

Cold Weather Shelter

by Bill Slocum, Director, Greenville Rescue Mission

Opportunities come in many forms. The Greenville Rescue Mission focuses daily on fulfilling Miracle Hill's stated mission to the men and families who live here in our dorms.

"To ensure that those persons most in need receive food, shelter, and compassion, while hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ and becoming productive members of society."

Our dorms are generally always full. Most nights there are more men needing a place to stay than we can accommodate. The men in our shelter dorms, the men in our Overcomers drug and alcohol recovery program, and the intact families in our Family Apartments are certainly among "those most in need;" but they are surely not all of them. Our community is home to hundreds of street homeless men, women, and families. Despite the efforts of Miracle Hill staff and volunteers

to try to bring them in and help them, many are content to stay homeless.

But, we cannot allow them to freeze to death under bridges during cold winter nights without offering a safe and warm haven with few expectations. Terry, a chronically street homeless man thanked me in our parking lot one hot July day. "Hey, thanks for taking us in during the winter. I don't know what would happen to me if y'all weren't there."

On every winter night where the predicted outdoor temperature will be below 40 degrees, our shelters in Cherokee County, Spartanburg County, and Greenville County open overflow facilities to provide the street homeless warm shelter for the night. Our services to them are meager: a mattress, a blanket, a snack, literature to read, a shower if they choose, and a breakfast sandwich and coffee in the morning. Our expectations of them are likewise few. All we ask is the minimal cooperation required to lay down and sleep through the night. And sleep they do. The sound of dozens (often as many as 100) of sleeping, snoring men fill our gymnasium. A few men from night to night will want to talk with our staff

member, perhaps to ask him to pray for them or their family. But most just sleep and leave early in the morning.

Staff members often convince them to ask about taking "the next step." We'll arrange for them to check into our missions, help them make contacts with medical or mental health professionals, and start working with them to secure employment and housing. Stanley is one of many wonderful stories. He came each winter and stayed on the gym floor nearly every night. He asked a staff member about the possibility of a bed in the Mission. He checked in and out of the Mission a number of times before asking about the Overcomers. He graduated from the Overcomers and stayed an additional 4 months, completing our Servant Leader Program. He went to an intern program with a sister agency and graduated after one year. And the possibility of life change began with his visits to the Cold Weather Shelter each winter. Years later he has the tools necessary for productive living in society.

So the opportunities we share come in different ways. Mostly it is in the lives of the people who live here. But often it is in the lives of the men who simply spend the cold winter nights on our gym floor. 🙏





Humility

by Reid Lehman, President/CEO

A friend recently called to ask if his brother could enter our Overcomers addiction recovery program. "Yes," I responded, "he probably can." "But you and I can't get him in. He needs to call for himself. And, he'll only be admitted if he can convince Curtis Pitts, our program director, that he's serious about changing his life."

Because Overcomers and Renewal [our program serving women] have waiting lists, applicants must usually enter one of Miracle Hill's emergency shelters first until a program slot opens. Some applicants have never stayed in a rescue mission and consider it "beneath" them. They're the ones who have a brief shelter stay, because pride and a sense of superiority that "I'm not like those people" are big obstacles to overcoming addiction.

Sharing her experiences with addiction in a recent interview, actress Carrie Fisher noted that a common characteristic of addicts is self-obsession. Since actors are by nature self-obsessed, it's not surprising that many are also addicts. To avoid the embarrassment of "entering rehab" many actors pay shyster doctors tens of thousands of dollars to detox them in hotel rooms, only to relapse immediately after. To be healed, Ms. Fisher said, "You need to have that embarrassment. That's part of it, really. The best thing that can happen is that you're desperate . . . you're teachable."

I'm not sure "embarrassment" is the right word. Perhaps it can be better stated that addicts must "humble themselves." They must be much more concerned about doing whatever is needed to get help than about the shame of staying in a mission or of admitting they are "stuck" and need help.

Self-obsessed individuals begin serving others here. Program participants clean, help in the kitchen, and answer phones. They help with community service projects. They also help provide operating income by working with our thrift stores. Along the way they become conscious of the needs of others and begin to realize that the world does not revolve around them.

Do these attitude changes guarantee healing? No, but they help in two ways. I Peter 5:5 says, . . . clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humility removes blinders that prevent healing and releases the power of God so essential to the process. Along the way, participants learn discipline; and staff and volunteers provide clear, biblically-focused teaching on healthy living.

Curtis and his staff recently surveyed 59 of our 2008 Overcomer graduates, finding that 63% had consistently remained substance free. An additional fifteen percent had relapsed briefly, but were doing fine at the time of the survey. Considering that nearly every graduate entered with his life in complete disarray, these results are miraculous. Thank you for participating with us in this great work of offering relief and freedom to those God brings our way. 📧

Elves Do Exist

by Minda Shelton, Director, Miracle Hill Shepherd's Gate

Have you ever read the story, "The Shoemaker and the Elves"? If not, here is a quick synopsis: A popular shoemaker—he must be, he has more business than he can handle!—can never complete all of his work, and goes to bed resigned to never fixing that cute pair of shoes. Enter the elves! As Mr. Shoemaker drifts off to sleep, they come and pick up the slack. They complete everything that was left undone and then quietly leave. When the shoemaker wakes up—TAH DAH—everything is finished! This happens night after night.

Now, why do I tell this story? Simply because I know many of you do not believe in elves, and I am here to tell you that they do exist; I have seen them at Shepherd's Gate! You might choose to call them volunteers, and that is fine; whatever the label, I can only tell you that we would be lost without them. What would we do without those who come faithfully year after year to answer our phones so a caseworker can go and help a client in crisis? What would the clients miss hearing if not for those individuals or church groups who come to give devotions? Oh, and goodness, should I even begin tell you what our clothing closet would look like if not for those who come to straighten it for us?

Many of you have the heart to volunteer somewhere. Would you consider coming to Shepherd's Gate? You can call Pat Holland, Volunteer Coordinator, at 268-4357, and she will be glad to give you details. Thank you. We cannot do what we do without you, and we believe! 📧

Samaritan's Feet



Manny Ohonme

Samaritan's Feet, an International ministry focused on providing shoes for needy children, provided shoes to more than 200 homeless folks in Greenville this past Fall.

Volunteers from the community and staff of Miracle Hill Ministries gathered at Earle Street Baptist Church to distribute the shoes. Residents from local Miracle Hill shelters were bussed to the church where they heard live music from Damien Horne and listened to the testimony of Samaritan's Feet Founder, Emmanuel Ohonme before the distribution began. In addition to receiving new shoes, the 200 recipients had their feet washed, and their new socks and shoes put on their feet before a volunteer prayed with them.

Emanuel "Manny" Ohonme, Founder of Samaritan's Feet began a 300 mile walk, from Charlotte to Atlanta, in his bare feet on October 11th, 2008, to raise awareness for needy people in our communities who can't afford warm, well fitting clothes and coats much less a pair of new shoes.

Along with their new shoes, ladies from the Renewal Center, Miracle Hill's addiction recovery facility for women, were also given new crocs. The ladies were so humbled by the foot washing act that many of them asked to wash the feet of volunteers in return for their kindness. Before the ladies headed back to the shelter, they had their own photo op, posing with the barefoot Manny in their new crocs. By noon, word was out on the street and many homeless folks with worn shoes made their way to the church and were blessed with new tennis shoes. 🙏

Boxed Out

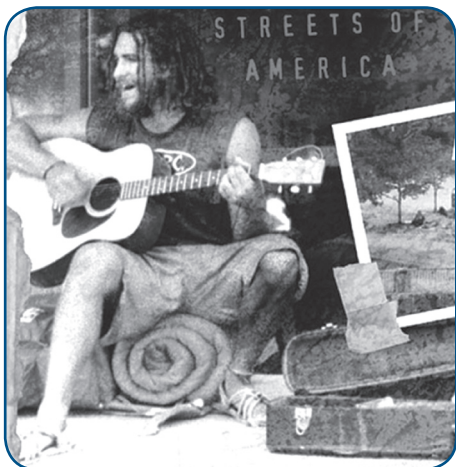


Twelve youth from across Cherokee County had the opportunity to experience homelessness first hand on October 24th, 2008. The event, appropriately named "Boxed Out" had kids spending the night in a cardboard village with only a sleeping bag and a flashlight to raise awareness about the issue of homeless.

The evening began with warm weather, but soon become cold and rainy as the group built their night's accommodations from flattened pieces of cardboard. The young people saw first hand that no matter how well things are going, things from the past can come up and put you right back where you started. They learned a few of the reasons why people become homeless and how difficult it is to become established again, especially if drugs or alcohol are involved.

Before settling in for the night, everyone gathered around for prayer and to hear from a gentleman who became homeless because of an alcohol addiction. After a dinner of PB & jelly sandwiches, everyone crawled into their boxes. The air was freezing and everyone and everything got soaking wet. Most people had difficulty sleeping, and woke up many times from the cold, wet or noisy near-by train.

It was a wake up call for all of us, about the reality of living without a home. We couldn't imagine what it would be like to have that every night, to dread bad weather because there was no place to go if it was raining and cold. As miserable as the night was, we had homes to go back to and the next night we slept warm and dry in our own beds, surrounded by our own things. 🙏




“I Am Disgusting.”

During any given year, more than 3.5 million people will experience homelessness— a social crisis that has a whopping one percent of the entire population eating out of trash cans and sleeping under bridges. On the other side of the pendulum lies many Americans, Christians included, living comfortable, secure lives—either unaware or unwilling to do anything to help those in need.

Mike Yankoski’s life went from upper-middle class plush to scum-of-the-earth repulsive overnight. By his own choice. From the United States capital to San Diego, Mike and his traveling companion, Sam, journeyed as homeless men for five months. Not for a college project or even as a response to a dare. Mike needed to know if his faith in God was real -- if he could actually be the Christian he said he was -- apart from the comforts he had always known.

So, with a bag on his back, a guitar in his hand, and Sam by his side, he set out. And like any traveler in a foreign land, he returned a different man.

Eating from garbage cans and dumpsters by day, and sleeping under bridges and on streets by night, Mike and Sam were forced to depend on the generosity and kindness of strangers as they panhandled to sustain their existence. For more than five months, the pair experienced first hand the extreme pangs of hunger, the constant uncertainty and danger of living on the streets, exhaustion, depression, and social rejection — all of this by their own choice.

Please join us as Mike shares his unusual, captivating and challenging story at Miracle Hill’s annual fundraising banquet on Thursday, April 23, 2009. 

Banquet Opportunities

You can make a difference in the lives of the Upstate’s homeless by sponsoring Miracle Hill’s annual fund raising banquet.

Sponsorship Opportunities:

Presenting Sponsor \$10,000

company or individual named as presenting sponsor, thank you from the stage during the banquet, plus ASSOCIATE benefits

Associate Sponsor \$5,000

placement of a sign (*provided by you*), name listed on Miracle Hill Ministries web site, plus PARTNER benefits

Partner \$2,500

name displayed in shelter for one year, plus BENEFACTOR benefits

Benefactor \$1,000

company name or logo in PowerPoint presentation, plus FRIEND benefit

Friend \$500

name listed in banquet program

If you have friends who would like to learn more about Miracle Hill and those we serve, consider being a table host. Please call Frankie Powell at 864-268-4357.

Administrative Office	877.558.4357
Miracle Hill Boys’ Shelter	864.292.0552
Miracle Hill Children’s Home	864.878.9987
Miracle Hill Relief Ministry	864.242.2911
Miracle Hill Rescue Mission	
• Cherokee Co.	864.488.0376
• Greenville	864.242.6933
• Spartanburg	864.583.1628
Miracle Hill Shepherd’s Gate	864.268.5589
Miracle Hill Thrift Operations	864.242.6931
Miracle Hill Auto Sales	864.268.1960
Overcomers Program	864.242.6933
Renewal Program	864.242.2166



Miracles in the Making

Miracle Hill does not discriminate with regard to race, color, sex, national origin, marital, veteran, handicap or any other legally protected status.

*Names and photos of clients may have been changed to ensure their safety.

Miracle Hill Ministries, Inc. is a member of the
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