

# THE LIGHT.

From  
Homelessness  
to **HOPE**

**YOUR CITY.  
YOUR MISSION.  
CITY UNION MISSION.**

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From the  
Executive Director

# Connecting with You

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Dear Friend,

We trust this summer is going well for you and those you love. Vannie and I have become “empty nesters” as we married off our youngest daughter recently. My family has been very blessed over the years. My father is nearly 89 years old but still living on his own. I’ve lost no immediate family member, other than my mom. Our four children are now married and doing well. Health in our family has generally been very good. Yes, we have been blessed.

I share this only to make the contrast between the blessings most of us have experienced over the years with the very difficult, even tragic, experiences of the many families we have served. As I write this we’ve been seeing 90-plus homeless family members staying in our emergency shelter—that is very close to filling every bed in that facility. Warm weather has typically meant higher numbers of homeless families needing a safe place to stay.

We have added beds to shelter more single women and hopefully later this summer we will be able to turn a room into additional space for families. Long term, we believe God is making it clear we should add on to our existing family shelter. We’d, of course, love to know what the future holds but can only go with the current trends to know what we should do to provide the shelter needed for families who have lost everything. Please continue to pray for God’s clear direction and give as generously as you are able.

For His glory,

Rev. Daniel J. Doty  
Executive Director

***For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.***

—2 Corinthians 8:3 (NIV)

Executive Director Dan Doty and the Mission staff are concerned about the growing number of homeless families in our community and are seeking new ways to assist them.

## Remembering Dorsey Davis

City Union Mission remembers with love and gratitude Dorsey Davis, a dear friend and coworker who went home to be with the Lord on March 20. Dorsey had served at the Mission in various capacities since 2006, but found his calling working with the men in our overnight shelter, encouraging them to follow Jesus. As many as 50 current Mission residents and guests attended his funeral to honor the man who had touched their hearts.

**“We worked together almost daily for the past 18 months or more. I grew to really appreciate his patience as he showed me by example how to effectively minister to the men here at the shelter. I always looked forward to his insight concerning situations I may have been going through. Dorsey’s sense of humor was refreshing and always timely. And he was the type of man who always was willing to reach down and help another person up.”**

—Trent Robinson, shelter manager



**Dorsey Davis, center, will be missed dearly by our staff and residents.**

**“Mr. Dorsey was a good friend who will be missed. He had a big heart and he shared it with everyone. He may have been hard at times, but only when he had to be and it was always done in a spirit of love. He will be missed.”**

—Kenneth, men’s shelter resident



# Making a New Life

## Homelessness knows no season.

Neither does addiction. "You never know what's going to put you in a shelter," says 48-year-old Chris, who came to the Mission last August with her 9 year-old-son Milo. Her addiction had grown progressively worse and her family would no longer allow her in their homes. "I knew I'd made horrible choices that affected Milo along with myself. It got to where I was either going to lose him and lose myself, or I had to make changes. I had to make a whole new life."

Chris was grateful we had a place available for her and Milo when she had nowhere else to turn. After accepting Christ's forgiveness and asking for His strength in overcoming her addiction, she and her son joined our New Life Program.

"The program has done so much for me, but what it's done for my son is amazing," Chris shares with tears in her eyes. "He has friends here and has set up his room the way he wants it with his toys. He's never had stability until this year, and that's so important for a child. We're reading the Bible and growing up together with Christ leading us. Milo told me, 'I'm not scared anymore, mom,' and that's my blessing."

Chris has found blessings, too, in the loving environment of our New Life Center and the friendships she's formed with other residents. "We go grocery shopping and then cook for our families. We do chapel twice a week or do family nights or house outings. A couple of us are putting in a garden outside. It's different sharing a home with other families and singles, but it's a great way of getting back on your feet, preparing to be successful and not falling back into your old ways." She also feels support from her church. "I needed to tie in with other women who understood what I was going through and who really loved Christ," she says.

Chris loves working with children and hopes to build a career in daycare. But her greatest joy comes from being a godly mother and example for her own son. "People used to tell me I had the potential to be a great mom, and now they tell me I am a great mom," she says, giving Christ the glory for her transformation. "You can try other recovery options, but unless you have Christ, it's very difficult. He's given me my strength to do this."

Thank you for allowing the Mission to be a place where God can transform lives of all ages, every season of the year. Your continued financial support is truly a blessing to men, women and families like Chris and Milo.

## Board Member Spotlight

### David Langford and 2020 Task Force examine the Mission's response to homelessness

David Langford and his wife Heidi share a week with homeless kids at Camp CUMCITO.



The plight of homeless families in Kansas City is top among the issues being examined by City Union Mission's Task Force 2020. "The model for the task force is to bring together the Mission staff and board, along with individuals of the community, and look at the long-range planning for the ministries of the Mission. *Where should we be focused beyond what the Mission is doing now? What are the opportunities to expand in the metro area and how could they be linked with opportunities for giving in a significant way?* From this we will develop concrete initiatives the Mission can focus on trying to solve," says Mission board member David Langford, whose work on the Task Force is among the many ways he lives out his belief that Christians are called to serve the poor.

David also volunteered as a counselor at Camp CUMCITO last year, sharing a cabin with seven teenage boys. "It was a very challenging and rewarding week as we exposed them to the Scripture and Bible teachings," he shares. Throughout the year, he has stayed involved with the boys, taking them to ball games and bowling and trying to maintain a positive influence in their lives. The Mission is grateful for David's dedication and partnership, as well as that of all our board members and volunteers.

# Summer Offers No Relief for Hurting Families

The struggles of our homeless and near-homeless neighbors don't end when summer begins. In fact, it often brings even more people to our doors. Single mothers or fathers with children—even intact families—barely hanging on to their independence face even more critical challenges this time of year. Utilities can be disconnected when temperatures rise above a certain level, and landlords more readily evict when the weather turns warm. Many then face the risk of dehydration and heat-related illnesses if they're forced onto the streets.



## Children suffer the most

The effects of homelessness are devastating for people of any age, but they're especially dramatic for the little ones. Children who are homeless are more likely to suffer from medical illnesses. They go hungry at twice the rate of other kids and have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems. The constant barrage of stressful and traumatic experiences also has a profound effect on their ability to learn, ultimately impacting their success

in life (The National Center on Family Homelessness).

## Families struggle with food

Food can be another critical issue in the summertime. The children of impoverished families in our area don't have access to the free breakfasts or lunches they receive when school is in session. And because fewer grocery items are donated to food banks in the summer, parents may not have the resources they need to feed their kids. In recent years, we've also seen an increase in the number of low-income single parents who can't afford summer daycare for their children.

## Area shelter space is limited

Through our community assistance program we help families with fans, utility payments and food. And youngsters in our 12-week City Camp are provided supervised care, educational activities and wholesome meals and snacks. But meeting the need for shelter is a different story.



According to the Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City, between 2010 and 2011 the number of displaced families in the metro area rose by more than 31 percent. Not only are more homeless families seeking shelter, their circumstances force them to stay longer once they find it. But of the 5,510 calls to the Mission-sponsored Hotline for the Homeless (see article below) in 2011, only 3,093 people were placed—7,275 men, women and children were told there were no beds available. And there continues to be fewer beds citywide as shelters close or change the segment of population they serve.

Here at the Mission, we have up to 160 beds for single parents like Chris (see story on Page 3) and their children along with intact families, and our emergency shelter and New Life Center is **nearly always** at capacity. For the families under our roof, we also provide Christian counseling, medical resources, help with housing and job searches, wholesome food and education programs for their children. If they demonstrate a commitment to making permanent changes, they can join our long-term New Life Program. Our goal is to ensure they leave our care with a foundation of faith in God and the ability to achieve and maintain their independence.

## Through your compassion, there's hope

Thank you for remembering the hurting men, women and children we'll serve this summer by making a contribution today using the enclosed reply form and envelope. Please continue to pray fervently that the Mission, in partnership with other agencies, will find solutions to the growing challenge of homelessness in our city.

# Hotline for the Homeless

A single call provides valuable information, but not always good news

The Hotline for the Homeless is a free service to the Kansas City community, operated and funded by City Union Mission since 1985. Together with other area agencies, we recognized the need to provide the homeless with a faster and more efficient route to safe lodging than by calling each area shelter one by one.

By dialing (816) 474-4599, the homeless can learn the locations of Kansas City shelters and which ones can provide temporary lodging for the night. But making the call does not guarantee a bed. The Hotline typically receives the most calls June through September when family homelessness peaks. In 2011, requests for shelter during this period increased 35 percent over the same time in 2010. Sadly, 34 percent of callers had to be informed that no lodging was available. If callers can't be placed, operators provide suggestions on where they can go for food and day centers where they can stay cool.



# Using the Gifts God Gave Us

**“She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.”**

—Mark 14:8 (NIV)

Volunteers Cathy Carlin Zahner and Ashley Ferro are taking to heart Jesus’ words in Mark 14:8 and using the special gifts God gave them. Ashley is an art therapist; Cathy, a journalist. Together, they’re helping children at the Mission’s Vanderberg Youth Center, our Family Shelter and Camp CUMCITO express what homelessness means to them as a way of uplifting their spirits and letting them know others care about them. The youngsters’ stories and artwork will be compiled and published in a book commemorating the Mission’s 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014.

“I prayed for months that God would show me where I could use any talent I had,” Cathy explains. Her life’s goal is to write a children’s book, but so far she hadn’t had the opportunity. On the Mission’s website, she applied to volunteer, listing her skills. “Lo and behold, they were looking to put together a book to commemorate the anniversary and children,” she says. “I want their voices to sparkle like jewels—to be heard.”

Ashley learned of the opportunity from a friend who works at the Mission. “I believe in God and that is my passion,” Ashley shares. “I really want to have a long-term impact on these kids and art is a way to do that. Many hide their emotions in order to survive to be strong for their families.”

The duo meets with the youngsters one-on-one and encourages them to talk about what their situations feel like as they draw what their experiences look like. “Most kids are very receptive and some are very expressive,” Cathy says. “Others might just shrug their shoulders. Sometimes their stories are very



**Volunteers Cathy Carlin Zahner (left) and Ashley Ferro (right) use their special talents to help homeless children express their feelings.**

sad and you want to take them home and fix it. But you can’t. One time I just stopped the interview and prayed. But knowing someone actually listened to them, I hope it gives them a little nugget of love and strength.”

“I encourage them to draw an event,” says Ashley. “I want them to paint what they’re feeling. A lot of them can’t use their words, but their art says it by the colors or utensils they use. Some want to use color. Others, just a pencil. Some don’t know how to get to that part of their heart, and they just want to doodle. And that’s fine. My family has struggled and I can relate to some of the problems they’re going through.”

Both women feel blessed in so many ways by their experience with the children and also with the opportunity to share this time with one another. “We work great together. We pray before the sessions for God to bless us with the right things to say and for the kids to feel like we are there for them,” Ashley says.

*Several of the children’s moving stories and works of art will be shared periodically in our newsletters before the publication of the anniversary book in 2014.*

## Calling all Volunteers—

### Do What YOU Can Do!

If you have a special talent you’d like to share with the Mission—or simply a big heart and a little time—visit our website at [www.cityunionmission.org](http://www.cityunionmission.org) for a list of our volunteer opportunities!

*“The Lord has given you gifts and talents you don’t even know you have. He is just waiting for you to say, ‘I’ll be your oven mitt.’ It’s not about you and what you think you can do, it is about opening up your hands and saying, ‘Use me.’ And you will be the one who gains so much more than you give!”*

—Cathy Carlin Zahner



## Back-to-School Program Shifts Focus

City Union Mission’s back-to-school outreach will take a different focus this year. Instead of providing school supplies, which is a service undertaken by many community organizations, the Mission will offer another element vital to a child’s success in the classroom—proper school clothing.

“We’ll provide the items required by the Kansas City Missouri School District for nearly 600 income-qualified students in grades K through 6,” says Scott Wilson, the Mission’s Hotline for the Homeless and seasonal ministries supervisor. Each youngster will receive a blue polo shirt, khaki pants, two pairs of white socks and two pairs of underwear. The Mission is grateful to the businesses and organizations that have donated clothing and funding to fulfill this year’s needs, and is continuing to accept donations of clothing and financial gifts toward the program.

Registration for the school clothing giveaway begins on July 23. Visit the Mission’s website, [www.cityunionmission.org](http://www.cityunionmission.org) for all the details, including information on the distribution day event.

# Alexander Austin: Street Painter's Jeans—A Journey of Hope

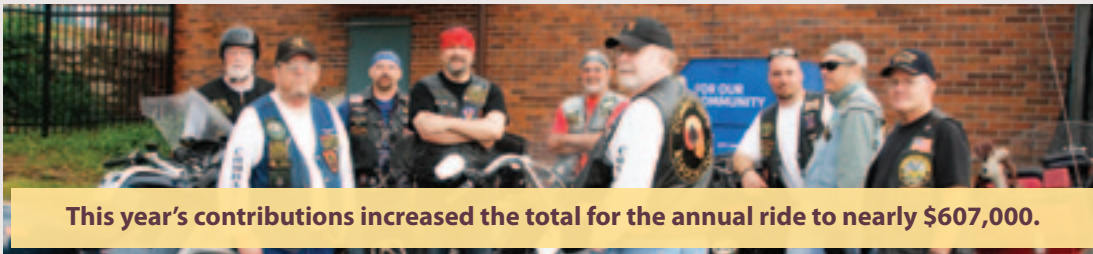
Known for his large-scale murals throughout Kansas City, Alexander Austin is an award-winning painter. Once homeless and living on the streets, he found shelter, food and friendship at City Union Mission.

This "Painter of the Streets" has truly left his mark on the Kansas City landscape with his most notable murals including the 18,000-square-foot south-facing walls of the Power and Light District, the Martin Luther King Jr. mural at Linwood Avenue and Troost and his depiction of jazz legends in the 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine Jazz District. His original works of art hang in galleries and personal collections throughout North America and Europe. In 2009, he returned to the Mission to paint "Journey of Hope," the mural in the multipurpose room of our Christian Life Center, which depicts men going through their own progressions of struggle and pain to victory. That year he also was named one of the 100 most influential African Americans in Kansas City by the Kansas City Globe News. He has also been honored to sit in Buck O'Neil's legacy seat at Kauffman Stadium and was given the Urban Heroes Award by the Downtown Council in 2010.

As part of the 2012 All Star celebration, Alexander's original pencil drawings and paintings—including a rendition of former Kansas City Royals player Frank White, signed by the legend himself—were featured and sold during Missouri Bank's First Friday event on July 6 at their location in the Crossroads District, 125 Southwest Boulevard. Lee Jeans was the presenting sponsor of the show, which also included the auction of a quilt made from denim jeans Alexander has worn to paint his murals. The artwork will remain on display and for sale at the bank through the end of the July, with 50 percent of all proceeds from the initial event and subsequent sales donated to the Mission.



Former Mission resident and renowned Kansas City mural painter Alexander Austin was recognized as Major League Baseball's "2012 Hometown Heroes Artist" at the All-Star Game at Kauffman Stadium.



This year's contributions increased the total for the annual ride to nearly \$607,000.

## Bikers With a Mission Ride for the Homeless

Despite rainy conditions, more than 300 motorcycle riders departed from the parking lot of City Union Mission's Men's Shelter on Sunday, May 6, for the 23rd annual **Bikers with Mission Run for the Homeless Benefit Ride**.

The 100-mile trip, which raises money to help the Mission assist Kansas City's homeless and working poor, brought in more than \$25,600 in cash and pledges. The funds are used to help Mission clients with needs over and above what the Mission typically budgets for, including utility assistance, bus tokens, baby formula, prescriptions, dental and medical care, eyeglasses and so much more.

Glenn and JoAnn Hicks were declared this year's grand-prize winner for securing the most pledges and cash in hand on the day of the event at \$1,950. They received a custom-made knife created by Bill Miller of **W. M. Knives**, who has been donating his knives as incentive prizes every year since the event began in 1990.

The Mission is grateful to all riders, donors, volunteers and event sponsors who helped make this event a success.

## New City Thrift Opens in Kansas

Donate gently used household goods, small appliances, antiques, shoes and other must-have items and receive 25% off your purchase the same day during the Grand Opening of the new Antioch City Thrift in Kansas. Visit [www.cityunionmission.org](http://www.cityunionmission.org) for details.

### Grand Opening Antioch City Thrift

Shannon Valley Shopping Center  
11100 Antioch Rd • Overland Park  
Corner of College and Antioch  
9 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Sat.  
10 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday

## Because You Gave Financial Update

FY 2012 Budget (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30) **\$8,250,000.00**  
Amount Raised as of 5/31/12 **\$6,267,916.58**

## January-May 2012

Daily average of homeless sleeping overnight	<b>424</b>
Daily average of meals served	<b>630</b>
Approx. number of patients seen for medical issues	<b>4,164</b>
Approx. number of salvations and rededications	<b>216</b>
Daily average of homeless attending chapel services	<b>255</b>