

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSIONNETWORK

Restoring Lives of Homeless Neighbors by Caring Like Christ

SEPTEMBER 2026



**It only takes
one person to
believe in you!**

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Against all odds!

HARLAND'S STORY



Growing up, Harland rarely experienced stability. Born in West Virginia and raised in Ohio before moving to Hampton Roads, Harland spent eight years in foster care after his mother's struggle with addiction tore his family apart. Although she eventually regained custody, life remained difficult. Financial hardship, homelessness, and constant moves from one hotel to another became the norm.

When Harland's father left during his freshman year of high school, the family's fragile foundation crumbled. His mother became involved in unhealthy relationships, and their home environment grew increasingly chaotic and unsafe. Through it all, Harland held tightly to one goal: "It was simple," he says. "I wanted to graduate high school and go to college."

That dream was tested almost every day. He often missed school because there was no dependable transportation. Some days there was no electricity and little food beyond ramen noodles and snack cakes. Several times, his family lost their housing altogether. Despite the turmoil surrounding him, Harland refused to let his circumstances determine his future.

A turning point came when he transferred to Western Branch High School for his junior year. Not long afterward, he met a young woman who encouraged him through some of the darkest moments of his life. Her friendship—and later their relationship—became a source of hope and strength. "It only takes one person to believe in you," Harland says. He decided to give life one

more chance. He committed himself to working hard, improving his grades, and believing that things could get better.

Harland eventually found himself with nowhere safe to go. Through the support of caring educators and community members, he was connected to The Union Mission.

At The Mission, Harland found something he hadn't experienced in a long time: peace. Instead of living in fear, Harland now has a safe place to sleep, regular meals, warm showers, clean clothes, and people who genuinely care about his future. The David Development Director, Lamont Harris, encourages him and helps him stay focused on school. He even attended Harland's high school graduation where Harland graduated with honors and received the school's Medallion of Spirit for his commitment to overcoming his challenges.

Today, with help from Mission staff, Harland is attending Radford University, where he plans to study cybersecurity. His dream is to help protect organizations from cybercrime while building a stable future of his own.

Harland's journey reminds us that, with God's grace and the support of compassionate people, even the most difficult chapters of life do not have to define the ending.

Because of faithful friends like you who are caring like Christ, young people like Harland in our David Program are discovering hope, healing, and the opportunity to build a future filled with promise.

With God's grace and the support of compassionate people, even the most difficult chapters of life do not have to define the ending.



God helps you get up every day with *Hope*

FAITH'S STORY

Stay positive, focus on your healing, accept counseling and other available resources, and hold on to God.

When Faith arrived at The Union Mission on October 15, she was searching for safety, stability, and a new beginning. After years of abuse and threats, she left her hometown determined to build a better future.

The journey to Virginia was difficult. After a hurricane delayed her flight, Faith spent several days living in a car with another woman experiencing homelessness. She later traveled to Virginia Beach by train and bus to see the ocean for the first time. For a while, she stayed in a small hotel room, but rising costs soon forced her into a nearby homeless encampment and then a tent on the beach. As hurricane season approached, Faith began calling shelters, praying for a safe place to stay. Eventually, she found a bed at The Union Mission.

Faith arrived with very little, but she carried determination and hope. The day after intake, after a good night's sleep, she walked to Janaf Shopping Center and spoke with store managers about employment. At the Goodwill store, she shared her previous thrift-store experience. Within days, she was offered a job.

Faith began working as a cashier just a week after coming to The Mission. When a production position became available, she asked to move into the work she enjoyed most. More than six months later,

she continues to thrive in production. Faith recently completed a six-week leadership training program and has been invited to shadow supervisors and managers as she prepares for an open supervisory position.

Looking back, Faith sees each step as evidence of God's faithfulness. "God has held me. God has carried me," she says. Faith believes God can use even painful experiences for good. The hardships have taught her adaptability, compassion, and perseverance—qualities she hopes will help her become a caring leader. She also wants to encourage other women to recognize their worth and seek the life that God intends for them.

Today, Faith works full-time and participates in Bible studies and mental health programs at The Mission. She is saving for a vehicle so she will no longer have to walk to work. She is building stability and looking ahead with renewed confidence.

Faith continues to hope for reunification with her children and a brighter future for them. She knows the road ahead may still hold challenges, but she no longer faces it without support or purpose. Her message to others is simple: stay positive, focus on your healing, accept counseling and other available resources, and hold on to God.



OCTOBER 2

THE UNION MISSION'S

Fairways to Homes

GOLF FUNDRAISER

REGISTER NOW for 3rd Annual
FAIRWAY TO HOMES GOLF FUNDRAISER

OCTOBER 2, 2026

Ocean View Golf Course in Norfolk
Golf, lunch, prizes, and fun!



REGISTER AT unionmissionministries.org/getinvolved/events

OCTOBER 16

An Evening of Hope

OCTOBER 16 — 6:00 PM — THE MAIN — TICKETS \$60

You are invited to join us for this special celebration! We are honored to welcome **The Honorable Bob McDonnell** as our keynote speaker and **Kurt Williams of WTKR News** to emcee the evening.



RESERVE YOUR SEAT AT 757-627-8686

Summer Camp Fun @ HOPE HAVEN

"Thank you so much for bringing me to this camp. I got closer to God and learned more about him. This camp is the most funnest camp ever."



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

Explore ministry job opportunities as shelter staff, food service team members, security, or accounting at:

unionmissionministries.org/getinvolved



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Thank you for Your Generosity!

REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



September brings fresh starts and new opportunities. Children return to school, churches launch new ministries, and families settle into new routines. Here at the Mission, we're celebrating something even more meaningful: new beginnings for the men, women, and children whose lives are being transformed through your support.

In this newsletter, you'll see how hope is taking root in remarkable ways. One woman in our shelter recently completed a leadership training program, opening the door to a promotion in a job she loves after overcoming years of abuse and instability. Another guest is preparing to begin his freshman year of college, packing a new computer and the essentials he needs for campus life. Just months ago, he was experiencing homelessness and struggling to imagine a brighter future. Today, he is pursuing a dream that once seemed out of reach.

Hope was also alive this summer at Camp Hope Haven, where 275 children and teens experienced a safe, encouraging environment and learned about the Gospel of Jesus. Thirteen young people made professions of faith, marking the beginning of their own journeys of transformation.

As we look ahead, we invite you to join us for our Evening of Hope on October 16. Together, we will celebrate what God has accomplished through the generosity of friends like you and share our vision for the future. Additional information about this event and other upcoming opportunities can be found on the back page. Thank you for giving hope, restoring lives, and making new beginnings possible every day.

Gratefully,

Hope Begins with a Meal



Each day, guests at The Mission receive proof that you care through a healthy, filling meal. You can help in a very practical way by sponsoring:

\$25.50

a table of 8

\$479

a meal for all our Men's Shelter guests

\$192

a meal for all Grace Place women and children

**Give to
provide a
meal!**

SCAN TO GIVE ONLINE

unionmissionministries.org/donate



Rev. Gray, I want to share hope with shelter guests!

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.

09-2026



SUPPORT THE UNION MISSION THROUGH A

Donor-Advised Fund

Every day at The Union Mission, men, women, and children walk through our doors searching for hope. They receive nourishing meals, safe shelter, compassionate care, and, most importantly, the opportunity to hear the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ. None of this would be possible without you.

On October 8th, we invite you to celebrate DAF Day by recommending a grant from your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) to support the life-changing ministry of The Union Mission.

If you already have a DAF, DAF Day is the perfect opportunity to put your charitable dollars to work. If you've never considered one before, a Donor-Advised Fund is a simple, tax-advantaged charitable giving account that allows you to contribute cash or

appreciated assets, receive an immediate tax deduction, invest those funds for future growth, and recommend grants to qualified nonprofits whenever you're ready. It is designed to make generosity easier and more impactful.

Studies have shown that donors who use DAFs find it easier to organize their charitable giving in one place. Whether your passion is caring for the homeless, sharing the Gospel, or meeting urgent community needs, a DAF can help you faithfully steward the resources God has entrusted to you.

Scripture reminds us, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). A Donor-Advised Fund is simply another tool that enables cheerful, intentional generosity throughout the year.

Your DAF grant helps restore broken lives through Christ-centered programs that offer counseling, recovery, and the hope found in Jesus. Every gift becomes part of God's work of transforming lives and restoring families. Your generosity ensures that every person who comes through our doors is welcomed with compassion and cared for with dignity.

GIVE



Contribute to your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) at any time and receive an immediate tax benefit.

GROW



Your funds are invested and grow tax-free.

GRANT



Distribute your funds to support your favorite charities like The Union Mission

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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