



An Encouraging
Word from Van

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Peggy Hawkins (blue shirt) and a few
of the many Red Ribbon Christmas volunteers.

your mission messenger



WINTER ISSUE 2020

Little Miracles, Every Christmas

More than anything, the little girl wanted a Barbie DreamHouse for Christmas. She made absolutely sure that Santa — and her parents — knew.

But times were tough. Her mom said not to get her hopes up, knowing it would take a miracle because they simply couldn’t afford it.

But when Christmas morning arrived ... so did the miracle: A Barbie DreamHouse under the tree.

Such miracles happen every year with the Kokomo Rescue Mission’s Red Ribbon Christmas Project, an outreach to 600–700 local families and individuals who are struggling financially. For each family, Red Ribbon provides toys for the kids plus a bounty of essential items for the whole household — all delivered prior to Christmas morning.

Peggy Hawkins volunteers for the program, and smiles as she tells the tale of the Barbie DreamHouse.

“Every year we hear stories like this,” says Peggy, who has

been involved with Red Ribbon since its inception almost 30 years ago. “Those are the stories that keep us going.”

Families must apply to receive Red Ribbon packages after meeting specific income requirements. Applications include names and ages of each family member and, for the children, the toys they wish for.

Every child gets one new toy and gently used toys. The new ones are purchased from a generous fund provided by We Care Kokomo, and the used toys are donated by friends like you in the community.

It’s a year-round operation that takes thousands of hours from dozens of volunteers — mostly retirees, including Peggy.

The reputation of this excellent program compels the donors to give quality toys to bless the children receiving a Red Ribbon Christmas.

“We want every toy to be in the exact condition we’d want

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An Encouraging Word from Van ...

*"... and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."
— Luke 2:7*

The young couple was essentially homeless, with nowhere to turn. They went door to door, seeking shelter, but *there was no guest room available for them.*

Joseph and Mary spent that night on the streets, like many homeless people do right here in our own community. Christmas night, in the dirt and the filth, *because there was no guest room available.* Can you imagine?

At the Kokomo Rescue Mission, your support ensures we will *always* have room for our neighbors in need. And, of course, there's always room for Jesus.

Come, all you who are weary and need rest. Our doors are open.

Your servant,

Van C. Taylor

Van C. Taylor, Executive Director



We Want You To Be Connected!

You can receive urgent messages, quick updates and fun videos by texting INVOLVE to 56525. You will receive occasional updates on our ministry. Join the club!

"Now I Have Hope"

After years of drinking and aimlessness, Jerry has found his way.

I wasn't planning to stay in Kokomo. I was just passing through, on my way somewhere else ... but I guess God had other plans.

I've battled alcoholism since I was a teenager, and it finally caught up with me in Kokomo. I had a breakdown, and ended up in the hospital. The doctor said my liver was in bad shape, and I'd be dead in two weeks if I kept drinking.



Jerry is grateful for your support of the Mission.

I had spent much of the last 20 years homeless, always on the move, never settling down. And always with a bottle. But that trip to the hospital made me take a long, hard look at my life, and I decided I wanted to change.

Someone recommended I try the Kokomo Rescue Mission. That was almost a year ago, and it's been the best decision I've ever made.

They've helped me in so many ways, especially getting back on my feet and getting my priorities back in line. I'm paying off some old debts, and I'm restoring some broken relationships.

If it weren't for the Kokomo Rescue Mission, I'd probably be in jail or still out on the streets. Now I have hope for the future.

Thank YOU for giving men like Jerry that kind of hope!



Red Ribbon Christmas Outreach

Each year, our Red Ribbon Christmas project assists 600–700 families in North Central Indiana. This Christmas, we need the following donations:

- Hats, scarves and mittens
- Bibles
- Mugs
- School supplies
- Backpacks
- Children's books
- Craft kits for girls
- Games for boys
- 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

"It's Uplifting. It's Amazing."

Thanks to your support, Susan is overcoming her despair.

When asked why she came to the Kokomo Rescue Mission, Susan replies with two words:

"Despair. Hopelessness."

Once you hear her story, you will understand. The abuse started when Susan was just a toddler — every kind of abuse you could imagine, and from a family member at that. She'll never forget the day he yanked a handful of hair out of her head ... because it never grew back.

"I grew up in total fear because you never knew what could get you hurt," Susan says. "The wrong look on your face could cause a beating. He even threatened to kill us."

Susan finally got out of the house at 18, but she had no self-worth. She started doing drugs, particularly meth, as a way to escape her pain. She got married and thought that would bring some measure of safety and security. Unfortunately, it didn't: Her husband did not protect her from another abusive situation.

Susan continued taking drugs. She attempted suicide several times. At 40, she was diagnosed with PTSD and bipolar disorder. More despair and hopelessness.



Susan says if it wasn't for the Mission, "I wouldn't be alive."

Finally, she wound up at the Mission, where she began to feel her burdens lifted, soon after she walked through the door. The love was palpable.

"You can feel it," she says. "It's uplifting. It's amazing."

Susan began to relax, to change, to feel safe and secure. She began to open up to counselors. She began to heal. She can smile and laugh again. She can *live* again.

"If it wasn't for the Mission, I wouldn't be alive," she says. "Now I have hope and joy."

Thank you for bringing hope and joy to Susan and so many others!

Memorials and Tribute Gifts

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 special they are to you.

To remember and honor your loved one, please visit our website kokomorescuemission.org, select the Donate button at the top right corner of the page, enter your amount, designate it for a tribute, then enter your loved one's name in the comments. Or call us at: 765-456-3838.

Little Miracles, Every Christmas *continued from cover*

for our own children," says Peggy.

For the toys that arrive in less-than-pristine condition, a team of volunteers — a veritable Santa's workshop with an average of five to eight volunteers *every day* — gets them into prime form.

There's no guarantee a child will receive the toy(s) they wish for, but Peggy says it often happens anyway ... thanks to some divine intervention.

"We pray over every box that goes to each family," she says. "We pray that we'll put something special in each box that will be

very meaningful to the recipients."

That's how a little girl ended up with a Barbie DreamHouse on Christmas morning. Or any of the other countless miracles that Red Ribbon brings to local families every holiday season.

The Red Ribbon Christmas Outreach is made possible by supporters like you. If you'd like to donate toys or essentials, see the list at left.



VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are always needed to wrap presents the first two weeks of December.

Volunteers are also needed to help deliver presents on our Red Ribbon Christmas delivery days.

Call 765-456-3838 or visit the events page of our website: kokomorescuemission.org/events for more information.

Give the gift of
abundant life
this Christmas

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." — John 10:10 (ESV)

That's not a Bible verse you usually see at Christmas. More typically, you'd see verses about Joseph and Mary, the birth in a manger, and the shepherds, angels and wise men.

But it all points to the same thing — or, more specifically, to the same one whose birth we celebrate at this time: Jesus. Which brings us to that verse from the book of John.

Jesus promises us not just life but to have life abundantly.

Living on the streets is not abundant life. Poverty is not abundant life. Hunger is not abundant life. Abuse is not abundant life. Addiction is not abundant life.

The Kokomo Rescue Mission exists to bring abundant life to people who are experiencing such things — to every man, woman and child who comes through our doors. That's what we're all about.

And that means that your support of the Mission helps to deliver abundant life to people in our community who need it most.

There's no better gift this Christmas than the gift of life . . . of abundant life. Please remember the Mission with a special gift today. Thank you!

Save the Dates

Please mark your calendars for the following:

November 29, 2020: Restock Sunday

There's a fifth Sunday in November, and you know what that means. It's time to help us restock our shelves with supplies. We particularly need toilet bowl cleaner, disinfectant wipes, antibacterial hand soap refills, paper towels, toilet tissue and coffee. Please visit our website for a complete needs list.

February 13, 2021: Walk a Mile in My Shoes

At this annual event, walkers are given the opportunity to learn about the experiences of homeless people while also raising funds for the Mission. You'll form teams of 2–20 people and find sponsors for your 1-mile walk from the Mission headquarters to Watered Garden (single women's shelter), and end at Open Arms (shelter for women and children).

Keep checking our website for updates:
kokomorescuemission.org

I Want to Transform Lives This Christmas!

YES, Van, I want to help men, women and families who need our help this Christmas season. 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 make your check payable to Kokomo Rescue Mission.
To give online, visit kokomorescuemission.org. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.



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

Please charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ Discover ☐ AMEX

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