



HEART *of the* MISSION

APRIL 2015

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair hugging a young child from behind. The woman is looking towards the camera with a slight smile, while the child is looking down. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a fence.

ANOTHER CHANCE

You're making a difference



REV. GLENN CRANFIELD
PRESIDENT AND CEO

*Honor your father
and your mother,
that your days may
be long in the land
that the LORD your
God is giving you.*

EXODUS 20:12 ESV

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

How will you celebrate your mom today?

With over 85 million mothers in America, would it surprise you to know we spend over 671 million dollars on Mother's Day cards? In fact, Mother's Day is the busiest phone day of the year, totaling over 122 million calls.

That says to me that even if we can't be with our mothers on this special day, we will go to great lengths to honor and celebrate our mom whether it's with cards, flowers, or phone calls.

But what if you're a homeless mom on Mother's Day? What if different situations and circumstances in your life have led you to the point of despair and you can't provide for you or your children? Is there anything to celebrate on this day?

Yes, I believe there is! Every mom—homeless or not—is worth celebrating. God commands us to

honor our mothers and fathers. It's the first commandment with a promise. (Ephesians 6:2)

With your help, hope lives here—at Nashville Rescue Mission. Your support makes it possible for homeless women in our community to find more than a hot meal, safe shelter, and clean clothes. This year these moms will be honored at a special banquet on Mother's Day. Staff and volunteers will prepare and serve a meal worthy of some of Nashville's finest restaurants.

I so appreciate the way in which you express your love and care for those in need, and especially the mothers who find themselves needing more than just a meal this Mother's Day. Because you give, they have hope.

DID YOU SEE?

Octavis got his HSE diploma (high school equivalency)! He ran into our office and exclaimed, "Look! Can you take a picture!?" He was SO excited about completing his studies and receiving his diploma that we snapped a photo and shared it on our Facebook page!



**FIND US ON
FACEBOOK**

LIKE us at [facebook.com/nashvillerescue](https://www.facebook.com/nashvillerescue) to see encouraging stories and photos just like this one. **HOPE LIVES HERE!** And we can't wait to share it with you.

MISSION IN MY WORDS

Erica Gilmore

NASHVILLE CITY COUNCIL



I suppose no one was more surprised than I when I decided to run for a seat on the city council.

My mom, Brenda Gilmore (member of Tennessee House of Representatives representing 54th district) has had a strong influence on me. I've watched her serve in public office for many years, so serving is a way of life in our family. But I didn't set out to be on the council.

After graduating from Whites Creek High School, I attended college in Washington, D.C. I can still remember all the excitement during the election while I lived there. In fact, it was the first time I had the opportunity to vote for the President of the United States of America. I was inspired by the experience.

In moving back to Nashville after college, I made a conscious decision to live close to downtown. I found the cutest house, in the Hope Garden area near the Farmer's Market. I took great pride in purchasing my first house. But I'll never forget my grandmother's reaction when she came to visit—she started to cry. I remember asking her why she was sad, because I for one was extremely happy. Having grown up in Gallatin, my grandmother wasn't comfortable in an urban setting. She was crying because she was concerned for my safety.

Where I saw potential and beauty in an area filled with diversity, my grandmother saw danger. Her reaction made an impression on me and from that point forward, I decided to get involved in my community so I could make a difference. I started serving on the board of my neighborhood association. I wanted my neighborhood to be a place where my grandmother wouldn't be afraid.

Living in such close proximity to Nashville Rescue Mission's campus for women and children, I encountered those struggling with homelessness on a regular basis.

As my concern for them grew, I found myself meeting with advocates for the homeless. This brought their humanity to light for me. I realized I had a responsibility to help the homeless.

I also discovered the issue of homelessness was much bigger than just my neighborhood. This was an issue affecting our entire city. My experiences in serving my local neighborhood motivated me to get more involved and run for a seat on the council. I wanted to make a bigger impact. I thought my neighborhood and our city's best days were still ahead. I wanted to improve the community and city I live in because I believe deeply that we are a great city but we can be greater.

As my term representing the 19th district ends, I've seen so many remarkable changes take place in our wonderful city... from the Music City Center to the West Riverfront Park currently under construction. Nashville is a great city.

Just last year, I joined Nashville Rescue Mission in recognizing their 60th Anniversary of helping the homeless and less fortunate in our community. They also underwent a beautification project with the help of many in our city to bring more beauty to our downtown area. The Mission does an awesome job with its resources, especially when you consider they do not accept government funds. And while I wish there wasn't such a huge need for the Mission's services in Nashville, I am extremely grateful for the work they do and the people they help every day. Nashville Rescue Mission makes our city a better place.

ERICA GILMORE represents the 19th district on the Metro Council, a seat she has held for eight years. The youngest woman on the council, Gilmore was elected speaker pro tem for the 2011-12 council year. Beyond her political aspirations, Gilmore taught for five years in Metro Schools and is an English adjunct professor at Fisk University and Nashville State Community College.



ANOTHER CHANCE

You're making a difference



This Mother's Day will be one Megan will never forget.

After years of drug abuse and marriage problems, followed by episodes of homelessness and desperation, Megan will celebrate this Mother's Day, clean, sober, safe, and with her four-year-old son, Timmy.

"I married my high school sweetheart," said Megan. "I thought we'd have kids and grow old together. But what I didn't imagine was being eight months pregnant, living with a drug addict, and being robbed by someone pointing an AK-47 at me."

THIS WAS NOT THE LIFE MEGAN IMAGINED.

"In the early days of our marriage, my husband and I both worked steady jobs," she said. "We used drugs recreationally. But I stopped using as soon as I found out I was pregnant. We'd been trying for quite a while, and I was so excited."

After their son was born, Megan's joy turned to depression when she discovered her husband's unfaithfulness. She was devastated. She found herself sinking further and further away, resorting to prescription pills, meth, and crack cocaine to avoid feeling the pain. Her drug use escalated along with her husband's.

"**THINGS WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE.** I let go of everything. My family tried to stage an intervention. Everyone wanted to help, but I was too blind to see it." The life Megan had imagined crumbled before her eyes and she felt powerless to do anything about it.

"Looking back, there were times when the Department of Children's Services could have taken Timmy away, but didn't. His father received two charges of child endangerment but somehow our case slipped through the cracks. My poor son was practically raising himself."

"It took losing everything before I was willing to seek help," said Megan. "But even then I didn't want to admit I had a problem. After we lost our house, we stayed with my husband's grandparents and when that situation became tense, we stayed in a hotel with his sister. The next thing you know, we're homeless and living in an abandoned barn."

LIVING IN SUCH POOR CONDITIONS, Megan got sick and wound up in the ER. It was at that point she decided it was time to detox. Nine days later, she relapsed. "After I was released from the hospital, my husband decided to leave me and Timmy. And while I know today it was for the best, at the time I didn't want to accept that my

marriage was over. I felt like I didn't have anything left to live for."

BUT SHE DID. Megan had Timmy. And being Timmy's mom was enough for her to cry out for help. "I started looking for a place to go, somewhere safe, somewhere I could try to figure out what to do now that the life I had hoped for had shattered."

Megan's search led her to Nashville Rescue Mission. "We spent two nights in the emergency shelter, where I met someone who had graduated from the Mission's Life Recovery Program. Her story was similar to mine. She went through the program while raising her two-year-old daughter. I knew if this mom could survive what she'd been through, I could do it too, or at least try. Her story gave me hope."

TODAY, Megan has hope for the future—both for herself and for Timmy. "The Mission's Life Recovery Program has given me a second chance. I'm getting to know my son. He's the sweetest little boy in the world, and I love him so much."

Megan is learning to put God first and trust that everything will follow. "Before, I always felt like I needed a man. The Mission's program helped me see what I really needed was God."

Megan's excitement in seeing the changes take place both within herself and with her son is obvious. "Timmy is experiencing structure and routine for the first time in his life. I missed so much of the first four years of his life because of drugs; I'm determined not to miss any more. I'm rebuilding the bonds of trust with my family. Nashville Rescue Mission gave me another chance. I'm thankful I found a place where I could get the help I desperately needed, while also learning how to be the best mom to Timmy I can be."



IT IS THROUGH YOUR SUPPORT LIVES LIKE MEGAN AND TIMMY'S ARE FOREVER CHANGED. YOUR GIFTS MAKE SECOND CHANCES POSSIBLE. THANK YOU FOR GIVING!



Shirley, Frances, and Sharon, from Grace Nazarene Church have fun serving together at Nashville Rescue Mission.



Le and Sharon enjoy serving each month.



Grace Nazarene Sunday school class from left to right: Ann, Frances, Bea, Sharon, Shirley, Le, Marvin, and Margaret.

Love
THY NEIGHBOR
Homelessness can happen to anyone

For members of a Sunday school class at Grace Church of the Nazarene, volunteering at Nashville Rescue Mission is a way to personally connect with hurting individuals—because after all, homelessness can happen to any of us.

Sharon started to volunteer at Nashville Rescue Mission because of her first-hand experience with the Mission's Life Recovery Program. "After seeing the Mission's program change my son's life three years ago, I wanted to get involved and give back," said Sharon. She encouraged her fellow church members to volunteer with her and soon her entire Sunday school class got onboard. Sharon realizes

each individual she encounters is someone's mother, brother, cousin, or son—like hers, and that sparks an instant connection.

"Every time I walk in this building, I think about the help my son received while in the Mission's program," shared Sharon. "I have so many wonderful memories here. I'm happy to say he graduated the program, then moved into the Mission's transitional housing, before moving into his own place. Today he's living in Nashville, and doing so well!"

Bea, one of Sharon's dear friends, regularly joins her in the kitchen. Bea's experience with homelessness hit pretty close to home. "My sister was once homeless. She didn't live in Nashville, but whenever I'm volunteering at the Mission, I think about her. This person I'm serving a meal to could easily be like my sister, and is probably someone's sister or brother. I make every effort to make eye contact with each person when they come through the line. I know they feel invisible when they are living on the streets. I want them to know that I see them and they matter."

Together, this Sunday school class made up of men and women, serve lunch at the men's campus once a month.

They love to volunteer. For them, it's all about creating a welcoming and personal community. They focus on listening to stories and developing friendships.

Margaret, a member of the class who also volunteers, feels a connection to the men and women who stay at the Mission and understands the need for the Gospel. "I was raised in a very poor household. I look at these men and women and think—I could just have easily ended up here. Homelessness is something that can happen to anyone. I'm thankful the Mission shares the hope that comes from knowing Jesus to everyone who comes to them in need of help." Margaret also loves how easy it is to volunteer. "The program is very organized; we are told exactly what to do, and I'm always impressed with their high health scores from the health department!"

"I like to work at the end of the counter," she continued. "I try to connect with each person who comes through the line. Someone might look sad or grumpy, but when I say

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”

MARVIN

GRACE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE VOLUNTEER

something nice to them, they light up! It makes my day and theirs." Each of these volunteers has made friends while serving. Being surrounded by individuals with the same motivation to create a welcoming atmosphere makes it not only fun and rewarding, but exciting to offer service.

HOW CAN
YOU LOVE THY
NEIGHBOR?

VOLUNTEERING is a great opportunity to help your neighbor in need, while also growing your own faith.

If you're looking to serve in a welcoming and organized environment, meet fellow volunteers, and bless those in need, then sign up online at nashvillerescuemission.org.

LIVES YOU HAVE TOUCHED

FEBRUARY 2015

	Daily Avg	Monthly
Meals Served	2,343	65,603
Nights of Lodging	759	21,255
Chapel Attendance	493	13,796
Education Hours	91	2,541
Bible Class Attendance	35	983
Decisions & Prayers	42	1,171
Volunteer Hours	205	5,736
Travel Assistance	n/a	42
Program Graduates	n/a	8

HONOR A Mom WITHOUT A HOME



Nashville Rescue Mission and Ordinary Heroes will honor and celebrate these moms with a Mother's Day Banquet—a day filled with music, lunch, and goodie bags—but we need your help.

Your gifts will show each of these moms they are valued, treasured, and special—even if it's just for this one day.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

DONATE

Catering for 250 moms and children

250 gift bags

Flowers

White tablecloths

Gifts of perfume, note cards, make-up, jewelry for gift bags

Massages

Facials

Door prizes

VOLUNTEER

Help the kids with a Mother's Day craft

Play with kids while their moms attend the banquet

Sign up to serve meals

Please contact volunteer services at volunteer@nashvillerescuemission.org or 615-312-1544 to be a part of this awesome day.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



GIVE



VOLUNTEER



PRAY



SHARE



NASHVILLE RESCUE MISSION

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