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*This Christmas, thank you for giving  
me the gift of love!*



# your mission messenger

WINTER ISSUE 2017

## Feeling Loved — for Free

**G**rowing up, Sarah was molested and raped multiple times by extended family members. Her oldest son is the result of one of those horrific encounters.

The facts of Sarah's upbringing are almost too terrible to fathom. The impact on her life is too tragic to ignore.

"I spent my childhood depressed and afraid," she says. "I always felt like it was my fault somehow. All my life, I felt like my only purpose on earth was to have sex. It was the only way I could feel loved."

It's no surprise she started using drugs at 16. Then, by

**"I spent my childhood depressed and afraid. I always felt like it was my fault somehow"**

the age of 21, she was arrested for her first drug felony and lost possession of her two children.

"I lost my babies," she recalls. "I gave up on them. When I got out of jail, I went right back to cocaine and heroin, because I just didn't want to feel anything anymore. I was suicidal."

In January 2016, Sarah overdosed and nearly died. She was arrested again on another drug charge. But this time, when she was released from jail, she came straight to Open Arms.

"For the first time in my life, I feel safe," Sarah says. "Ever since I was a kid, I felt like I had to have sex with someone to feel loved. But here, I feel loved by everyone — for free. I don't have to give them anything to feel loved."

For all her 26 years, the world told Sarah she wasn't worth anything, and she believed the lies. Open Arms has given Sarah the chance to learn a new truth.

"It's not always easy to hear the truth," she says. "But the

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## Feeling Loved — for Free

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people here give me motherly love I never had. Sometimes it's hard love. Sometimes they tell me things I don't want to hear. But it's because they love me.

"I'm a Christian and I'm getting closer to God. I always felt like an abomination. But now, despite everything that's happened, I feel loved — by the people here at Open Arms and by God. I know it."



## Giving in Memory and Tribute

Memorials and tribute gifts allow you to thoughtfully remember family members and friends who have been a vital part of your life. Gifts made at times such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's; at the birth of a child or grandchild; or on a birthday, wedding, anniversary or other notable occasion can be gifts of love to show how much you care. For information on giving these special gifts, call us at 765-456-3838 or visit our website at [KokomoRescueMission.org](http://KokomoRescueMission.org)



## An Encouraging Word from Van . . .



Dear Friend of the Kokomo Rescue Mission,

I hope Sarah's story touches you this holiday season. When she first came here, she felt worthless, like an empty, dented, mislabeled can. But God knew that isn't who she was. Not really.

So God used the Kokomo Rescue Mission, and people like you and me, to fill her with a love she never experienced before. Your support showed her that she's truly something special, uniquely made, and a child of God. No, we didn't *heal* Sarah's brokenness. Only God can do that. But God used us, so His love could mend her broken life.

In a way, Sarah's story reminds me of Christmas. The world is filled with broken, hurting people who feel worthless like Sarah. But Jesus came into this broken world to fill it with His healing love. "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

To me, that's what the Kokomo Rescue Mission — and YOU — are all about. Hurting men and women like Sarah need to know the truth: They are not worthless. They are beautiful and loved. Together, we simply show them who they truly are.

### Thank You for Giving Hurting People the REAL Gift of Christmas

This Christmas, I invite you to come and see for yourself the difference you make in the lives of people like Sarah. If you could look into their faces, you'd see far more than the wounds and scars that have hurt them so badly. You'd also see a sparkle of joy because of the love they have found. For the first time, they know who they truly are in Jesus Christ. And isn't that the real gift of Christmas? This blessed holiday season, thank you for all you do.

Your servant,

*Van C. Taylor*

Van C. Taylor, Executive Director

*"Your support showed her that she's truly something special, uniquely made, and a child of God."*

## Please remember our homeless

**W**ith the seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas just weeks away, please remember all those in need here in Kokomo — especially those who are homeless, hungry, sick, and lonely. For them, the holidays can be the most painful time of the year.

Your gift today will bring gratitude and Christmas joy to so many hurting men, women, and children who will come to the Kokomo Rescue Mission seeking hope and another chance at life. As a faithful friend of this ministry, you already know how much your support really means to these precious souls.

**Thank you for being a special friend to those in need**

# The Richest I've Ever Been – BY SHANE

**L**ast year, this guy invited me to smoke some spice with him and his friends. We'd had some trouble with each other, but I'm an addict, so I thought, sure, let's do it. Turns out it was rat poison. The guy tried to kill me. The pain was so bad, I prayed to Jesus, on my hands and knees, and promised that if He got me through this, I'd check into the Kokomo Rescue Mission and change my life. The Lord did bring me through it.

He's brought me through a lot of things. My mom was an abusive alcoholic. My dad was an abusive meth addict. We were so poor, we lived off the land, with no running water

or electricity. I started smoking pot and huffing gas when I was 10. I was in and out of trouble with the law. No one wanted me, and I was in foster care for a while.

In other words, I grew up with a lot of instability. I never learned how to make life work. So pot, pain pills, meth, spice, and alcohol helped me cope. It was easier to deal with drugs than real life.

## **They introduced me to another lamb. The Lamb of God.**

I got jobs here and there. Fell in love with a girl who became my full-time babysitter, so I could drink full-time. That lasted five years, until she kicked me out.

### **I Kept My Promise**

By 2013, I was homeless on the streets here in Kokomo, sleeping in the woods near Jackrabbits Stadium, in abandoned houses, or under bridges — until that guy tried to kill me. I kept my promise to Jesus and came to the Kokomo Rescue Mission.

When I got here, I had no more hope. I was so miserable. But the Mission has taught me that Jesus is my only hope, and only through Him can I change my life. Thanks to the Mission, my walk with the Lord is the most important thing in my life now. And through the power of Jesus, my life is transforming more every day.

This Christmas, I don't have four dollars in my pocket, but I'm the richest I've ever been.

*My life has changed so much. Thank you!*

**RED RIBBON**



## **Christmas Outreach**

Our Red Ribbon Christmas project assists approximately 800 to 1,000 families in our six-county area each year. For Christmas 2017, we will need approximately:

- 1,250 hams
- 1,250 loaves of bread
- 5,000 cans of green beans and corn
- 1,250 boxes of instant potatoes
- 1,250 pounds of margarine
- 1,250 pies
- 5,000 apples and oranges
- 1,250 bars of bath soap
- 1,250 bottles of liquid dish soap
- 1,250 packages of toilet paper
- 1,250 rolls of paper towels
- 1,250 bottles of shampoo
- 1,250 tubes of toothpaste
- Thousands of new and gently used toys, unwrapped

Call 765-456-3838 to schedule a date for your group to wrap presents on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. the first two weeks of December. Visit [KokomoRescueMission.org](http://KokomoRescueMission.org) for the location of the Red Ribbon Christmas warehouse.

Delivering Red Ribbon Christmas boxes will fill your heart with the real meaning of Christmas. For more details, delivery dates and to register, please contact our volunteer coordinator by phone at 765-456-3838 or online.

*You can help us deliver boxes like these to bring hope to area families this Christmas.*

## **and hungry neighbors this holiday season**

Thanks to you, hungry and homeless guests at the Kokomo Rescue Mission enjoy nutritious meals, safe shelter, counseling, spiritual nurture, love, and other tangible care that provides them with the real help they need to turn their lives around today *and for eternity*.

In the spirit of this holy season of giving, we encourage you once again to give a donation of any amount to help lessen the suffering and pain of those who come through our doors. For your convenience, please use the remit slip in this newsletter to give your donation. You may also donate on our secure website at [www.kokomorescuemission.org](http://www.kokomorescuemission.org) or call us today at 765-456-3838.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of hurting people!

*“Your gift today will bring gratitude and Christmas joy to so many hurting men, women, and children.”*

# Save the Date...Recruit a Team Walk a Mile in My Shoes February 10, 2018

Yes, the calendar says November, but the Kokomo Rescue Mission team is already busy preparing for the 17th Annual "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" event that is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2018. Once again, walkers can participate in a "simulation experience." This is an opportunity to understand the program and services Open Arms offers to the ladies and children who come to the shelter.

It's not too early to mark your calendar, contact friends to form a team, and come up with some clever ways to put the "fun" into "fundraising" to benefit Open Arms, Kokomo Rescue Mission's shelter for homeless women and children. Walk a Mile in My Shoes allows participants to step into the struggles facing homeless women and children. It is one mile round trip in length, from the Kokomo Rescue Mission main headquarters to Open Arms.



Why hold this event in the winter? To help raise awareness of the difficulties the homeless members of our community deal with on a daily basis. Poverty and homelessness know no season.

Walk teams consist of 2 to 20 people. Each walker is encouraged to raise sponsorships of at least \$50 to \$100. Team packets will be available at the Mission the beginning of January.

**For more information call 765-456-3838 or  
visit our website at [KokomoRescueMission.org](http://KokomoRescueMission.org)**

*Please help us offer a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to all who come.*

## We're expecting 600 guests at our Thanksgiving Banquets

On Thanksgiving Day, we'll serve our traditional Thanksgiving Banquet from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church. Meals are available for delivery to shut-ins on Thanksgiving morning by calling the Mission office during regular business hours through Wednesday, November 22, at 765-456-3838. We are so thankful for the hundreds of volunteers who help with the event.



## My Christmas Gift

**YES, Van,** I want to help men, women, and families who need our help this Christmas.

**Here's my Christmas gift of:**

- \$20.50** to provide **10** meals and other assistance
- \$30.75** to provide **15** meals and other assistance
- \$61.50** to provide **30** meals and other assistance
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ to provide as many meals and as much care as possible

- Please bill my credit card (please print):  
 VISA  MC  DISCOVER



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ACCOUNT NO.	EXP. DATE	AMOUNT
NAME	SIGNATURE	
ADDRESS		
CITY / STATE / ZIP		
EMAIL ADDRESS		

**Kokomo Rescue Mission**  
P.O. Box 476  
Kokomo, IN 46903-0476

► Please mail this completed form with your Christmas donation, or you may give your gift online at [www.kokomorescuemission.org](http://www.kokomorescuemission.org). Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.