



## Reaching Out to Women in Need of Hope

The stories in this edition of *Your Mission Messenger* are all about women. Meeting the urgent needs of women from all walks of life is one of our top priorities.

One of our most vital women's ministries is Open Arms, our home for single women and children. For women with no place to go, Open Arms is a haven of help and hope.

A gift of just \$44.30 covers a full day of care for such a family, providing a one-night stay (bed, utilities, etc.), case management and life skills classes and three nutritious meals. Imagine the difference you can make today!

*Please give at [kokomorescuemission.org/donate](http://kokomorescuemission.org/donate). Or take part in our Walk a Mile fundraiser. (See page 3!)*



## “I Wasn’t Good Enough”

*How you helped a young woman find the help and hope she needed.*

Ashley grew up with an absent father and a drug-addicted mother. When she hit her teens, her stepfather began sexually abusing her ... for three years.

It's no wonder Ashley sought a way out. Anything to escape the horrors. Anything to make her feel better about herself. At first, it was pain pills. Later, it escalated to heroin, but after an overdose, she turned to meth instead.

“I started using drugs because I didn't feel like I was good enough,” she says. “I wasn't good enough for my real dad to stick around. I wasn't good enough for my mom to stay clean. I wondered what was wrong with me.”

Drugs may have helped her cope, but they got her in trouble with the law. Last

year, she spent a few months in jail on a couple of charges.

Later released on house arrest, Ashley came to the Kokomo Rescue Mission to serve the rest of her sentence ... and to get her life back on track. There's much to look forward to: She's only 25.

She's grateful to the Mission ... and for your support.

“I'm just thankful I had somewhere to go,” Ashley says. “They gave me the tools I need to succeed.”

Now sober, living independently and employed, Ashley looks to a future filled with promise.

***Thank you for helping women in need of hope!***





## A Message from Kevin

*Hear the bells ringing,  
they're singing*

*That you can be  
born again*

*Hear the bells ringing,  
they're singing*

*Christ is risen from  
the dead*



## “I Was Always Afraid”

*But she found peace at the Mission.*

Patty can't get enough of the Kokomo Rescue Mission.

Even though she graduated from the program long ago and lives independently, she keeps coming back again and again ... but not as a client. Patty keeps returning as a volunteer — to help women in desperate circumstances ... much like her own.

When Patty first came to us in early 2000, she'd been homeless for almost six months. She had fled a domestic-abuse situation only to find herself in danger again — sleeping in her car at night in public parking lots.

“It was very frightening,” she says. “People take advantage of you. I was always afraid.”

Patty's fears were soon put to rest when she came to the Mission for help.

“They welcomed me with open arms,” she says now. “They were so friendly. What a relief, let me tell you. I was very grateful.”

Patty settled into the daily rhythms at the Mission, participating in the program, in Bible study and chapel, and regularly helping out in the kitchen. She earned a reputation for her amazing breakfasts, particularly her blueberry pancakes.

When her application for public housing was approved, Patty moved out on her own ... reluctantly.

“I miss it here,” she says. “So I asked them if I could come back as a volunteer, and they allowed me to do that.”

Patty works at the front desk, answers phone calls and performs general office work.

“I love it here,” she says. “The people are just beautiful.”

*Because of you, Mission guests find the beautiful love of God. Thank you!*

Those words, from a 1970s tune called simply “The Easter Song,” perfectly capture the season — and our work here at the Mission.

Struggling souls walk through our doors seeking new life, a fresh start. We believe that kind of deep, lasting change comes through what Jesus called being “born again,” by giving one's life to Him.

And we believe Jesus has the power to transform us from within because of that last line above: Because He has risen from the dead. Only God can do that!

So, this Easter season, join us in celebrating new life at Kokomo Rescue Mission — fresh starts that couldn't happen without your compassionate support. Hear the bells ringing!

Serving Him by Serving Them,

*Kevin L. Smith*

Kevin L. Smith  
Executive Director

## Faithful to the Cause

*Marguerite Lechlitner has participated in every Walk a Mile event since it started.*



*Marguerite has walked nearly a full marathon by participating every year.*

Helping others has always come almost automatically for Marguerite Lechlitner. She practically inherited it from her father.

“I grew up in a farm family, and my dad would always help whoever needed help,” she says. “If somebody had a flat tire, my dad would help him fix it. The other person would ask, ‘Can I give you some money for helping me?’ And my

dad goes, ‘No, just go help the next person.’”

Marguerite saw an opportunity to “help the next person” when the Mission held its first Walk a Mile in My Shoes event in 2001. Marguerite signed up and walked — and brought her husband and kids, then 8 and 11 — along for the experience.

She's participated in every Walk a Mile since. This year's event will be her 22nd consecutive Walk a Mile. That's 22 miles ... almost a marathon's worth of steps to help some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

“I have a heart for the homeless,” Marguerite says. “It doesn't matter why they're in that situation. They still need shelter. They still need food. They still need us to wrap our arms around them so they know they're loved and accepted.”

Marguerite walks every year with a team representing Hillsdale United Methodist Church. Their team name is simple: The Hillsdale Shoes. Over the years, the team has raised more than \$4,000, including \$370 last year.

She has walked on sunny days when the temperature was almost balmy — for February. And she has walked on days when it's been snowing and brutally cold.

Marguerite, who also volunteers regularly throughout the year at the Mission, wouldn't miss the Walk, no matter the conditions. It's in her blood.

“She's steadfast, year after year after year,” says Mary Price, the Mission's volunteer and event coordinator. “It's a blessing to have volunteers like Marguerite!”

*We're so grateful for faithful volunteers like Marguerite!*



Every February since 2001, we've held the annual **Walk a Mile in My Shoes** event to raise awareness — and funds — for our Open Arms and Watered Garden shelters. These programs provide safe shelter for single women and single women with children who are experiencing homelessness.

Why in February? So participants can experience what it would feel like to be homeless during harsh winter conditions.

So come join us on February 11 for this annual event. The one-mile walk will give you a small glimpse into what it might be like to be homeless in the winter ... and help struggling women and children while you're at it.

Learn more at our website: [kokomorescuemission.org](http://kokomorescuemission.org)

Since starting in 2001, WAM has raised more than **\$1.5 million**. Thank you!



# “Today, I Respect Myself”

*Your kindness helped Kelly find love and understand her worth.*

Kelly has a lot of good things to say about the Kokomo Rescue Mission — starting with something very practical.

“They have great food, a lot better than prison food!” she says with a laugh.

**“It’s a good place to live. They’re caring Christian people.”**

But in all seriousness, Kelly says her time behind bars began a life change that has continued since she’s been at the Mission. She had been a meth addict for years, and when she was arrested in October 2019 for dealing, it was a turning point.

“It was my rock bottom moment,” she says. “I haven’t turned back since.”

While incarcerated, Kelly went through a recovery program, and has continued on a positive path ever since. She came to the Mission last year as part of a drug court program, and says it’s been a blessing from the start.



“The Mission has helped me tremendously,” says Kelly. “It’s a good place to live. They’re caring Christian people.”

While with us, Kelly went through the ServSafe program and is now a cook at a local restaurant. She is saving her money for a car and her own place.

But mostly, she says she’s changed from the inside.

“I used to have low self-esteem,” Kelly says. “Today, I respect myself. I’m proud of myself.”

“I can’t wait to live the second half of my life as a sober woman.”

*Thank you for making such life change possible!*

▼ ▼ PLEASE CUT OFF THE REPLY FORM BELOW, AND RETURN WITH YOUR GIFT. THANK YOU. ▼ ▼

## I Want to Transform Lives This Easter

**YES**, Kevin, I want to help homeless, hungry and hurting men, women and families today and through the Easter season. Here’s my gift of:

- \$23.70** to provide **10 meals** and assistance.
- \$35.55** to provide **15 meals** and assistance.
- \$71.10** to provide **30 meals** and assistance.
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ to provide as many meals and as much assistance as possible.

*Please make your check payable to Kokomo Rescue Mission. Thank you!*



To give online, use this QR code, or visit [kokomorescuemission.org](http://kokomorescuemission.org). Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law.



Kokomo Rescue Mission  
P.O. Box 476  
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