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# your mission messenger



WINTER ISSUE 2019

## A Christmas Love Story —BY MEGAN

Christmas never meant much to me. Growing up, my mom suffered from a lot of depression and severe mental illness, and she made it clear to me and my siblings that she never wanted kids. The emotional abuse we endured was unbearable, even at Christmas.

As I grew older, my self-worth was so bad, I turned to painkillers and meth. I looked for love from *anybody* who would accept me. My life was a free-for-all of self-destructive drug abuse, men who abused me, and hopeless despair. But by 26, I had three children who desperately needed me. And I wanted to be there for them. I *tried* to be the best mom I could be. But honestly, I saw no future—not for me or for them. Christmas, like every other day, was just another day to get through.

Then it happened. I was arrested for drugs in 2016 and went to prison. I was sentenced to 17 years, and I lost

everything, including my kids. Shame and self-hate overwhelmed me. I thought my life was over and this was all I deserved. But God proved me wrong, because He used prison to change everything.

**“Christmas, like every other day, was just another day to get through.”**

In June 2017, I gave my life to Christ and God began transforming my heart. Then, in December 2018, God did even more than that. I was miraculously released from prison and came straight to Open Arms. It was just before Christmas, and for the first time I understood what it was all about. That Christmas, I saw Jesus, the Christ child, laying in a manger. And He looked me in the eye and said, “I love you so much, I came to see you.” For the first time, I felt loved. Truly loved.

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## A Christmas Love Story

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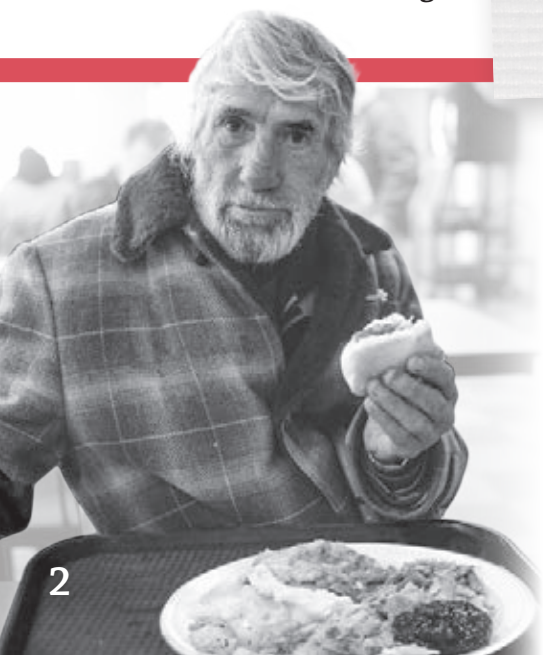
The rest of that holiday season was amazing. I was reunited with my children, and here at Open Arms I was surrounded with so much love.

And over this past year, it's just continued. Every day is like Christmas Day all over again. As a donor, it's the best gift you could ever give me. Thank you.

## 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; on a birthday, anniversary, wedding, or other occasions; can be gifts of love to show them how special they are to you.

For information on giving these special gifts, call us at: **765-456-3838** or visit our website: [www.kokomorescuemission.org](http://www.kokomorescuemission.org).



## An Encouraging Word from Van...

Dear Friend of the Kokomo Rescue Mission,

Every holiday season, we're all bombarded with so much materialism, glitz, and brightly colored packages. But this time of year at Kokomo Rescue Mission also reminds me of what Christmas is all about and what's really important.

People who are devastated by homelessness don't think much about all the glitz. What matters is where they'll sleep at night or how they'll eat. Whether anyone still cares or if they will ever feel loved again. These are the real gifts they long for.

And these are real gifts you give them—at Christmas and all year round. Your support provides gifts of food and shelter. You remind them that someone cares. Thanks to you, they experience love and family again. And here they discover the greatest, most important gift of all—God's gift of Jesus Christ and the hope for new life.

Those are the gifts they will treasure for a lifetime.

### Thank you for giving the gift of joy at Christmas

I invite you to come to the Kokomo Rescue Mission this holiday season, and see for yourself what your gifts mean. In a word, it's joy. You won't find much glitz or many fancy packages here. No marketing campaigns or Christmas ads. But you'll meet men and women who are filled with a joy that's only possible when people know Jesus, when they taste new life today and then the promise of eternal life.

And your experience here will be a gift in itself—God's gift back to you for all you do on behalf of precious men, women, and children at the Kokomo Rescue Mission. On their behalf, thank you for all you do—*Merry Christmas*.

Your servant,

*Van C. Taylor*

Van C. Taylor, Executive Director



*"Here they discover the greatest, most important gift of all—God's gift of Jesus Christ and the hope for new life."*



## Please Give the Gift of New Life to Homeless

It all started on that starry night, when God chose to launch his long-awaited project to reclaim and redeem the world, starting in a humble stable in Bethlehem. That night, through His holy angels, God announced peace on earth and goodwill to all humanity through His Son—our Savior—Jesus Christ.

Today, thanks to caring and compassionate people like you, God continues to offer His peace and goodwill to men, women, and children at the Kokomo Rescue Mission. People who were once enslaved to alcohol, drugs, and unspeakable abuse, have found freedom through the King of Kings. Those who've lost their way are now following the One who says follow me.

# I Finally Fit In —BY DAVID

I had never been in trouble before. Then, in 2016, I was arrested for possession of drugs—and I wasn't even a drug addict! The truth is, I bought them for a friend. It was a mistake that cost me 16 months in jail. But looking back, I don't regret going to jail. I had been heading down the wrong path for a long time, and jail was the wake-up call I needed.

My life started off good. I was raised by two Christian parents, and we were active in church. But I suffered with ADHD as a kid, and it created all kinds of problems, especially at school. It was hard to focus or study, so my grades suffered. All the other kids treated me different and I never felt like I fit in anywhere. So as I grew older, I grew more isolated.

As a teenager, I gradually left church behind and drew closer to people I shouldn't have hung around with. I spent years foolishly going down that path. But I was just so lonely.

But in jail, I had a long time to reflect on all the bad choices that led me there. Then the people from my old church started visiting me, encouraging me to "put it all in God's hands" and He'll take care of me. I slowly realized I had become someone I don't want to be—and I had to change. So when I left jail, I came straight to Kokomo Rescue Mission.



**"Every day, I'm surrounded by people who love me and show me who I really am and where I belong."**

Since I came, I surrendered my life to God, and every day I'm surrounded by people who love me and show me who I really am and where I belong—I'm a child of God in the family of God. They also equipped me with new job skills and I'm already working again. My self-esteem is getting better and I'm growing into the man God created me to be.

Thanks to people like you who support the Kokomo Rescue Mission, I'm back on the right path, and I am so blessed.

## RED RIBBON

### Christmas Outreach

Each year, our Red Ribbon Christmas project assists approximately 600–700 families in our North Central Indiana area. For Christmas 2019, we will be needing approximately:

- 900 hams
- 900 loaves of bread
- 3,600 cans of green beans and corn
- 900 boxes of instant potatoes
- 900 pounds of margarine
- 900 pies
- 5,400 apples and oranges
- 900 bars of bath soap
- 900 bottles of liquid dish soap
- 1,800 packages of toilet paper
- 900 rolls of paper towels
- 900 bottles of shampoo
- 900 tubes of toothpaste
- Thousands of new and gently used toys, unwrapped

Volunteers are always needed to wrap presents the first two weeks of December. Call **765-456-3838** or visit the events page of our website: <https://kokomorescuemission.org/events/> for more information on the times and location where you or your group can join us.

Volunteering to deliver Red Ribbon Christmas presents will fill your heart with the real meaning of Christmas. For more details on how you can get involved, delivery dates, and how to register, please contact our volunteer coordinator by phone at **765-456-3838** or online.



## Men, Women, and Children This Christmas

### Please remember those who are homeless this Christmas

Your gifts to the Kokomo Rescue Mission offer every man, woman, and child who comes through our doors nourishing food, warm clothing, safe shelter—and the promise of God's peace, goodwill, and transforming power. So, this Christmas season, please remember people devastated by homelessness and seeking hope and a new start.

To donate immediately, please use the enclosed remit slip. You may also give your donation by visiting us online at [www.kokomorescuemission.org](http://www.kokomorescuemission.org) or call us at **765-456-3838**. Thank you for touching so many lives through your generous giving at Christmas and throughout the year.

*"This Christmas season, please remember people devastated by homelessness and seeking hope and a new start."*

# Save the Date...Form a Team Walk A Mile In My Shoes February 8, 2020

Yes, it may be November, but the Kokomo Rescue Mission team is already busy preparing for the 19th Annual "Walk A Mile In My Shoes" event scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 2020. Walkers can participate in a "simulation experience" where they are introduced to real life scenarios of homeless women and children and how our women's shelters along with their programs can help restore hope to broken lives.

It is not too early to mark your calendar, contact friends to form a team, and come up with creative ways to put the "fun" into "fundraising" that will benefit the women and children we serve. Walk A Mile In My Shoes allows participants to understand the challenges facing homeless women and children as they experience this one mile round trip walk from the Kokomo Rescue Mission (KRM) main Headquarters to Open Arms.



Why hold this event in the winter? To help raise awareness to those around us about difficulties the homeless members of our community deal with daily...poverty and homelessness know no season.

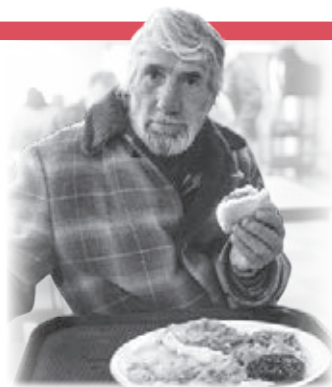
Walk teams consist of 2 to 20 people. Each walker is encouraged to raise sponsorships of at least \$50 to \$100. Team packets will be available at the Mission at the beginning of January.

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.*

## Our Thanksgiving Banquet Serves Over 700 Guests

On Thanksgiving Day, our traditional Thanksgiving Banquet will be served from 11:30 am-1:00 pm at Grace United Methodist Church in Kokomo. Meals are available for delivery to shut-ins on Thanksgiving morning by calling the Mission office at 765-456-3838 during regular business hours through Wednesday, November 27. We are so grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who help to make this event possible.



## 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:
  - VISA  MC  DISCOVER  AMEX

|                            |           |        |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------|
| ACCOUNT NO. (please print) | EXP. DATE | AMOUNT |
| NAME                       | SIGNATURE |        |
| ADDRESS                    |           |        |
| CITY / STATE / ZIP         |           |        |
| EMAIL ADDRESS              |           |        |

Kokomo Rescue Mission  
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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.