

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSION NETWORK

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

JANUARY 2022

**"The Mission gave me
a sense of belonging
and purpose."**

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God's Rx | The Power of Your Legacy | Gratitude Report

Knife Skills & Life Skills

Chicken Fajitas with Black Beans, Spanish Rice, and Avocado. Mediterranean Chef's Salad. Tailgate Turkey Chili with Pintos. Tuna Niçoise on Greens. Banana Split Berry Yogurt Parfait. Ask any of the dozen-plus students in our Simple Cooking with Heart course about these meals and you'll get a mouthful!

The Union Mission's Bashford Men's Shelter guests and RECLAIM residents discover heart-healthy choices during the free five-week series facilitated by Brianna Ricks from the American Heart Association and Vanessa Hill of Sentara Healthcare. Each Wednesday night as the men learn to make simple, inexpensive, and delicious meals, they're empowered to improve their health and prepare for

independent living. What's more, they discover the joy of cooking.

Dr. LaWanda Wood teaches them each week how to avoid hypertension, stroke, and heart attack and to reduce obesity by getting away from salt-, sugar-, and fat-laden fast foods and comfort favorites. She stresses not only a wholesome mix of vegetables, proteins, and starches, but also portion control.

Then Chef Angel Salvador-Austria remotes in from her multi-camera kitchen to demonstrate each step of the cooking. She covers basic measurements, culinary terms, and food prep safety. She also shows the men how to brown meat and sauté veggies on their propane hot plates as she answers their questions.

With each session, their kitchen skills increase and appetites change. The men all agree that the best thing about the class is eating the delicious meals they prepare, but they appreciate other benefits, too. "I've been on my own too many years and never learned to cook," Dwight says, "so this is nice." Alton agrees: "I really need to learn this!" John always got distracted when his grandmother tried to teach him to cook, "but now I'm right where I'm supposed to be!" he says, adding a few more extra jalapeños to his chili.

"The hands-on training, that's what I love," says Randy (left), a member of the Mission's Food Services team, who wouldn't mind a promotion to chef. "In my second marriage I did all the cooking," Norman says as he

chops his green pepper, but "I like that we're learning different ways of cooking and new menus." Sam says he's trying to lose weight, "plus gathering with a group of people to cook, listening to the doctor, having a real professional chef help us out, that's great!" Donnie appreciates the instructors for "demonstrating that a healthy diet is not only possible on a modest budget, it can be delicious as well! To them must go a heaping helping of gratitude!"

To conclude the course, nutritionist Amber Hannon leads a field trip to a nearby grocery store. The visit gives the guys valuable tips on how to read labels, shop sales, and find fresh ingredients around the perimeter of the store. And each man who completes the course leaves with a certificate of completion, a personal blood-pressure monitoring kit, and a \$50 Food Lion gift card. He also leaves in better health.

"Our brothers who had been diagnosed with high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes saw significant changes in their numbers because of the teaching and interaction of this community partnership," says Rev. Adrian Wyrick, Spiritual Formation Counselor for RECLAIM. "Plus, all of these tasty meals that they prepared—without salt!—allowed our participants to show off culinary skills that made them more confident in themselves."

"As our men talk about their experiences, I am absolutely in awe!" says Michael Marshall, RECLAIM's Transitional Resource Specialist and Program Manager. "It speaks volumes to the significance of bringing such helpful resources to our guests and tenants!"



Try some of the delicious
AHA recipes yourself at:

recipes.heart.org



A Familiar Face, Grateful for *Grace*

You may have seen Paul before if you're an Anchor of Hope. His face smiles up from our monthly giving page, but he hasn't always looked so happy. After 67 years of twists and turns, now he's back on the straight and narrow.

Born into a military family, after they moved to Virginia, Paul and his sisters attended church every week, but still "we were a dysfunctional family." Paul was never a bad kid, but he suffered from migraines and depression, and academics were not his strength.

By the 8th grade, Paul was ready to work, and his parents let him drop out of school. For 10 years he did construction and carpentry. He also experimented with drugs and began drinking. In his late 20s Paul moved to Florida to work at a lawnmower parts warehouse. When a Baptist evangelistic team came to his home to share the Gospel, Paul accepted Christ, but he soon fell into a sinful relationship with a girl from church. Unhappy after their break-up, he began drinking more, and later after another romance went sour, he returned to Virginia.

"I felt like I left God in Florida... Spiritually, it was a dry time." After working construction each day, he soothed his pain with TV and alcohol each night. When he saw that the newspaper needed help in its printing shop, he got hired as a certified press operator, a job he did well for 23 ½ years. Paul loved being part of a team, but at home he was lonely.

*"People have a
preconceived notion
of what homeless
people are like..."*

Looking for love in a Yahoo chat room, he met a woman from the Philippines. On his second visit there, they married, but love overseas was more tumultuous than it was online. "Our relationship never really took," and he left three weeks later. They never divorced, but speak "from time to time."

When the newspaper downsized, Paul took an early retirement buyout, cashed out his 401(k), and left with \$50,000. "Like a dummy, I spent all the money. Everything was going out, but nothing was coming in." His jobs were short-lived, and "after about a year, my funds dried up, and I didn't know where to go."

His Filipina wife discovered The Union Mission website and suggested

that he call. Paul was anxious, but relieved to get the last available bed at the Mission. "It was Christ-based, so I knew it was a good place to be."

Here, Paul started to put his life back on track, finding help with his job searching, health, and self-esteem. Chapels, Bible studies, and a six-month discipleship program led him back to God and made him feel part of a brotherhood of believers, and the case managers' acceptance gave him a new confidence.

Now Paul is in our RECLAIM/SRO transitional program, where he took a recent cooking course, enrolled in Medicare, and saved up enough money to buy a used car. Paul also works full-time on staff at the shelter. "Wearing this blue shirt gives me a sense of belonging." He's cleaning floors before sunrise, so it's convenient that he leases a room on the third floor, but he really wants to find his own place soon. And some roommates to share the rent and a cat would be nice.

Ministry is also on his mind. He'd like to learn how to help other men find the understanding and resources they need. "The Union Mission gave me a place to stay and a purpose," and he's grateful to the ministry's donors for the hand up. "These are God's people doing God's work! The Mission provides everything you need to get your life right. You can trust you are making a good investment that provides all-encompassing help for those in need."

For more of Paul's journey, see our Stories of Hope at unionmissionministries.org.

Give Monthly Become an Anchor of Hope

As an Anchor of Hope, your ongoing support will help meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of our homeless, hurting neighbors. You'll become a steadfast anchor that provides:

Hearty meals and safe shelter | Bible-based rehabilitation and care | Essential job-skills and life-skills training

To become an Anchor of Hope, click the red donate monthly box at the top of:

unionmissionministries.org





Vets Find That *Laughter* Is Good Medicine

PTSD is no laughing matter for many military veterans, but Vernard Hines has a different take on that.

The Christian comic a.k.a. The Laugh Therapist shared his ministry of humor, counseling, and faith in our Bashford Men's Shelter Chapel for Veterans Day. The 20 invited homeless vets related well to Hines, a U.S. Army vet. After serving two tours of active duty in Iraq, he returned with post-traumatic stress disorder. For years he tried to laugh off his symptoms and self-medicated with alcohol. Finally, "I went to the VA [Hospital] and got some things taken care of."

Therapist is a certified peer recovery specialist, but reminds his audiences, "I'm not licensed, just medicated." He's grateful that his humorous, faith-filled take on PTSD helps destigmatize the condition and encourages fellow vets to get the help they need to be whole, body, mind, and spirit. "Always keep hope in God in all you do, and keep laughing!"

"Proverbs tells us that 'a merry heart does good like medicine'—and Vernard Hines gave us a good dose of laughter tonight," says Rev. William Crawley, The Union Mission's Chief Operations Officer and a U.S. Navy veteran. And as a result of Hines' Gospel message, Crawley says, one

*"Now I define PTSD as
Processing Traumatic Situations Differently."*

Exercising his faith in God and keeping his focus on joy instead of pain kept him from committing suicide, but so did medication and therapy. "Now I define PTSD as Processing Traumatic Situations Differently," and his own experiences inspire his comedy about mental health awareness. Everyone has some emotional baggage, he says, but "just like when you get on a plane, your excess baggage will cost you something." Between their laughs, the veterans nod. But, he tells the men, "you can live a normal life if you decide to seek help."

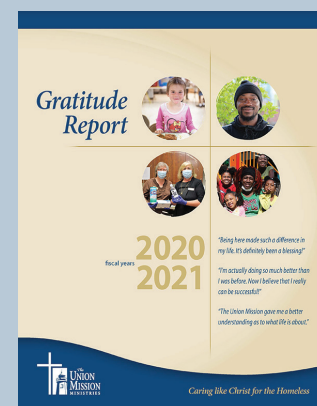
For nearly a decade now, through his humor, Hines has been an advocate for veterans and wounded warriors, and an educator for their families. The Laugh

shelter guest accepted Christ as his Savior and Lord.

The Mission's Veterans Day celebration also included a special dinner to honor the sacrifices and service of our warriors and heroes. The annual event again was generously hosted and sponsored by longtime Mission volunteer and friend, Dr. Mack Bonner. The retired internal medicine physician is himself a Navy vet, and his team's salute to our veteran shelter guests, staff, and community partners included patriotic décor, flags from the service branches, and a diverse menu of tasty favorites. The evening was a welcomed tribute to all who have protected and defended America's freedom.

We're Thankful for You!

Discover the successes, statistics, and stories that your faithful support made possible in our latest Gratitude Report.



unionmissionministries.org/learn/financials

2022: The Year to Volunteer

If you're interested in helping out at The Union Mission or Hope Haven, or arranging a collection drive or fundraising event, touch base with Christina Geisler, our Volunteer Engagement Coordinator. She has great ideas on how you can get involved. Contact her at x 415 or at volunteer@ummnorva.org.

A Paycheck and A Purpose

Looking for meaningful employment? The Union Mission Ministries is hiring both shelter workers and ministry support staff. Take a look at our current job openings 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

Every January marks a fresh start. As 2022 begins, you, like millions of other people, may be making resolutions for this new year. I will take better care of my health. I will stress less and laugh more. I will be more grateful and more generous. In short, you are exercising your hope that this year will be better than the ones that came before it.

Hope...it's what most of our homeless neighbors need most when they come through the doors of The Union Mission. Usually, life has beaten them up and beaten them down. They've been knocked about by wave after wave of problems that they can't rise above on their own. Alone, they feel like they are drowning and that no one wants to help. Thankfully, God has put us in a position to offer them a lifeline to guide them safely to tomorrow.

And you can help us keep helping by becoming an Anchor of Hope: sustaining donors who give to our ministry each month. These regular, dependable gifts help us with budgeting, planning, and stewardship to wisely invest the resources entrusted to us to help others. Already, nearly 2,500 donors have become Anchors of Hope. I hope this is the year *you'll* become one, too!

Thank you for your faithful partnership with The Union Mission Ministries!

In His service,

*"We have this hope as an
anchor for the soul, firm
and secure..."*
— Hebrews 6:19

ANCHORS of HOPE ...

As a faithful monthly donor,
you are changing lives!

*"The Union Mission provided me
with a bed, a roof over my head, three
meals a day, and help with my search
for housing. I am getting my life back
on track, and I am thankful!"*

—Campbell

*"I appreciate the donors who help this
ministry so that women like me can
come in with nothing and leave with
everything: spiritual courage, support,
love, and savings. Thank you!"*

—"Nichole"

*"The Union Mission gave me a better
understanding as to what life is about.
Being here made such a difference in
my life. It's definitely been a blessing!"*

—Khalil

Become an Anchor of Hope today!

Sign up online at
donate.unionmissionministries.org
or contact us at
anchorsofhope@ummnorva.org.

Rev. Gray, I want to help The Union Mission give hope to others!

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.

01-2022



Consider The Power of Your Legacy

Stock Photo

Everyone wants to be fondly remembered for making a difference in the world. So much of our lives are spent raising families, building careers, and preparing for retirement, but how many people plan estates that align with their values?

Roberta King's father did. After his death, as she distributed the donations he'd left to his church, the local art museum, and a community foundation, it not only brought unexpected joy to her heart—it helped ease her grief. "I still received a nice inheritance, but the real gift my dad gave me wasn't his money. It was a deeper understanding of him in a very personal way as he financially supported a community that he loved."

May we all endeavor to build a legacy that will long outlive us.

With thoughtful estate planning you, too, can leave:

A legacy of provision. An up-to-date will is good stewardship of your resources. It also ensures that your loved ones are provided for and any minor children will be raised by the guardian of your choosing. Your legacy can provide protection, provision, and peace.

A legacy of love. Many people are incorporating the idea of an ethical will into their estate planning. This approach passes along the riches of the heart. Including personal letters, special family experiences, affirmations of love, and your own life stories make this a rich and enduring gift.

A legacy of generosity. What ministries or causes have you felt connected to throughout your life? Would you consider leaving them a gift in your will? Planning a legacy gift is a powerful way to communicate your values and to inspire your loved ones to practice generosity as well.

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

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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