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Message from the Executive Director

We often get to tell you a beautiful story about connecting, about healing, and about enabling women and men to start afresh and write a new chapter of their lives. After almost 30 years of service, our ministry continues to welcome those without a home into our house, with nourishing meals and a safe place to sleep 365 days per year.

But life is about a lot more than having a roof over your head. Because we believe a shelter must be only a temporary solution to homelessness, we work to create a stable and supportive environment that nurtures people's strengths and provides a healthy framework for personal growth. As you engage in the life stories and watch our guests embrace physical and emotional healing, a renewed confidence forms, and the groundwork is laid for sustainable, independent living.

We invite you to join the community that rescues people from despair, feeds them hope, and gently guides them out in to a safer world. We can't move forward without you.

Faithful friends like you have made it possible for broken lives to be made whole again through the compassionate ministry of the Cornerstone Rescue Mission. Together, we work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year. This is possible because you make it possible.

I want to thank you for making it possible and ask you to spread the word to your friends who can join you in helping us continue God's work in transforming broken lives.

Blessings and all best wishes for happiness and tranquility as summer comes to an end.

Jim



Executive Director Jim Castleberry

Thanks

The Cornerstone Rescue Mission and the Women and Children's Home would like to send sincere appreciation to TREA Bingo and TREA Auxiliary Chapter 29 for providing approximately 300 cans of food every month for the last two years. These donations have been a special blessing to the Women's Home.

A big "thank you" to Ernie Summarell, president of the auxiliary and a very special thanks to Norrell Willette as the chairman of the TREA Food Pantry.



Helping Those Who Help Themselves

The goal of the Cornerstone Apartments transitional housing program is to help previously homeless families achieve self-sufficiency. Over the past year, we have interviewed more than 200 families for the 24 apartment units available. The need is evident. Only a few are chosen.

As of August 1, we are pleased to say that 14 families successfully completed one year of participation in this program. Twelve families have made the commitment to stay in the program for a second and final year before they venture out on their own.

The journey is not easy, but these families know that their travel is far more difficult when they try to break the cycle of homelessness alone. We have learned that “success” is defined by each individual and family. The greatest success comes to those who make the most of the support we offer and are also committed to helping themselves. During a recent exit interview, one family agreed to share how their lives have changed in just one year.

Travis, Brittney, and their daughter Emily moved into the Cornerstone Apartments in July 2008. Like many families we interview for this program, they were very open about their past struggles, poor choices, barriers they had encountered and their shared desire for a better life.

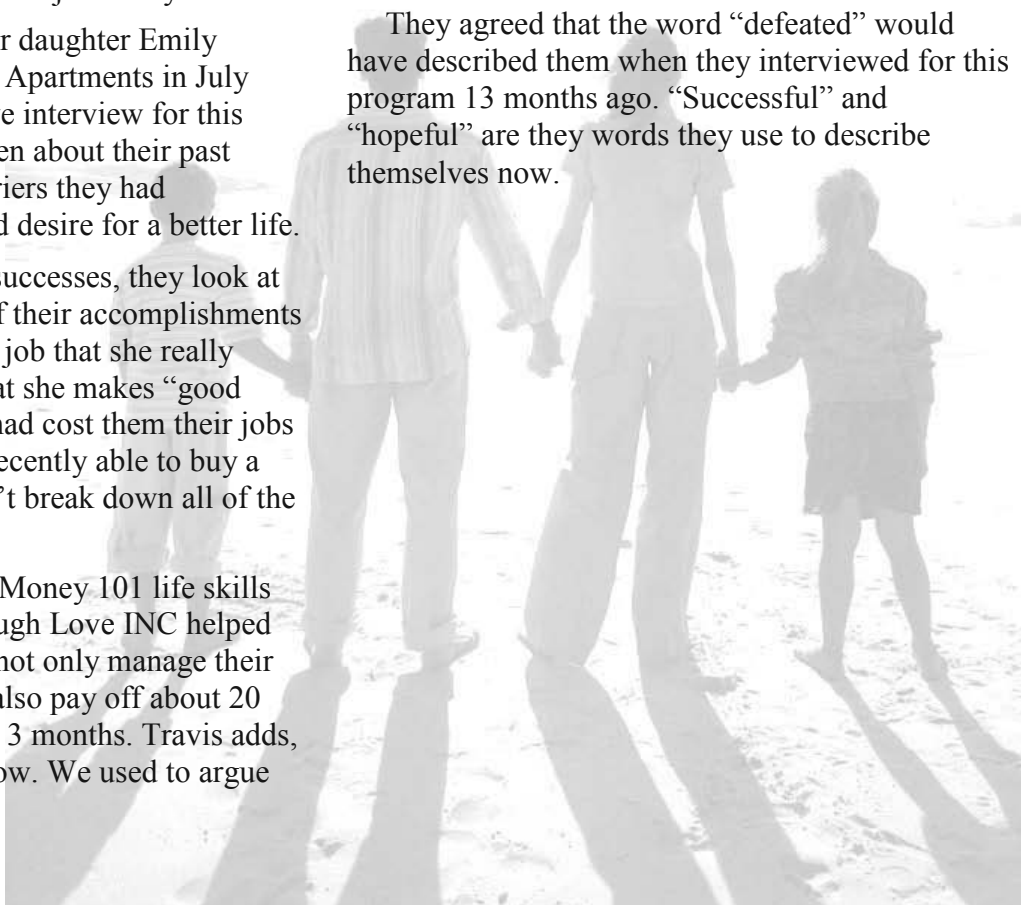
When asked about their successes, they look at each other, smile and list off their accomplishments including Brittney finding a job that she really enjoys. She quickly adds that she makes “good money” too. Car problems had cost them their jobs last December. They were recently able to buy a more reliable car that doesn’t break down all of the time.

They both agree that the Money 101 life skills classes they completed through Love INC helped them learn the strategies to not only manage their money more wisely, but to also pay off about 20 percent of their debts in just 3 months. Travis adds, “We don’t argue as much now. We used to argue about money all the time.”

Travis shared that one of the most meaningful things that happened to him during this past year was regaining custody of his daughter Markayla. He adds that the Love INC parenting classes he and Brittney completed helped them learn how to make better parenting choices individually and to support each other in the parenting role. Travis’s face beams when he talks about a Father’s Day card he received from his mother this year. “She told me how proud she was of me for stepping up to do the right things and take care of my family.” Travis keeps this card on the refrigerator.

Travis and his family moved to another location on August 1. They are very excited about beginning classes at Western Dakota Tech this fall with hope for future employment that will provide for the long term needs of their family. Even though they did not accomplish all of their goals during this past year, they made significant progress. Most importantly, they learned some skills that will support their ongoing success in the future.

They agreed that the word “defeated” would have described them when they interviewed for this program 13 months ago. “Successful” and “hopeful” are the words they use to describe themselves now.



Unconditional Love

As they prepared to share their last supper together, Jesus wanted his disciples to understand the gift of loving one another. He did so through an act of humbleness. He washed their feet. After doing so he said:

I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 13 – 16 (NIV)

“Love” is a very small word. It sounds so simple, but as these scriptures portray, the act of loving is not always pleasant or easy. This call to action is issued to each one of us. At Cornerstone, we have the opportunity to gain new understanding of the depth of Jesus’ call to action:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13: 34-35

As servants of the Lord, Cornerstone employees and volunteers are called to love those who have been rejected by the world. They often see themselves as unlovable, unworthy or as a lost cause. However, as Jesus taught us repeatedly, the act of sharing love is never small and we can never underestimate the power of His love in action through us.

Bill Garland, case manager at the Cornerstone Rescue Mission for over 11 years, has written a song about three people he served through his work at the Mission. Each one had been rejected by the world. Each one knew failure. Each one had given up hope. Each one walked through the doors into our ministry searching for help. The chorus of Bill’s song tells the most important part of the story:

“And we showed them, unconditional love.
Careful not to judge.

What the world needs more of in Jesus Christ is unconditional love.”

We are not called to love one another only when it is easy. Sometimes loving people who come to our ministry challenges our employees to deeper levels than they ever imagined. We are often called to love people who are hurt, broken, disillusioned with the world and even angry at God himself.

As Jesus also promised, the people we serve in our ministry are often blessed beyond measure by experiencing the love of Jesus Christ. When we humble ourselves, and lean on the Holy Spirit for guidance, we are often amazed by the Lord’s power of loving his people.

We invite you to listen to Bill’s song by going to our website:
www.cornerstonemission.org

Needs Lists

We are grateful for the support of this community throughout the year! Our current needs include:

Cornerstone Apartments

Cleaning supplies
Laundry detergent and fabric softener
Hair-care products
Diapers of all sizes

Men’s Mission

Spices
Coffee
Deodorant, razors
Toothpaste

Women & Children’s Home

Household cleaning supplies
Kitchen scrubbers, bottle brushes
Hair care products
Size 4 & 5 diapers
Food wrap, foil
Ladies’ underwear, smaller sizes
B & C cup bras

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Who is Called?

Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. John 12 – 26 (NIV)

Cornerstone is blessed each day by the presence of volunteers. One of our greatest joys is witnessing the many ways that the Holy Spirit calls people to reach out to help by giving of their time, gifts, and passions.

People commonly say, "I don't know if there is anything that I can do to help, but let me know if you need me." Our response to them is simple...we say, "Pray." For we know that when people are led by the Lord to serve in a way that he has uniquely prepared for them, they will be blessed in return and our organization will benefit in ways that we never fathomed.

Cornerstone is enormously blessed by the presence of a variety of volunteers. People from a number of churches in our area give of their time each month to serve meals at the Mission. We have retirees, like Marge and Bernie, who choose to spend some of their available time helping at the Cornerstone Thrift Store.

Kelly, one of our newer volunteers, first visited us when she volunteered in May with her sixth-grade class. She has since volunteered every week by helping at our new Dear Ones Child Care Program. And then we have Rachel and Gerrie, who answer the phones at the Women and Children's Home a few hours each week.

Who is called to serve? As followers of Christ, we all are. We all have something to offer.

The only limitation is our willingness. Call our Volunteer program at 718-8712 or send an email to volunteer@cornerstonemission.org to learn about the multiple ways that you can get involved.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CORNERSTONE RESCUE MISSION

(The enclosed envelope is for your convenience. We are serving more people every day. Your help is appreciated!)