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We would love to talk with you!

A CELEBRATION 120 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Pictured: **Deputy Mayor Jaime Tincher and Ramsey County Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo**

Pictured: **The Steeles**

A Joy-filled 120th Anniversary Open House

On August 3, UGMTC opened the Men's Campus to welcome the public and entire Mission family, past and present, to celebrate 120 years of serving neighbors in need. We enjoyed the praise-filled sounds of Sarah Renner, Heart of the City Band, and The Steeles—three Twin Cities-based musical groups—and were inspired by the talent and message of Luke Winger, juggler and inspirational speaker.

We were honored to have special partners and distinguished guests lead our program of prayer and dedication, including St. Paul Deputy Mayor, Jaime Tincher, who presented a proclamation naming August 3, 2022, "Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities 120th Anniversary Day." And we were moved to be able to offer delicious fare from J & E Snack Shack, a food truck owned by Jason Drenttel, alumni of UGMTC's Christ Recovery Center (CRC). Our heartfelt thanks to all who attended the Open House, volunteered, and prayed for God's blessing and faithfully support UGMTC in countless ways.

STAY CONNECTED

1908: Thanksgiving Baskets

UGMTC is known to many for serving a Thanksgiving meal to guests and residents through our annual Thanksgiving Food Bag Distribution, a tradition with roots dating back to as early as 1908. In 2021, more than 20,000 Thanksgiving meals were served in the Mission's Dining Hall through bags of holiday food given to families in need and hot meals brought to families and seniors in local high rises.

N912-2022

MESSENGER

UNION GOSPEL MISSION TWIN CITIES

SEPTEMBER 2022 OUR MISSION IS CHANGING LIVES

FINDING CHRIST, SOBRIETY, AND A FUTURE

Grant didn't recognize his own drug addiction when he called to enroll his biological father in UGMTC's Christ Recovery Center (CRC). Now sober, the two men are building their relationship, and Grant—having earned his GED through the Mission's Adult Education and Training program—is preparing to enroll in college.

Bullied throughout his school years, Grant decided to try to finally fit in with the "cool" kids in high school. "They all did drugs," said Grant, "so I started skipping school and doing drugs with them."

Hoping to get him away from the drugs, Grant's mother brought him from their home in Iowa to Utah, where he was born. After abusing alcohol and drugs while living at his best friend's house, Grant was sent back to live his mom.

It was then that he called his biological father. "I never knew him, but I called him, and he said he was clean. I thought, 'Wow, I would love to meet him and have a dad. 'This was my chance."

What Grant hoped would be a meaningful new start proved devastating. "When I went to live with my dad, I found out he was still using—even though he had said he was clean. That was really heartbreaking. So, I called a place I learned about called the Union Gospel Mission Christ Recovery Center and asked if they had an open bed. They did, so my aunt took him there."

"At the Mission, you find Christ, sobriety, and brotherhood. It's amazing."

Grant's drug use spiraled downhill, and he soon found himself living on the streets in Arizona before being taken in by a drug dealer. When his aunt learned Grant was using again, she flew to get him and told him they were moving to Minnesota. "I asked if that's where I sent my dad to rehab. She said, 'Yes,' so I asked her to drop me off there."

Grant was 19 years old when he entered the CRC. "I didn't take it seriously. I thought I just needed to get off drugs for a little bit, and then I'd be good. But when I left, I start using again."

On December 30, 2021, Grant returned to the Mission ready to make a change. "It's amazing the blessings that you get here when you actually take the program seriously. It's been really awesome."

During his stay in the CRC, Grant studied in the Adult Education and Training program to earn his GED. He passed all his exams with college-ready scores. "The staff in the education center do their very best to help you learn. They wanted me to study a lot. I'm thankful, because those tests were harder than I presumed."

Grant's next goal is to enroll in a program to become a licensed alcohol and drug counselor. He's also rebuilding his relationship with his father. "My dad got sober; that's a huge inspiration to me. And getting sobriety at the same place as my dad, at the same, is amazing. We got to build our relationship from nothing, and now he is a father figure for me. "

"This place just gives me hope. It has given me a whole new start. With Christ, all things are possible. It's amazing."

Q & A WITH GAIL GISI

Gail Gisi serves as Director of Education at UGMTC

What is your role at UGMTC?

I have the privilege of overseeing the Mission's Adult Education and Training program. The majority of our students come from our long-term residential programs: the Discipleship Program, Christ Recovery Center (CRC), and Naomi Family Program (NFP). I'm really passionate about the folks we serve and the work we do.

What services does the education center provide?

In a nutshell, our dedicated team of instructors and volunteers walk alongside students to help them increase their education levels, develop critical life and workplace skills, and create a path towards future success.

The program isn't only for people who need a high school diploma; we have students who have college degrees and have owned businesses. We meet each student where they're at and teach the skills they need for success—all through a Biblical lens.

We work with every student in three stages. In the "Ready" stage, we're helping students to develop new habits, build trust with people, and engage in the program. Here, they have the opportunity to increase their academic skills through a variety of classes, including digital literacy—Windows, Word, email, and Zoom. This stage also includes coaching students in time management, understanding appropriate workplace clothing and language, and adapting to a workplace culture.

In the "Set" stage, students think about who they are, how God made them, and what they want for their future. We explore what they're interested in and begin working to develop a career path.

In the "Go" stage, the residents have finished or are finishing their primary program requirements and are starting to think about employment or further education. We help students figure out what salary they need, gather employment history and references, build a skills-based resume (since many of our residents have big gaps in employment), and coach them on how to interview well.

What do you enjoy most about working in the education center?

I have a student who has been working so long and hard on his GED. He has now passed all but one of the GED tests and, for the first time in his life, has hopes and dreams for his future. Yesterday he told me that he isn't going to give up and, once he has his GED, is planning to go to vocational school for carpentry. His life is being transformed, and my team gets to come alongside him in the process. That's what it's all about!

SERVE HOPE: GIVE TODAY AT UGMTC.ORG/DONATE

A MESSAGE FROM
PAM STEGORA AXBERG, CEO

Serving Hope and Blessing, One Meal at a Time

Fall is upon us! We're in that sweet time of year when we look back at a summer filled with blessing while looking ahead in anticipation of all this season and the upcoming holidays will bring.

Last month, we marked 120 years of God's faithfulness to the Mission with a meaningful, fun-filled Open House. What a joy to come together with the entire UGMTC family—residents, guests, alumni, donors, volunteers, church and community partners, neighbors, local businesses, staff, and friends—to celebrate more than a century of lives changed!

As students everywhere are adjusting to new school schedules, we are grateful for the many ways the Mission is working to teach, train, and grow our residents toward wholeness, independence, and godly living. Our Adult Education and Training program and Child Development Center (CDC) continue to provide sound, biblically based curriculum that truly changes lives!

And, as we continue to offer meals and shelter each day to those experiencing homelessness, we are busy preparing for another exciting Thanksgiving Food Bag Distribution to bless neighbors in need with special meals served with hope and love.

Your prayer, volunteerism, and donations are greatly needed this season and deeply appreciated. I am immensely thankful for all you do to transform lives.

Blessings,

Pam

Pam Stegora Axberg

HOPE BEGINS WITH A MEAL