

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSIONNETWORK

Restoring Lives of Homeless Neighbors by Caring Like Christ

JULY 2026

**The lesson stayed
with him for life:
Ministry is always
about people.**

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Learning Life Long Lessons



Camp Hope Haven is fun. Swimming in the pool. Exploring the outdoors. Laughing with friends. Singing around a campfire. Learning new skills. Spending a week away from everyday life.

For generations of children, Camp Hope Haven has been a place filled with adventure, friendship, and unforgettable memories. But camp is also much more than that.

For many children, Camp Hope Haven is where they encounter God's love in a life-changing way. Just ask John Gray.

Today, Rev. Gray leads a Christian ministry serving homeless men, women, and children. But long before he became a ministry leader, he was an eager young boy counting down the days until he was old enough to attend Camp Hope Haven. "I couldn't wait to go," he recalls.

Growing up at Hope Haven, John watched older children head off to camp and dreamed of joining them. When he finally arrived, camp represented everything he could hope for—being outdoors, making friends, trying new activities, and the excitement of adventure.

One of John's favorite memories is learning to swim at Camp Hope Haven. Yet the greatest lessons he learned weren't in the pool.

Around the age of seven, John gave his life to Christ. Camp helped strengthen that decision. Through Bible lessons, Christian mentors, and daily opportunities to see God's love in action, his faith continued to grow. "Camp reinforced what I was learning at home and helped shape who I would become," he says.

As John grew older, he returned to Camp Hope Haven—not as a camper, but as a counselor. Eventually, he became camp director. One lesson from those years remains vivid in his memory.

During a particularly difficult summer, John became distracted by his own plans. A veteran camp leader named Sandy pulled him aside and reminded him that the children entrusted to his care deserved his full attention. Her words changed his perspective.

John recommitted himself to serving the campers, and what had started as a difficult week became one of the most rewarding experiences of his ministry.

The lesson stayed with him for life: ministry is always about people.

Today, Camp Hope Haven continues to impact children just as it impacted John decades ago. Every summer, boys and girls gain confidence, learn about Jesus, and experience the love of God through caring counselors and staff. Because of generous supporters like you, children who might never otherwise have the opportunity can attend camp, make lasting memories, and hear the Gospel.

You are helping create moments that can shape a child's future—and perhaps even a lifetime of service to Christ and his children in need.

*"Camp reinforced what
I was learning at home
and helped shape who
I would become."*



God had more *Work* to do!

MAURICE'S STORY



When Maurice Ford arrived at Union Mission Ministries, he was carrying more than an oxygen tank. He was carrying the grief of losing his wife of more than 30 years. A U.S. Army veteran who served during the Vietnam era, Maurice spent decades working in home renovation, shipyards, and water treatment facilities. He and his wife, Veronica, built a life, raised two children, and welcomed six grandchildren.

But after Veronica passed away from lung cancer last year, Maurice found himself facing an uncertain future. Then illness struck. Suffering from severe COPD, he was hospitalized and needed a place to recover after his discharge.

Though he was familiar with Union Mission, the idea of staying in a shelter was difficult to accept at first. "I'm not going to no shelter," he recalled thinking. But God had other plans.

"During that time when I came here, it was God-sent," Maurice said. "It was God-sent."

What Maurice discovered was different from what he expected. He found compassionate staff and practical support in a Christ-centered environment that helped restore both hope and stability. Staff members helped him replace lost identification, obtain military records, connect

with Veterans Affairs, and save money toward housing. In just four and a half months, Maurice had saved enough to move into his own apartment.

Yet Maurice believes God was doing more than providing housing. An ordained minister, Maurice has experienced seasons when he drifted from God, but he never lost sight of the Lord's call on his life. Looking back, he believes God was preparing him for a new purpose.

At the Mission, Maurice led a weekly Saturday morning Bible study. And he watched God transform lives. Men who arrived hopeless began finding renewed purpose. Some surrendered their lives to Christ. Others found a job and a fresh start.

"I've been seeing unity," Maurice shared. "I thank God."

As Maurice settles into his new home, his heart remains connected to the Mission. He hopes to return to encourage others who are walking the same road he once traveled.

For Maurice, The Union Mission is a place where

God provided healing and a renewed calling. Through the support of faithful donors, men like Maurice discover that even after hardship, God is still at work.

As Maurice puts it, God told him, "Put it back up there because we've got work to do." And by God's grace, that work continues today.

*An ordained minister,
Maurice ... never lost sight
of the Lord's call on his life.
Looking back, he believes
God was preparing him
for a new purpose.*



THE UNION MISSION'S

Fairways to Homes

GOLF FUNDRAISER

presented by



clearstead

ADVISORY
SOLUTIONS

PLAN TO JOIN US ON

OCT. 2. 26

for The Union Mission's
3RD ANNUAL
Fairways to Homes
Golf Tournament at the
Ocean View Golf Course
in Norfolk. Sponsorship
opportunities are available.

**Register
now**



An Evening of Hope

OCTOBER 16 at 6:00 PM

Join us at the Main in Norfolk for this joyful celebration of the lives changed at The Union Mission through God's Grace and your support. Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Townebank.

**Join Us to
Change Lives!
Maybe Even Your Own!**

The Union Mission has job openings at our shelters for case managers, guest services coordinators, and an overnight security guard. Look at our current employment listings or apply online at:

[unionmissionministries.org/
job-opportunities](http://unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities)

Operation Hydration



Your gift of bottled water for Hope Haven campers and Shelter guests will help us continue life-changing programs through the heat of the summer.

DONATION SCHEDULE

Monday – Friday | 9am – 5pm

The Union Mission

5100 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk

Hope Haven

3000 North Landing Road, Virginia Beach



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



Thank you for Your Generosity!

REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Summer has arrived with intensity this year, bringing heat advisories exceeding 105 degrees. Many of our shelter guests work outdoors, and our water supplies are being depleted much earlier than usual. At the same time, staff and volunteers at Hope Haven are preparing for the arrival of hundreds of campers in the coming weeks. Improvements across the grounds—including a new sand volleyball court, an enhanced obstacle course, refreshed cabins, and a cleaned and painted pool—will welcome both returning and first-time campers. These efforts help create a safe and memorable experience for every child, but they also require significant amounts of work in this hot weather.

As I think about our need for water during these hot summer months, I am reminded of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. There, He spoke of the "living water" that satisfies a deeper thirst and is available through faith in Him. At both The Union Mission and Hope Haven, your support helps us provide both kinds of water. Through your generosity, we can offer the cool water that refreshes and sustains the body, while also sharing the message of the "living water" which is Jesus Christ with those we serve.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." Your prayers, gifts of bottled water, and financial support make a lasting difference. Together, we can meet immediate physical needs while sharing the life-giving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ with our guests and campers throughout the summer season.

Gratefully,

Sponsor a Child

FOR A
LIFE-CHANGING WEEK AT
CAMP HOPE HAVEN

Your \$200 gift will introduce a child to the joy and love of Jesus through swimming, nature walks, crafts, sports, and Bible lessons at Camp Hope Haven or through other Hope Haven programs like Recharge Respite and Switchback.

Give to
transform
a life!



SCAN TO GIVE ONLINE

unionmissionministries.org/camp

Rev. Gray, I want to share the Living Water with shelter guests and summer campers!

I've enclosed: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$_____

☐ 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.

07-2026



MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE DURING National *Make-A-Will* Month

August is National Make-A-Will Month, a reminder of the importance of creating or updating a will.

While estate planning is something many people intend to do, only about one-third of Americans currently have a will in place. This simple but important step can protect your loved ones and ensure that your values continue to make an impact for generations to come.

For Christians, a will is more than a legal document—it leaves a legacy that reflects a lifetime of faith and stewardship. Through thoughtful estate planning, you can provide for your family while also supporting ministries that have touched your heart and transformed lives.

At The Union Mission, we witness every day how God works through the generosity of caring supporters. The investments that faithful friends make in the ministry assures that meals are served, shelter is provided, and lives are restored. By including The Union Mission in your will or estate plans, you can help ensure that this life-changing work continues far into the future.

A CHARITABLE BEQUEST can be made in several ways. Some families choose to designate a percentage of their estate to ministries they care about. Others include charitable organizations alongside family members as beneficiaries. Some update an existing will through a codicil, a simple amendment that allows changes without creating an

entirely new document. These gifts cost nothing during your lifetime yet create a lasting impact for future generations.

In addition to a will or trust, supporters may choose to **NAME THE UNION MISSION AS A BENEFICIARY** of retirement accounts, life insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, or other assets. These planned gifts help provide a stable foundation for the Mission's future while allowing donors to express the values that have guided their lives.

If you have not yet created a will—or if it has been several years since you reviewed your estate plans—National Make-A-Will Month is an excellent opportunity to take that important step. As you prayerfully consider the legacy you hope to leave, we invite you to remember The Union Mission. Together, we can continue sharing Christ's love, restoring lives, and offering hope to those experiencing homelessness and hardship for years to come.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Email legacygiving@ummnorva.org or call 757-627-8686 with any questions.

Contact your tax advisor with questions about your specific situation.

Visit unionmission.christianwill.org for helpful information on tax-wise ways to give, giving through retirement assets, and the lasting impact of a gift in your estate plan.

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.