

the BRIDGE

Building bridges of hope



FALL ISSUE 2019

OLD SAVANNAH
CITY MISSION

I Surrendered All

by Robert

I never got to be a child. I never got to enjoy the fun of being a kid, playing in safety, being silly, or just resting in carefree innocence. You don't get a childhood when you grow up in a war zone.

Where I lived in Atlanta, it was like the Wild West. Every day on our way to school, my sisters and I walked over men passed out drunk on the sidewalk, past prostitutes, and even people who'd been shot the night before. But as bad as the streets were, home was worse. Dad was a horror show of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse—and I got it the worst. Mom finally

divorced him when I was 13, but I never got over what he did.

When I discovered alcohol at 13, I poured all my anger, hurt, and self-worth into a bottle from that point on. The longest I ever stayed sober was nine months. By the age of 40, I just gave up. I lived only to drink or get high.

“I never dreamed I'd one day give my life to Jesus Christ. But that's what I did.”

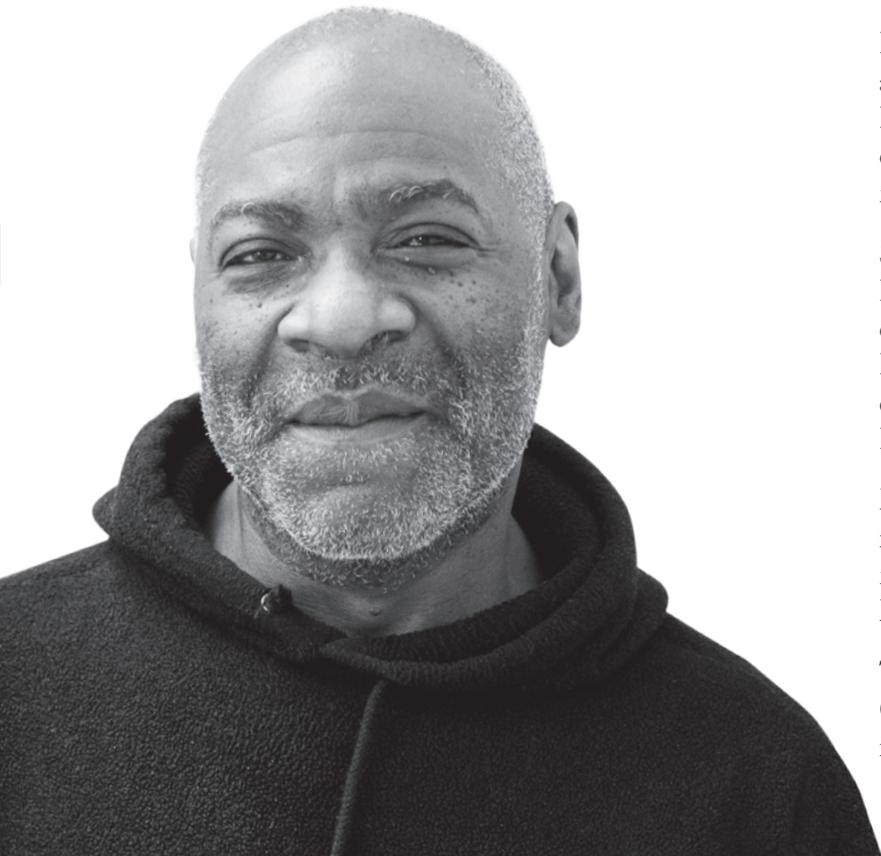
In 2014, I finally got into therapy and went through a lot of healing for all the trauma I endured as a kid. I finally got that little boy out of bondage. But I kept drinking, because I never dealt with Robert the grown man. And Robert the grown man had to change, too.

So last year, I came to Old Savannah City Mission. I've been here six months now. I never dreamed I'd one day give my life to Jesus Christ. But that's what I did. I totally surrendered my whole life, everything Robert ever did, to Jesus at the foot of the cross. And once I surrendered, everything changed.

Every day, I wake up with the Holy Spirit, and He follows me wherever I go. I got supernatural power now. I got Jesus. I got “the way, the truth, and the life”—and I'll never be the same.

That's why I'm so grateful for your support of Old Savannah City Mission. Your love and concern for guys like me changed my life. Thank you.

**Photos have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.*



Old Savannah City Mission Holds its 5K Run

On behalf of Old Savannah City Mission, we would like to extend our thanks and sincere gratitude for everyone who participated in the first Old Savannah City Mission 5K RUN/WALK on Saturday, March 30th. Under sunny skies, over 250 runners/walkers traversed around beautiful Forsyth Park twice, traveling 3.2 miles from the park and ending at Old Savannah City Mission. For students in our local schools, this event provided an opportunity to obtain some of the volunteer hours needed for graduation. It also taught students about philanthropy and the need to give back to our community.

Dozens of friends, students, and athletes of all ages helped to raise over \$60,000 to support the ongoing efforts of Old Savannah City Mission. The event could not have been a success without those who participated and our corporate sponsors. Because you made this inaugural event a huge success, we hope that you will continue to support Old Savannah City Mission on an ongoing basis as a sustaining donor. Moreover, we hope that you will support our second annual 5K RUN/WALK next year.

And last, but not least—a special, overwhelmingly grateful thank you goes to Mario de la Guardia, Jr., chairman of our first 5K RUN/WALK, whose leadership, enthusiasm, and determination made this event a tremendous success! HATS OFF TO YOU, MARIO!

An Encouraging Word from Brother Bill



Dear Friend of Old Savannah City Mission,

For most of us, Thanksgiving is a season filled with warmth and love. But for many homeless souls in Savannah, it's often the most painful time of year, because they're reminded of everything they've lost. They remember better Thanksgivings past, spent with family that no longer wants them around today. They look at what their lives have become, and they are overwhelmed with guilt, embarrassment, and shame. And when they come to the Old Savannah City Mission, they've hit rock bottom.

"You provide the meals, the shelter, and the love that transformed the lives of men like Robert and Lynn..."

But Thanksgiving gives people like you and me a special opportunity to bless these precious souls out of the abundance God has blessed us with. God gives us the privilege of showing them they are not merely "needy" people, they are people loved by God. And at the Old Savannah City Mission, they are family. When we treat them like family—with love, patience, and kindness, many move beyond their past into a new future filled with blessed hope for healing and salvation.

Thank you for transforming lives 365 days a year

That's why, as we begin preparing for this special season of Thanksgiving, I'm so grateful for your ongoing loyalty and support for the Old Savannah City Mission. You provide the meals, the shelter, and the love that transformed the lives of men like Robert and Lynn in this issue of *the Bridge*. Thank you for believing in the Old Savannah City Mission, and for sacrificing out of your abundance to make sure hungry and homeless men experience hope not just at Thanksgiving, but 365 days a year.

William Stiles, Sr.
Executive Director



Please Help Our Hungry, Homeless

Give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind, for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things, (Psalm 107:8-9).

If there's one thing that best characterizes the heart of the Old Savannah City Mission, it's gratitude. All the hurting men here are deeply thankful, not only for food and shelter, but also for the grace and healing they experience here. Moreover, all of us who are part of this blessed ministry are especially grateful for your extraordinary generosity and faithfulness.

I Don't Need to Flip a Coin— I Have Jesus

by Lynn



For a long time, I was so lost in life, I flipped a coin every day to decide what I was going to do. But no matter what side that coin landed on, I always ended up doing the same thing: drinking and drugging.

I didn't start out lost. I didn't wake up one day and say, "I think I'll ruin my life and start doing drugs." I had good family. We went to church every Sunday. My dad taught me about respect and honor. But he never taught me to study the Bible. And I believe that's why I got lost. Without knowing God's Word, I never knew what to do or where to go.

Next thing you know, I started messing with the wrong crowd, and they were drinking and drugging. So naturally, I followed. Thing is, crack made me feel invincible. And whenever life got hard—girl problems, bad marriage, my baby brother died, my mom died—it was easier to pick up the crack pipe or a bottle than it was to deal with life.

Don't get me wrong, I worked. I've also been homeless, living in the woods. But somehow I always got by, and I never hurt anybody. Not until I hit rock bottom. Not long ago, I stole some money from a friend of mine. A friend who really cared about me, who trusted



"Without knowing God's Word, I never knew what to do or where to go."

me. When I hurt her, it hurt *me* more than anything I've ever done.

I knew right then that I had to get myself right. And that meant I had to get right with God. So I came to the Old Savannah City Mission. From day one, the guys opened their hearts and their arms to me. They got me into the Bible, teaching me about Jesus and how to live for Him. I don't need to flip a coin anymore to decide what I'm going to do. I have Jesus now, and I'm doing what HE says.

Thank you for supporting Old Savannah City Mission. Your donations made a big change in my life.

There were **1,606** homeless individuals identified in Chatham County during the 2017 point-in-time survey.

There are **233** homeless veterans living in Chatham County. Currently 1 out of every 18 homeless in Chatham County are Veterans.

There are currently **19** unregulated homeless camps that are active within Chatham County.

Chatham County is the second most homeless-populated region in Georgia. Our 2017 count identified **1,606** homeless individuals. This count does not include more than 800 students enrolled in the Savannah Chatham Public School System who are counted as homeless.

Source: homelessauthority.org



Homeless Neighbors This Fall

Your Gift Today Will Provide Hope and a New Start

Thanks to your sacrificial support, the Old Savannah City Mission is open 24/7, providing nourishing food, safe shelter, and the promise of God's transforming power to everyone who comes seeking help. As we move deeper in to fall and the holidays, please help us continue providing the life-changing care that rescues many more men from the streets. Send your next generous gift today, or give online at www.oscm.org. Thank you, and God bless you for your faithful prayers and support.

"All of us who are part of this miraculous ministry are especially grateful for your extraordinary generosity and faithfulness."



Urban Training Institute Students Complete Relationship Class

Because of the tremendous support of donors like you, Old Savannah City Mission (OSCM) continues to offer people in our community access to nutritious meals, shelter, clothing, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Additionally, OSCM continues to offer a residential recovery program for men based on an adult educational paradigm that is under the auspices of the Urban Training Institute (UTI). This unique program is based on a relational recovery model. This recovery identifies failed or broken relationships with God, self, and others as the core issues feeding addictive behaviors. The path to recovery works by placing individuals in an environment where the restoration of these relationships can be cultivated, challenged, and corrected on a daily basis.

Recently, students of the UTI completed a seven-week healthy marriage and relationship course. The course focused on teaching information to those not currently in a committed couples relationship or those students who may be married or who will seek a healthy couples relationship in the future. Moreover, the course allowed students to acquire skills that will improve and maintain quality biblical couple relationships including healthy expectations, pacing relationship development, problem-solving, communication, and strategies to improve the chances of forming and sustaining a healthy couples relationship in the future.



My Fall Gift

49_48947-5

YES, Brother Bill, I will help provide food, shelter, and other critical resources to my hungry and homeless neighbors this fall. Here's my gift of:

- \$20.50** to provide **10** meals and other assistance
- \$30.75** to provide **15** meals and other assistance
- \$61.50** to provide **30** meals and other assistance
- \$ _____ to provide as many meals and care as possible
- Please bill my credit card: VISA MC AMEX DINERS



ACCOUNT NO. _____ EXP. DATE _____

NAME _____ SIGNATURE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Old Savannah City Mission
P.O. Box 16839
Savannah, GA 31416-3539

► Please mail this completed form with your donation, or donate online at www.oscm.org. Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.