2021

**"I want better for
myself. I'm not
giving up!"**

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**INSIDE: Our Youngest Guest Finds a Home | Improving Mental Health
Success at Camp Hope Haven | Promote Family Peace | We're Hiring!**

From HOMELESSNESS to *Hope*

At 13, Kadeem had no idea what post-traumatic stress disorder was. Now 19, he understands PTSD all too well.

Kadeem grew up in Grenada with his mother after his parents divorced, but as a teenager he wanted to get to know his dad. After he began acting out, his mom arranged for Kadeem to live with his father.

When Kadeem moved to Virginia, “my dad was a cool person,” though for the first two years his father served in the Army in a foreign combat zone. He returned very different, and Kadeem didn’t understand. His mother says that “fighting in the war” changed him. “I never knew why my dad was just angry all the time.”

“I can’t say it’s all his fault.” Kadeem admits that he was far from perfect, but he worked hard to do his chores and pull his bad grades up to straight As by graduation. He also found success in part-time jobs and computer gaming tournaments.

Still, nothing seemed good enough, and his father’s negativity made him sullen himself. He distanced himself from family, and took solace in his room. Sometimes he was locked out of the house for a few hours, which grew to a few days as tensions escalated. Police sometimes had to let Kadeem back in, and the anxiety was palpable.

Eventually, Kadeem’s father insisted that he enlist in the military. Kadeem completed Marine boot camp training, but when they discharged Kadeem for having signed up under duress, his father demanded that he leave the house before they killed each other. His dad handed over all his son’s stuff and told him not to come back.

The Union Mission
“helped me with stuff
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Kadeem stayed with friends briefly, then slept at the park for three weeks. “My mom was upset about that, but I didn’t feel safe to try to go home. Thank God it didn’t rain!” He signed up for food stamps and Medicaid, but he was still homeless and losing hope.

“Back in Grenada, I used to go to church every Sunday,” so after a service, Kadeem spoke with a pastor who got him some help and told him about The Union Mission. “He brought me here at the end of August 2020.”

Just 18, Kadeem was the Bashford Men’s Shelter’s youngest guest—and grateful. “I had a roof over my head. I had plenty to eat,” and the Mission “helped me with stuff I didn’t even know they could help with.”

That included his mental health. “They said I’m not negative, but I am depressed, and I have PTSD, too.” Kadeem received medications “to help the way I think,” and he also participated in support groups with other traumatized homeless men. He learned to experience God’s acceptance instead of constant anger and frustration.



As Kadeem and his case manager lined up his veterans’ housing benefits and college financial aid, the shelter rules and schedule built his self-discipline. “I still fall and fail, but I get it right. I learn from it.” Prayer also helped him refocus his thoughts. “Now if I don’t know the answer, I just ask God and go on with the rest of my day with a calm mind instead of stressed out.”

In May Kadeem signed his first lease. He’s working part-time and studying IT and video graphic design. He trusts God to continue to guide him to make good choices. That includes restoration with his father when the time is right.

Kadeem found the Mission to be a helpful haven on his journey to a bright future. “I’m actually doing so much better than I was before. Now I believe that I really can be successful!”

Help Kadeem and others like him at



Mental Wellness at the Men's Shelter

Trauma, abuse, violence, and fear can be hard to overcome, especially for men who feel they cannot discuss their anguish with anyone else. But a new Coping Skills and Mental Health Wellness Group at our Bashford Men's Shelter is changing that.

The Mission long has wanted the resources and relationships to offer mental health counseling, emotional support, and skills training for our shelter guests, says Associate Director William Crawley. This year, a private foundation funded this pilot program led by Glasgow Mental Health Services. Each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, a small group of shelter guests meets for 90 minutes, fostering transparency and trust.

"We all have baggage that holds us back," but "finding a safe place to talk about things that you've carried alone for so long makes it easier to unload," says Glasgow's Program Director Shannon Monteiro. She is direct, down-to-earth, and difficult to shock, and as she shares her own twisted journey of troubles and triumphs, group members gradually open up to discuss their

personal demons like anger, anxieties, and addictions. As they listen, laugh, cry, and pray together, they focus on forgiving others and themselves. Over the six weeks, they also learn strategies to overcome the memories, beliefs, and emotions that have bedeviled them.

As the men lay down the heavy, secret burdens of their pasts, they find a fresh, God-inspired vision for their future. At graduation, each man can

*"We've created
a fellowship, a
community full of
love and acceptance."*

describe how the support group has helped him.

"Do you think I'm crazy?" A.J. asked his case manager when she suggested the class to him. Skeptical, he attended anyway. "Now I know how to cope with my feelings and how to share my emotions."

Barry also learned to deal with "the stuff bottled up inside me." He and the guys try to live by I Peter 5:7-11. By humbling themselves, resisting the devil, and casting all their cares on God, they trust Him to restore them and make them strong, firm, and steadfast.

Brian trusted his new brotherhood and finally "talked about my unspoken things," coming to realize how his mental and emotional well-being affect how he thinks, feels, and acts. He even found his probation time reduced because of his obvious progress. "This class was a light shining in the darkness for me!"

"I am so proud of my guys!" Shannon says. "I'm excited by the things they have learned about themselves during this journey and the new skills they are practicing." Her take-home wisdom for her new friends comes from St. Francis de Sales: "Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them—every day begin the task anew."



CAMP HOPE HAVEN 2021



Join Our Team: Caring Like Christ



L'TASHA SHIELDS

WOMEN & CHILDREN'S SHELTER SUPERVISOR

What I like about working at The Union Mission is that we get the chance to show the guests that God not only cares about them spiritually, but that He cares for them physically and emotionally. Working here gives me an opportunity to care about the whole person—spirit, soul, and body—which is very biblical. A lot of professions don't provide that opportunity for a believer, but The Union Mission does!



CHRISTINA GEISLER

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

The Gospel-centered aspect of The Union Mission is what sets us apart from other shelters and programs designed to help the homeless. We don't just do our work and then go home. We invest in the cause of advocating for our neighbors wholeheartedly. That doesn't just mean taking care of their physical and spiritual

needs, but also educating the community and standing in the gap for them when necessary to fight for their success.... The more transparent we can be about what drives us, the more others will want to join our cause.



LAMONT HARRIS

DAVID DEVELOPMENT CASE MANAGER
BASHFORD MEN'S SHELTER

To be transparent, my negative life choices led me to The Union Mission. I wanted to find a career where by sharing my experiences I could help others turn their lives around, to assist them with making sound decisions, and to aid them with creating goals and positive outcomes for their future. It is rewarding to see them begin their journey to housing and self-sufficiency. What I enjoy most about working at here is witnessing guests leave motivated, with a new vision and purpose for their lives.

WE'RE HIRING!

A paycheck with a purpose

View our current job openings or apply online at unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities



5100 E. VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD.
NORFOLK, VA 23502
757-627-8686



Thank you for Your Generosity!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“How is Camp Hope Haven going?” People have been asking me all summer, and I’m happy to report that our overnight summer camp was a success. Even though our season was cut short by COVID safety measures, we welcomed 243 campers to our rural Virginia Beach campus—and I wish you could have heard the laughter that went with the smiles you made possible. We shared fun and fellowship, but more important, we shared faith. After hearing the Gospel, more than 60 of these young souls decided to follow Jesus or rededicated their lives to Him! We rejoice that your partnership support helped make this a summer that changed so many lives for eternity.

And with the arrival of fall, our thoughts turn to those who will come to us in this new season feeling hungry and helpless. Some will lose their jobs or apartments. Others will fight monetary, medical, or mental health challenges. Most, with nowhere else to turn, will need our help to get back on their feet. And all will need hope.

You’ve heard me say it before: Hope begins with their first meal here at The Union Mission. A hot, comforting dinner served with love and compassion opens the door to the practical help and spiritual hope our homeless guests truly need. Your gift can make a real difference in a needy neighbor’s life. Please give generously!

In His service,



Just \$2.58 Can Change a Life!

For the cost of a hearty, healthy meal, you can put a needy neighbor on the path to help, wholeness, and hope!

You can provide:

10 meals = \$25.80

50 meals = \$129

200 meals = \$516

Please give
generously
today!



unionmissionministries.org/meals

Rev. Gray, I agree that hope begins with a meal—and I want to help!

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.

09-2021



Stock Photo

Don't PATCH Together Your Legacy

A patient told his physician that he was frustrated with one of his new medications. “Which one?” the doctor asked. “The patch,” the man replied. “The nurse told me to put on a new one every six hours, and now I’m running out of places to put them!”

Sometimes details get lost in translation. We all know there are certain health screenings and routine procedures we need to consider as we age, but sometimes even important ones slip through the cracks—and that can put us at risk.

Another important life detail we need to keep updated as we age is our estate plan. Even though it’s a comfort to have a strong plan, did you know nearly 70 percent of Americans do not have an up-to-date will?

*Do you have the **Will**
to help others?*

Good estate planning may help you avoid:

LEGAL RISKS. Your will could help loved ones avoid delays in receiving an inheritance or property. It can also enable them to pay your remaining bills in a timely manner. Plus, wise planning and tax-reduction strategies can maximize the amount of money your family receives.

RELATIONAL RISKS. Too many families have fallen into strife over a disputed will. Parents who ensure that their affairs are in order foster peace among their loved ones.

FINANCIAL RISKS. You can ensure that your estate provides for your loved ones by preventing expensive probate proceedings.

LEGACY RISKS. Communicating your values through your will is a great way to demonstrate your personal faith. Designate a gift for the organizations you appreciate—like The Union Mission Ministries. Estate planning is a heart-level opportunity not to be missed.

IT'S EASY TO INCLUDE THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES IN YOUR WILL!

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:

EMAIL

PHONE

THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES

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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.