Finding hope and opportunities in these challenging times
Finding Hope and Opportunities In These Challenging Times

Throughout this long year, with the pandemic continuing to challenge all of us, safety has taken on a much deeper meaning. This struck home whenever we were able to help someone staying in our shelter to acquire their own efficiency apartment – or when someone was ready to leave after completing their behavioral health counseling.

Because we had undertaken such thorough precautions to keep everyone safe, as they were getting ready to leave, many would share, in confidence, their worries that the world they were going back to might not be quite as safe.

So, as they left for their new homes, we also provided them with care packages that included masks, sanitizers, and other personal hygiene needs.

As always, those who knocked on our door found refuge from their personal storms, while receiving food, clothing, shelter, a safe place to sleep, counseling, and a reason to believe that tomorrow would be better.

During these challenging times, the need to help those in our community who are struggling never waned.

Those needs just became more challenging.

So, with your help, we persevered — finding new ways to come through for those who had nowhere else to turn.

Just by way of a few examples:

- Because of our close working relationship with the Henry J. Austin Health Center, 100 people in our shelter were among the first individuals experiencing homelessness in our country to receive the Covid-19 vaccine;
- In partnership with the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, we opened a Warming Center, where each day we were able to keep an additional 60 people experiencing homelessness safe and warm throughout last winter;
- Helped by a grant from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, we collaborated with area restaurants who were struggling to stay open, and together fed those in our community who were hungry;
- In collaboration with Mercer Street Friends, we opened a New Food Pantry – which we had never felt the need to do before – because of an unmistakable need that rose from our community; and
- We helped 140 individuals move from our shelter to their own housing.

We had no idea how we would possibly pay for all that needed to be done, around the clock, for those in our community who were most vulnerable.

We just knew what we had to do.

So, we persisted – and believed.

We are extremely grateful that you believed along with us — every step of the way.

In the most challenging times, we have come to believe, the best always comes out in those who truly care for others.

Throughout this long pandemic year, your compassion and your generosity has lifted us, and let us know that we would all come through this together.

Thank you for keeping those we serve in your hearts!
“We have never before felt the need to open a food pantry. Since the onslaught of the pandemic, however, that need rose unmistakably from our community,” said Barrett Young, Chief Executive Officer of The Mission.

He added, “Once we were able to re-open The Mission’s Thrift Store in the spring, we started seeing many new people who needed clothes and were also struggling to put food on their tables.”

Barrett said, “So, we knew we had to do something.”

That something became The Mission’s New Food Pantry, located inside our Thrift Store, which had its official opening on September 17th.

While The Mission has been here for over a century serving those who are experiencing homelessness, this New Food Pantry was created to help those in our community who, while they have a roof over their heads, are not able to make ends meet.

“Like every new program that has started here at The Mission,” Barrett said, “the New Food Pantry began by recognizing a need that became pronounced, which led to conversations among like-minded colleagues about what we could do together, then quickly creating a plan, and forging ahead.”

Those conversations occurred with the leadership teams at Mercer Street Friends Center, The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, and four area restaurants (Pat’s Original Diner, Blooming Grove Inn, Leonardo’s II, and Trentini’s) – who are providing chicken, ground beef, canned goods, fresh fruit and vegetables, along with individual meals that have been prepared, cooked, packaged, and frozen – so that all someone has to do is reheat each meal in a microwave oven.

In just a few months since opening, the New Food Pantry has helped over 1,500 individuals, and the need is growing.

Barrett added, “While The Mission has always found strength in collaborating with like-minded partners, the pandemic has brought us closer together to ensure that our neighbors do not go to bed hungry.”
Seeing Potential When All Hope Seems Lost

When Scott Harvey, the Chief Executive Officer of Scott Harvey Auto Group, came to The Mission last winter to donate hundreds of blankets, he said he would be very open to helping some individuals who were going through hard times with job experiences at his dealership. “If there is someone who wants a fresh start,” Scott said, “I’d love to help.”

That is how Scott met James Kirkland, who is now an entry-level technician, rotating tires and changing oil, fluids, and filters, as he learns to do more.

“While James has no previous experience, what he has is the will, the want, and the desire. If you have that, I can show you the rest. James is very good at working with his hands, and he is learning and growing every day. For five months now, he has shown up before anyone else. And if a customer appears at the end of the day for an oil change, he’ll gladly stay later to take care of it. I love his attitude,” Scott said. “We’re going to grow together.”

James explained that he came to The Shelter from prison. “If I had just listened to my parents when I was growing up, I’d be where I need to be. But I made some very poor choices. I got my head turned around, hung out with the wrong people, and ended up in trouble. Now I have a chance to set things right.”

Having now left The Shelter for his own apartment, he smiled, saying, “I have a set of keys. It’s mine.” Scott added, “Now that James has his own place, we can lend him a computer, so he can take online training and continue advancing.”

While he could take a ten-minute bus ride to work, James usually walks. “It feels good to stretch my legs,” he said. “And it gives me time to think about where I’ve been, where I am, and where I’m going.”

Reflecting on the words that Scott enthusiastically said about him, James said, “He sees something in me that I am just starting to see in myself.”

“He sees something in me that I am just starting to see in myself.”
When Kira Lynch and her daughter Crystal could no longer stay in their trailer in Egg Harbor Township, they gathered what few belongings they could carry and went to the train station. Feeling lost, having no place to go, they scanned the train schedule. The last train was about to leave for Trenton. So, they took that as a sign.

The next morning, exhausted and adrift, Kira and Crystal arrived at The Shelter.

“We became good friends with a lot of the staff, and grew close with many of the people staying there,” Kira said. “They made us feel comfortable being there.” In The Shelter, they felt safe, particularly in the throes of the pandemic. With a comfortable place to sleep, warm meals, clothing, and counseling, they found hope.

Crystal is now living in a home in Rocky Hill, and Kira has just moved into a historic house on South Clinton Avenue in Trenton, which The Mission purchased and renovated to accommodate five women who were previously homeless.

“My daughter and I talk on the phone every day, and she stays with me every other week,” Kira said. “So, things are looking up. We’re seeing new possibilities. We see where we are now as a stepping stone. The next step is a home for both of us together.” She paused, then added, “The train we got on a while back eventually took us in the right direction.”
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First Presbyterian Church of Hightstown
Greater Faith Tabernacle United Methodist Church
Holy Cross Church
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Hopewell Presbyterian Church
Ivyland Presbyterian Church
Lutheran Church of God’s Love
Montgomery United Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville
Princeton United Methodist Church
Saint David the King Roman Catholic Church
Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church
Saint Mark United Methodist Church
Saint Matthew’s Episcopal Church
Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church
Sisters of the Order of Saint Dominic
Robert Soclow Fund of the Jewish Communal Fund
The Diocese of New Jersey
The Greek Orthodox Ladies
Philoptochos Society
Trenton Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Trinity Church
Turning Point United Methodist Church
United Methodist Women
Uniarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
United Methodist Women of PUMC
United Presbyterian Church
Winterspoon Street Presbyterian Church

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1. Make a financial contribution
   Mail your check in the enclosed envelope. Donate online at: RescueMissionOfTrenton.org

2. Double your donation
   See if your company has a Matching Gift Program.

3. Make a memorial gift
   You can honor a loved one’s memory.

4. Leave a legacy
   Show your enduring support by including a gift to The Mission in your estate planning.

5. Donate gently used clothing
   See the interactive map on our website to find clothing donation boxes.

6. Donate your time
   See on our website ways you can volunteer virtually during this pandemic.

RescueMissionOfTrenton.org

The Rescue Mission of Trenton has received Charity Navigator’s highest rating for 8 consecutive years.
Behind each of these numbers is a personal story – of hope, potential and opportunity.
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Please donate now.
You can make a real difference.

If you are in a position to help, your donation will immediately provide food, housing, and opportunities for those in need during these unprecedented times.

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Thank you!

Rescue Mission of Trenton

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