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***This Christmas,  
thank you for  
giving me safety  
and love!***

# your mission messenger

WINTER ISSUE 2018

## In a Million Tiny Ways—One Big Change

**T**hroughout my life, I always accepted less than I deserved, because I never knew what I deserved. My family was very dysfunctional, with lots of anger and yelling. My dad abandoned us when I was still fairly young, so I always struggled with that. I was also overweight as a kid, and I was bullied all through school. I can still hear other kids scream down the hall, “How much do you weigh, fatty?”

**“The abandonment, the bullying, the screaming and yelling—I internalized all of it.”**

The abandonment, the bullying, the screaming and yelling—I internalized all of it. I could never see that I was worth more than that, and I never learned how to cope with my

problems in healthy ways. The only thing I had going for me is that I was smart. I even earned scholarships to go to college, but I dropped out when it got too hard. Then, I failed at two marriages.

After that, I ate my way up to 409 pounds and ended up with diabetes and high blood pressure. I had bariatric surgery to help me lose weight, but then I got addicted to painkillers. My addiction got so bad, I prayed that God would kill me, and I was mad when He didn't. I finally got sober, but continued to struggle with depression, hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts. I ended up losing my job, my car, and my apartment. Then a miracle happened. Someone told me about Open Arms.

From the moment I walked in the door, I felt truly loved. They cared about me. They supported me emotionally.

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## In a Million Tiny Ways...

(continued from page 1)

They prayed for me every day. In a million tiny ways, they showed me what I'm worth. And it all added up to one BIG change: They showed me who I really am—a child of God and worthy of being loved. Open Arms is a balm that transformed my life.

As a donor, that's what you did for me. You gave me safety and love. You gave me a new family. You gave me a new life.

## 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 the New Year; 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 [www.kokomorescuemission.org](http://www.kokomorescuemission.org).



## An Encouraging Word from Van . . .



Dear Friend of the Kokomo Rescue Mission,

With the holiday season just around the corner now, it seems like everywhere I go, I hear Christmas songs: "I'll be home for Christmas" . . . "There's no place like home for the holidays" . . . "It's the most wonderful time of the year."

For most of us, it is the most wonderful time of year. Those songs remind us of getting together with family and the warmth of a community that cares about us. They are songs of love and joy. But not for our homeless neighbors. Those songs only remind them of their emptiness, of friends and family who have forgotten them, of a community that seems like it has turned its back on them.

This holiday season, the Kokomo Rescue Mission will serve almost 18,000 meals to hungry men, women, and children. But for most, it's more than a meal. This is where they have found new family. This is where they feel loved and part of a community that cares about them. This is where they experience radical hospitality—the kind of hospitality that is only possible in a community filled with the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

**Thank you for showing our homeless neighbors how much you care!**

That's why every meal you provide our guests through your support is so important. Those meals are often the first chance we have to show them how much we care—and how much Jesus loves them. And for many this Christmas season, it might be the first time they hear the words "merry Christmas"—and feel like it just might be possible. Your faithful support will remind them that there really is no place like home for the holidays.

Thank you . . . and *merry Christmas!*

*Van C. Taylor*

Van C. Taylor, Executive Director

*"This holiday season, thanks to you, the Kokomo Rescue Mission will serve almost 18,000 meals to our hungry neighbors."*



## This holiday season, please help hurting

"While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6-7).

It's almost unimaginable. Jesus Christ, Creator and the true King over the whole world—was born homeless, in poverty. Yet because of that, God teaches us to see His face in every hurting, homeless man, woman, and child who comes to the Kokomo Rescue Mission. And your generosity toward these same precious souls proves you see what we see—and we are so grateful!

This Christmas, friends like you who support the Kokomo Rescue Mission give the greatest gifts of all: nourishing food, warm clothing, safe shelter, and the promise

# My Best Christmas Present Ever

— BY BRIAN

One year ago, while everyone else was getting ready for the holiday season, I was hopelessly addicted to meth and heroin, seriously depressed and homeless, living in an abandoned house, my only shelter from the cold. My whole life seemed like a big failure.

Growing up, the only people who ever seemed to really care about me were my grandparents, but they both died when I was 9. That was pretty traumatizing for me. I was already a lonely kid, but after that, it seemed like everything started to go downhill.

When I was 18, I had my wisdom teeth pulled and they gave me painkillers. I was instantly hooked. When I couldn't get my own painkillers anymore, I started stealing them from my mom. Then I started buying them on the street, and before long, I got into heroin and meth. Meth was cheaper, and it was a better high.



*Thanks to you, I'm going to accomplish something!*

But I was wasting my life, and I knew it. I could have achieved more. I *should* have achieved more. But drugs kept getting in the way. I started growing more and more depressed. And the more depressed I got, the worse decisions I made. I tried going to college at one point, but I dropped out. Drugs were more important. As my failures kept adding up, all I could see was a lifetime of failure ahead. Finally, I felt so hopeless that, shortly before Christmas, I tried to kill myself three times in one day. I couldn't even do that right.

**“They helped me get closer to God, and when that happened, everything started to change drastically.”**

But that's when I got the best Christmas present ever. On December 22, I came to the Kokomo Rescue Mission. They helped me get closer to God, and when that happened, everything started to change drastically. Thanks to the Bible studies, devotions, and chaplains, I'm not depressed anymore. I'm also developing a new career as a cook.

Thanks to you, I'm not going to be a failure. I'm going to accomplish something. I'm going to make something out of my life. You gave me the chance to love myself again. *Merry Christmas!*

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 2018, we will need approximately:

- Thousands of new and gently used toys, unwrapped
- 1,000 hams
- 1,000 loaves of bread
- 4,000 cans of green beans and corn
- 1,000 boxes of instant potatoes
- 1,000 pounds of margarine
- 1,000 pies
- 6,000 apples and oranges
- 1,000 bars of bath soap
- 1,000 bottles of liquid dish soap
- 2,000 packages of toilet paper
- 1,000 rolls of paper towels
- 1,000 bottles of shampoo
- 1,000 tubes of toothpaste

Call **765.456.3838** to schedule a date for your group to wrap presents on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm November 27 through December 6. 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.

## ng men, women, and children in Kokomo!

of God's transforming power to every man, woman, and child who need our help. So please remember our hurting and homeless neighbors who are seeking hope and a new start this holiday season.

### Please remember those who are homeless this Christmas

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!

*Thank you for remembering our hurting and homeless neighbors who are seeking hope and a new start this Christmas*

# Save the Date...Recruit a Team Walk a Mile in My Shoes February 9, 2019

Yes, the calendar says November, but the Kokomo Rescue Mission team is already busy preparing for the 18th Annual Walk a Mile in My Shoes event that is scheduled for Saturday, February 9, 2019. Once again, walkers can participate in a "simulation experience": this is an opportunity to understand the programs and services Open Arms offers to the ladies and children who come to the shelter.

It is 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, KRM'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 KRM main headquarters to Open Arms.



Why hold this event in the winter? To help raise awareness in the community about 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 at 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 am-1:00 pm 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 21 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:

- \$21.70 to provide 10 meals and other assistance
- \$32.55 to provide 15 meals and other assistance
- \$65.10 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  AMEX



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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 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.