

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSION NETWORK

Caring Like Christ for our Homeless Neighbors

SEPTEMBER 2025

"Through your support, Lashana's family found safety, dignity, and the chance to start again."

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Finding Grace in the Storm

When Lashana arrived at Grace Place, she carried more than just bags and belongings—she carried the weight of years of uncertainty, heartbreak, and the fierce love of a mother determined to protect her children.

In 2023, Lashana returned home from a weekend away to find her apartment dark and empty. Her mother had left without warning, taking food, furniture, and stability with her. Pregnant and with three young children, Lashana faced the unimaginable: no lights, no support, and nowhere to go.

Over the next year, she moved from house to house, city to city—Norfolk, Suffolk, Richmond—trying to keep her children in school and safe. “Everywhere we went,” she said, “the kids would ask, ‘When are we getting a house?’” The instability took a toll, but Lashana never stopped fighting for her family.

Her breaking point came in April 2025, when the grandmother of her ex—who had offered them shelter—passed away. Soon after, Lashana and her children were put out late at night, forced to sleep in a truck. She began calling shelters. By morning, she had found Grace Place at The Union Mission.

“I was nervous and hopeful all in one,” Lashana shared. “Anxious, like what’s going to happen now?”

Grace Place became more than a shelter—it became a sanctuary. Her children found joy in the day room, playing with toys and using the computer. Lashana found peace in having her own space and someone to talk to. “I don’t have a best friend anymore,” she said. “I barely talk to my mom. But here, I actually have someone to listen and to talk to.”

Though she still faces challenges—balancing work,

school schedules, child care, and transportation—Lashana is grateful. She’s saving money, receiving essentials like diapers and wipes, and slowly rebuilding. “I would thank the donors, honestly,” she said. “They help with clothes, pampers, wipes—it all adds up.”

Her story is a powerful reminder of why Grace Place exists.



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For more about Grace Place and DJ's

At just 22 years old, DJ has lived through more loss and pain than many experience in a lifetime. DJ's journey began with heartbreak. Between the ages of eight and ten, he lost his mother to breast cancer, his father to a heart attack, and both paternal grandparents.

The grief was overwhelming, and without a stable support system, DJ struggled to cope. His stepmother made it clear he was no longer her responsibility, and DJ found himself navigating adolescence with a heavy heart and little guidance.

By age 11, DJ was in therapy and on medication for depression and anxiety. He experienced multiple suicide attempts, each one a cry for help and a reflection of the deep pain he carried. "Every time I attempted," he said, "there was always some way I could be rescued. That's when I realized I needed help."

In September 2024, DJ survived a harrowing suicide attempt involving a car crash and a jump from a bridge. Miraculously, he held on to a railing until help arrived. "I wanted to live," he said. "Even though I was disappointed it didn't work, something in me still wanted to hold on."

That moment marked a turning point. After a series of halfway houses, DJ arrived at The Union Mission. "I was scared," he admitted. "I didn't know where I was going to lay my head." The Mission staff welcomed him. Mr. Harris, the Director of the David Development Program, became his mentor and saw potential in DJ that he couldn't yet see in himself.

With encouragement and support, DJ began rebuilding. He took a job in sales, which led to a connection with a local family who offered him a place to live. "They became real family to me," DJ shared.

"They helped me pay off school loans, gave me structure, and reminded me I wasn't alone."

Now, DJ is thriving. He's now working as a manager at Mattress Warehouse, planning to return to college to study computer science, and considering joining the Air Force for added structure and purpose. Through the Mission's Aftercare Program, he receives ongoing support, including transportation assistance and financial guidance.

"I didn't think I would have this situation," DJ said. "I was scared. I didn't know what I was going to do. But The Mission gave me a bed, a chance, and people who believed in me."

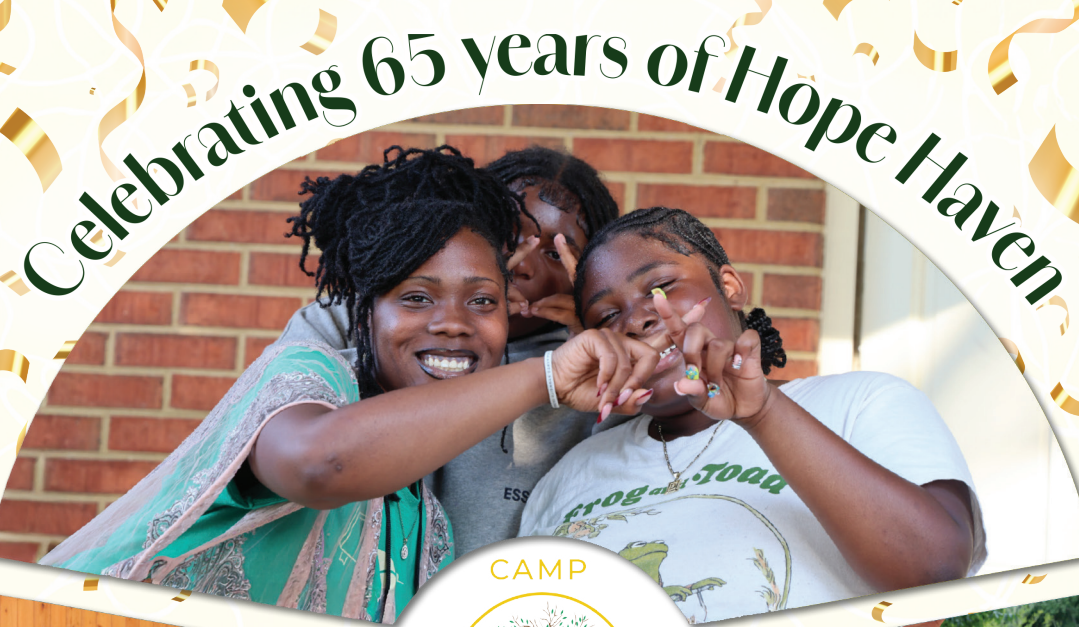
His story is a powerful reminder that healing is possible, even after deep wounds. DJ's life is a testament to God's faithfulness, the strength of the human spirit, and the importance of community and compassion.

From **DARKNESS** to **LIGHT**

DJ'S
JOURNEY OF
HEALING
AND HOPE

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FOR ITS 65TH YEAR, Hope Haven was filled with the sounds of children, laughing, shouting, singing, and praising this summer. 361 campers enjoyed a fun and exciting week learning about Jesus Christ's love for them. They enjoyed carnival night, petting zoos, swimming, bible study, nature walks, games, Princess Night and a brand-new obstacle course. 32 children chose to accept Christ and 42 recommitted their lives to Him. Your gifts and prayers have changed young lives for eternity!

THE UNION MISSION'S

*Fairways
to Homes*

GOLF FUNDRAISER

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 3**

TEE UP with some friends to benefit The Union Mission at our fall golf tournament. FRIDAY, OCT 3 at Ocean View Golf Course, Norfolk. Registration is open at \$125 per golfer, and event sponsorships are available.

Find out more or register at:
golf@ummnorva.org
unionmissionministries.org



Combined Federal Campaign

Tonight we expect more than 30 homeless veterans to seek shelter and help at The Union Mission. If you're a current or retired federal employee or military service member who'd like to help, you can give through the annual Combined Federal Campaign. Overseen by the Office of Personnel Management, the CFC offers an easy way to donate to The Union Mission and make a real difference for those in need in our community.

- 1 Scan the QR code below or go to cfcvab.givecfc.org.
- 2 Under **Charity Search**, choose **Union Mission Ministries** or write in **CFC #61126**.
- 3 Make your annual pledge.
- 4 Change the world with your generous community support.



Caring Like Christ

If you're looking for meaningful Christian employment, you may want to join our ministry. We have openings in both of our shelters and in our support departments. Take a look at our current staff needs 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

What are you most thankful for? During this time of year, we often focus much of our time on this question. Perhaps the busyness of life gets in the way of us just pausing, reflecting, and absorbing the many gifts of God. After a busy summer season here at The Mission and Camp Hope Haven, an already busy fall with the golf tournament and countless other events, it's certainly imperative to stop, think back, and be thankful.

A guest named Eva put this into perspective for me... "I can't be attached to material things. I pray, 'God, You know what's best for me. I know You will provide.' And He really did by bringing me to The Union Mission. He always provides."

As we look forward to Thanksgiving, don't forget to pause, reflect, and absorb all the reasons to be thankful. And brothers and sisters, pray for us! Pray for the Men's Shelter, that God will help us lead these men to make decisions for God's glory. Pray for the Women's and Children's programs, that God will give us the humility and love to protect, safeguard, and encourage these souls.

God has shown us time and time again how important you are to our ministry here. We are in awe of your faithfulness in partnering with The Union Mission. And we are incredibly thankful for you. May God bless each and every one of you by the riches of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Beyond thankful,

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.*

Just \$2.99 can change a

Life



For the cost of a hearty, healthy meal, you can put a neighbor in need on the pathway to help, wholeness, and hope! You can provide:

15 meals = \$44.85

50 meals = \$149.50

115 meals = \$343.85

**Please give
generously
today!**



unionmissionministries.org/meals



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.

09-2025

Do Something Today



YOUR FUTURE SELF WILL THANK YOU FOR



For more than 20 years, this quote from actor Sean Patrick Flanery has inspired people to take action that matters — to save, invest, work hard, and love well, so that tomorrow will be better because of what you did today.

Giving through a **Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)** is one such action — one that will bless others now and leave a lasting legacy you can look back on with gratitude. A DAF is like a charitable investment account created solely for supporting organizations you care about. When you contribute cash, securities, or other assets to your DAF at a public charity such as the Hampton Roads Community Foundation or Fidelity Charitable, you're generally eligible for an immediate tax deduction. Your gift can then be invested for tax-free growth, allowing you to recommend grants to any IRS-qualified charity over time.

GIVE

Make a tax-deductible donation of cash, stocks, or other appreciated assets.

GROW

Allow your contribution to potentially increase, tax-free, so there's more to give.

GRANT

Recommend grants to the charities you love from your church to The Union Mission — whenever you feel led.

For many, a DAF offers simplicity, flexibility, and excellent record-keeping, making it easier to steward your resources wisely. And for Christians, it's a beautiful way to fulfill 1 Timothy 6:18, which urges us to "be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share."

When you give to The Union Mission through your DAF, you are not just providing meals, shelter, and job training for neighbors experiencing homelessness — you are sharing the love of Jesus Christ in word and deed. So, do something today your future self will thank you for. Recommend a grant from your Donor-Advised Fund to The Union Mission and make an eternal difference.

Log in to your DAF account today and recommend a grant to:
The Union Mission Ministries, P.O. Box 3203, Norfolk, VA 23514 | TIN: 54-0573808

Comments / Change of Address:

EMAIL

PHONE

No person is denied service based on race, creed, gender, national origin, or disability unless it is beyond the scope of our care.

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 those experiencing homelessness 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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