



## Holiday Memorials & Tributes

Memorials and tribute gifts are a great way to thoughtfully remember family members and friends who have been a vital part of your life.

Gifts made during the holiday season can show how special they are to you.

To make a memorial or tribute gift, go to [kokomorescuemission.org](http://kokomorescuemission.org) and click the “Donate” button at the top.

On the donation page, choose a gift amount.

Then, under “Designation,” choose “Tributes (In Memory of),” and then enter your loved one’s name in the comments.

Alternately, you can make a tribute or memorial gift by calling 765-456-3838.



*Bryan, in Santa cap and beard, likes to take the whole family on his rounds.*

## A Real-Life Santa

*Year after year, Bryan makes it a priority to deliver gifts to struggling families.*

**B**ryan Hayden was just 15 when his church youth group helped with a Christmas service project at the Kokomo Rescue Mission.

He thought he was just doing a good deed with some friends. He had no clue his life would be forever changed ... or that he’d keep coming back, year after year.

This December will be Bryan’s 39th consecutive year helping out with the Mission’s Red Ribbon Christmas, which distributes gifts and food to hundreds of struggling families throughout the community.

At 15, Bryan was just along for the ride. But for decades now, he’s been in the driver’s seat, behind the wheel of a truck, aiming to help as many families as possible. One year, he delivered about 40 family boxes, but he says he averages about 10-15. He estimates that he’s delivered more than 500 boxes over the years.

And he can’t wait to do it again.

“I can’t imagine going through a Christmas season without having that experience and sharing it with my family,” he says. “I want my kids (ages 11 and 8) to grow up understanding how blessed we are. I want them to have that eye-opening experience.”

When Bryan had that experience as a teen, he thought “poverty” was just something that happened to people far away in developing nations — not at home in Kokomo.

“It made me appreciate and have gratitude like I’d never had before,” he says. “Because I’d

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## Kevin's Christmas Message

*She laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

— LUKE 2:7

The first Christmas, the night Jesus was born, there were homeless people who needed help. In a real sense, Jesus was born homeless.

More than 2,000 years later, there are still homeless who need your help. They need your time and contributions to help make sure that they are neither forgotten nor neglected. Sharing your blessings will ensure that they too are blessed this season.

And as you do so, it will help all of us point to the greatest gift, the gift of God's Son. He sent the baby to the manger. He supplies our needs. He is the source of all blessings.

Thank you for showing the compassion of Christ. May this Christmas be merry for you and yours.

Serving Him by Serving Them,

Kevin L. Smith  
Executive Director



**A Real-Life Santa,** *continued from cover*  
never had that perspective before.

### ***"I Was So Humbled"***

For years, Bryan has lived in Fort Wayne, but he still drives his truck 90 miles each way to take part in Red Ribbon Christmas.

He doesn't want to miss out on the memories. Like that time a little boy found a basketball in his family's delivered gift.

"He just went crazy over it," Bryan says. "He started dribbling it in the living room like it was the greatest thing."

The story gets even better.

"The boy's dad turns to me and says, 'Somebody blessed me with a kerosene heater recently, and now I have two,'" Bryan recalls. "Then he says, 'So I want to donate one of those heaters to the Mission. I want to give back.'"

"I thought, Man, if ever there was somebody who had every right to sell their spare kerosene heater to buy some food for his family, it was this guy. But because he had been blessed with an extra heater, he wanted to return the blessing. I was so humbled."

Bryan says he and his family also enjoy praying for the folks they visit, because it's about delivering more than just tangible gifts.

"Jesus did that in His ministry," Bryan says. "He first met their physical needs, but didn't walk away without meeting their spiritual needs too.

"I love being a part of that."

***And thank YOU for being a part of that too, through your kind support!***

## "The Beginning of My New Life"

*Carli's life fell apart after a traumatic childhood. You gave her a fresh start.*

Childhood should be carefree, a time for joy and making memories.

But Carli's childhood was nothing like that. Memories? No good ones for her. Sexual abuse. Trauma. A broken family. And a stepmom "who wasn't very nice to me at all."

To escape her pain, Carli turned to drugs in middle school. She started with prescription pain pills, then later moved on to meth and finally heroin. Along the way, she got kicked out of school.

In her early 20s, she got married and had a son. "I was starting to get my life together," she says. But when her grandmother died, "I spiraled out of control."

Her marriage fell apart, she met another man, and had two more kids. "And I continued spiraling."

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**"I'm so grateful for the program here. It really helps."**

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The spiral bottomed out in January 2020, when Carli was one of dozens of people arrested in a major drug bust by the Kokomo Police Department. She was charged with three counts of dealing meth, and went to prison.

Two years later, when given the option to continue her recovery at Open Arms — our ministry to women — Carli jumped on it. As a lifelong Kokomo resident, she knew about the Mission's good work.

She felt confident when she walked through our doors.

"I was happy to get here," she says, "because I saw it as a fresh start — like it was the beginning of my new life."

Carli is all-in with our programs, on a path to healing and wholeness. She especially appreciates the spiritual aspect. "I'm concentrating on my faith," she says.

She has a job and hopes to return to school someday.

Most of all, she wants to be reunited with her kids — three boys ages 7, 4 and 3. She lost custody of them while in the throes of addiction and legal problems.

"I just want to stay sober and be with my sons," she says.



*Thanks to your support, Carli has turned her life around at Open Arms.*

"I want to be a good mother.

"I'm so grateful for the program here. It really helps. And the people here genuinely love and care about you, no matter what you've been through."

***Thank you for helping to make the Mission a safe and healing place!***

## Help Wanted: Calling All Holiday Volunteers!

We need volunteers to help wrap presents in November and December and to help deliver them on our Red Ribbon Christmas delivery days.

If you'd like to pitch in and make a difference for struggling families and children this holiday season, please let us know!

**To learn more, call 765-456-3838 or go to [kokomorescuemission.org/events](http://kokomorescuemission.org/events).**



**“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, the shepherds and the angels and the 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.

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!**

## 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
- 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



**Learn how you can help with Red Ribbon by calling 765-456-3838.**



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

## I Want to Transform Lives This Christmas

**YES**, I want to help homeless, hungry and hurting men, women and families today and throughout the Christmas season. Here's my gift of:

- ☐ **\$16.59** to provide **7 meals** and assistance.
- ☐ **\$21.33** to provide **9 meals** and assistance.
- ☐ **\$31.18** to provide **14 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/give](http://kokomorescuemission.org/give)**.  
Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law.



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

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