

THE Quarterly

Summer 2022

When Do You Know You Are Ready To Seek Recovery?

Gazing out the window, as though paging through the past, Kenneth repeated the question out loud. *When do you know you are ready to seek recovery?*

"Alright. I'll tell you what it was like for me." Clearing his throat, Kenneth Smith, a Senior Recovery Aide in The Mission's Behavioral Health Center, who has just become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, said, "It just seemed like another dull, gray morning ten years ago. But I felt something different inside of me. Something needed to get out.

First thing in the morning, that's when you will catch someone in their feelings who is suffering from addiction. When they are waking up, aching, scared and lost. I didn't need a mirror to know how bad I looked. But I was staring myself down. And I was busy trying to hide from myself. And I was tired. So tired. I want-

"I'd just made someone else who was addicted cry because of the way I looked. I knew I was bad. But I didn't know I was that bad."



Kenneth knows that what he lost along the way, he has found again.

In this issue, you will hear about the many ways in which our essential workers are responding to the needs of those we serve.

1 What does it take for someone to admit to themselves that they need to change, and are ready to seek recovery?

2 A transformative course developed at The Mission is helping individuals open up to new possibilities.

4 How coming to The Shelter provided Lynne with the ability to get back on her feet with a new sense of hope.

8 Gifts from our donors have created a warm welcoming feeling for everyone who enters our new Food Pantry.

ed to be among the living. But I felt dead. Mentally drained, emotionally disrupted, spiritually empty. All of that. So, there was that one fateful morning when it all became just too much. I had no life. My job was chasing drugs for myself. That's all I was doing. Full-time. I had nothing. I was dirty. I didn't want to be around myself. And I just couldn't do it anymore. Then someone else who was addicted looked at me and started crying. She said, 'Kenny, look at you. You are not you.' And all I could do was laugh it off."

He paused, then continued. "Later that night, I was huddled in a vacant

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Barrett Young Receives Inspiring Leader Award

The New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies presented the Inspiring Leader Award to Barrett Young, Chief Executive Officer of The Mission.

In announcing the award, Debra Wentz, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of NJAMHAA, said, the essential workers – who keep The Mission open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a

“Barrett stands out from the crowd with his caring demeanor, his keen intelligence, his innovative spirit, and, most of all, his sincere compassion for every person The Rescue Mission of Trenton serves.”

year – respect Barrett because they know he is one of them, since he started at The Mission in 2003 as a counselor working from midnight until 8:00 am.

She noted, “His leadership abilities rose to a new level during the pandemic, which presented unprecedented challenges, leading to his becoming Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 2021. She added that Governor Murphy, during that time, also recognized Barrett for his outstanding leadership.

“Barrett stands out from the crowd with his caring demeanor, his keen intelligence, his innovative spirit, and, most of all, his sincere compassion for every person The Rescue Mission of Trenton serves,” Debra concluded. “He is an incredible leader, who is in the right position for him, for The Mission, and for Trenton.”



The Motor Vehicle Commission Came To The Mission

The Motor Vehicle Commission came to The Mission twice in the last few months with their mobile van to help over 50 individuals in our Shelter and Behavioral Health Center obtain drivers licenses and non-driver identification cards. Tyree Adams, Team Care Coordinator in The Shelter, said, “This is wonderful for those we serve.”

Tyree added, “Obtaining an identification card can help someone who comes to The Mission with nothing but

the clothes on their back to begin the process of obtaining housing. So, this mobile service is an enormous help.”

Lynne, one of the individuals who was able to apply for her driver’s license, said, “I am so grateful.” She added that she will now be able to drive to her job, which the case workers at The Mission helped her acquire. And having her driver’s license is the next step she needed to obtain her own supportive housing.



Vaccines are why we will succeed!

But it's not over yet.

Keep washing hands, wearing masks & staying safely distant.

– Dr. Eric Williams, The Mission's Medical Director



Black Student Union Conducts Drive For Women Staying In The Shelter

We are very grateful to the Black Student Union of Lawrence High School for conducting their second annual drive to collect and package hygiene items for women staying in The Mission's Shelter.

With her ever-glowing smile and her always positive attitude, Laura-Simone Martin, founder and president of the Black Student Union of Lawrence High School, delivered hundreds of feminine hygiene kits that were collected during their month-long drive.



Interested in Donating Your Gently-Used Clothing to The Mission's Thrift Store?

Our Thrift Store is a vibrant part of our community, where your donation provides a very affordable way for our patrons to find great values.

We gratefully accept donations of adult and children's clothing. We also make it convenient to donate clothing at our drop-off boxes. You can see a map to our Clothing Box

Locations on our website:

RescueMissionOfTrenton.org

Another way you can support The Mission is by hosting a clothing drive through your company, business, school, faith-based organization, or civic group.

For more information, call David at 609.695.1436 ext.360.



Lesly and her daughter Linda were finding some great values recently at the Thrift Store.

Learning What To Let Go Of And What To Hold On To

Both Joe and Wilfredo were leading double lives before they came to The Mission's Behavioral Health Center.

Joe was succeeding in healthcare technology sales, and was just three classes shy of earning his Master's Degree in Business Administration. Wilfredo was thriving as a barber, while also engaged in a community program to encourage children to read.

At the same time, though, they were each selling drugs on the street to support their habits.

As Wilfredo described, "I thought I was being successful at both jobs, being active in my community, while enjoying perks from the underworld. Then I got caught, and my life turned into suffering and pain, heartaches and heartbreaks."

On each of their separate journeys, new possibilities opened up for Joe and Wilfredo when they were accepted to be among a dozen members of the second cohort of The New Direction Program, a transformative course that was introduced at The Mission to provide individuals in recovery with the opportunity to learn, to be challenged, to reflect, to create a plan for their future, and to see something they may have never seen before – which is their real potential.

"Our premise for this program is that individuals who are in recovery can start to create a new perception of themselves by learning what drives them, connecting with others who have overcome similar challenges, providing them with access to educational and vocational opportunities, developing their own clear career path, and creat-



Joe will be selling healthcare technology and completing his Master's Degree.



Wilfredo's is preparing for his children to say, "That's my dad!"

"I've learned the hard way that our lives are about the decisions we make. And it didn't occur to me before how my decisions could affect so many other people besides myself."

ing a support network of mentors who will assist them afterwards," said Barrett Young, Chief Executive Officer of The Mission, who designed the course with Jeff Henderson, an award-winning chef and best-selling author, who discovered his passion and gift for cooking in a most unlikely place: Federal Prison.

Upon graduating from the program, Joe said, "This is about ending my story that was headed for certain death and starting my new story. The last few years I was just lingering, barely using my potential. Having my freedoms taken away has made me realize how important freedom is to me. Here, I've learned how to cope with and express my emotions,

rather than just try to numb whatever I was feeling and couldn't handle. I've learned that when issues are brought to the surface, I can deal with them. I've learned patience, rather than just grasping for instant gratification."

Joe, who will be going back to his job in healthcare technology sales and completing his MBA, added, "I now feel I have a purpose. I am clear about my life goals, and I have a plan. I've come to believe in speaking things into existence. And I have made a personal commitment to myself to think better, to act better, and to live out my purpose."

For Wilfredo, this has been a time of

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deep reflection, as well.

"I have two children," he said, looking off into the distance. "My youngest child was three weeks old when I was arrested. That weighs heavy on my chest.

“My youngest child was three weeks old when I was arrested. That weighs heavy on my chest. The last time I saw my family, I was shackled. Being away from my children for this long has been a real awakening.”

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Wilfredo added, “This has been a time of getting my affairs in order. I own and I have come to terms with the poor decisions I’ve made. I’ve learned the hard way that our lives are about the decisions we make. And it didn’t occur to me before how my decisions could affect so many other people besides myself. The bifurcated life I was leading has led me here.” Holding up his hands, as if surrendering, he said, “While being here, I’ve learned how my impatience caused me to make hasty decisions without thinking clearly about the consequences. Trying to live a bifurcated life kept me from being where I was meant to be.”

Pausing, he said, “While being here, I learned two important things: what I don’t want and what I do want. I now have a clear path, and a plan for how to succeed. I know what I need to do. My mind is clear. And I believe that the best part is that my story is yet to be finished. And how I finish it is my choice.”

The owner of the barbershop where he worked before has promised Wilfredo “your chair is waiting for you, as soon as you’re ready to get back in the game.”

“The lessons I’ve learned,” Wilfredo concluded, “will be my guide. And I promise you this: my story will end with triumph and victory. The legacy I leave behind will be one that my family and I will be proud of. And my children will say...*that’s my dad!*”

Assemblywoman Sponsors Benefit For Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson came to The Mission with Dr. Kathryn Foster, President of The College of New Jersey and representatives of Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church to cap a very successful five-week sock drive that the Assemblywoman sponsored to benefit individuals who knock on our Shelter’s door.

“The need is great,” as the Assemblywoman said so well. “Individuals experiencing homelessness suffer many health issues related to a lack of socks, or wearing old, damp socks – including frostbite, infections, nerve damage and ulcerations.”

“NJ Socks for Homeless” collected hundreds of pairs of socks between those gathered by Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church, The College of New Jersey, the Assemblywoman’s Office, and The Mission.

“I wanted to create this drive,” Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson said, “because it is one of those vital-



Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson and Dr. Kathryn Foster, President of The College of New Jersey, with some of the socks they collected from those experiencing homelessness.

needs that often goes unnoticed.”

And Dr. Foster echoed, “It was wonderful to see so many students get involved in this project – because they truly want to serve, to make a difference, to help those in need, and to have a meaningful impact.”

Bonner Scholars From Rider University Organize Donations

We are extremely grateful to the Bonner Scholars from Rider University who came to The Mission for three days as part of a service project to help us organize donations we have received.

They created kits with hundreds of household items that are now ready to be provided to individuals and families in need who come to our Food Pantry and our Shelter.

Joan Liptrot, Director of Service Learning for Rider, has organized this volunteer activity for the Bonners over the last few years.



Alyssa Stoddard, one of 18 Bonner Scholars who worked together on this project.

When Do You Know You Are Ready To Seek Recovery?

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house with no heat or water on the corner of Stockton and Hanover Streets in Trenton, and it hit me. She had planted the seed. I'd just made someone else who was addicted cry because of the way I looked. I knew I was bad. But I didn't realize I was that bad. Then it all clicked. And I started crying. Then I left the product I was going to use in the abandoned building and started walking. And I came to The Mission, where DeShawn Spears, a Recovery Peer Aide, was standing outside. I asked him, 'How can I get into this place?' And he smiled and said, "It's easy. Start by just knocking on the door."

"First thing in the morning, that's when you will catch someone in their feelings who is suffering from addiction. When they are waking up, aching, scared and lost."

After walking through that door, Kenneth came to realize, as he said, "I had so much anger inside of me. I didn't know any other feeling. I didn't know how to grieve. There was so much that I had to learn to let go of. I had all this stuff bottled up inside of me that had to find a better way out."

Through counseling, reflecting, journaling and praying, Kenneth, who was raised by his grandmother, said, "I came to realize who I was." His grandmother was the center of gravity in what was otherwise the mayhem of his childhood. "She was the voice of reason, who let me know I was loved, instilling morals and aspirations inside of me." Years later, when he was on the streets, he would think of his grandmother from time to time, "knowing what she tried to do for me, and how she would not want me to be living like

this." She passed away when Kenneth was twelve years old. "She was mugged and had to be hospitalized. After she was taken off in an ambulance, my grandfather returned and told us that she had died. Daisy Smith. My rock." Remembering, as though it was yesterday, he added, "That's when things got real chaotic in the household."

Letting out a long sigh, Kenneth added, "My mom, she was missing. She had a lot of demons that kept her from herself. I don't know what she was going through, but she didn't know how to cope with anything other than other men. She wasn't able to be there for me, to provide the kind of love I was looking for. So, I felt lost. Like I didn't fit in. Like I was the cause of her not being able to be there for me and my siblings. I didn't meet my dad until I was 15, and he was still battling his addiction at that time. So, I didn't have a father figure. I wanted to know him. But at the same time, by then, I felt like I was on my own. Shortly after that, I took to the streets, and my life became a blur."

Kenneth's journey to becoming a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist at The Mission has been about closing some doors, so he could open others.

"For a very long time, I was not who I am now," he said. "I left home when I was 16. So, the streets played a large part of my trying to fit in. The streets became my home. Heroin and cocaine became my story. I bought and sold. Eventually, I ended up living in abandoned houses. Years went by in a blur. I was lost. Completely. I lost all self-respect. I lost all hope."

Pausing, Kenneth said, "I used to ask myself, 'Why?'"

"Now, working here at The Mission, I know the reason was to find myself. After I went through the program here, Barrett (now the Chief Executive Officer of The Mission) encouraged me to

Helping Others Who Are Here Because He Has Been There

"Having successfully gone through our recovery program," Barrett said, "Kenneth readily identifies with people in earlier stages of recovery. He knows what they're going through, and he can connect with them in the moment, where they are, in very meaningful ways."

Barrett added, "Certified Peer Recovery Specialists like Kenneth become important role models for those who are earlier on their road to recovery – providing a ray of hope, and a daily example that success is possible."

In addition to their lived experience, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists like Kenneth have completed extensive training, including supervision and course work that covers recovery, communication, values, ethics, motivation, co-occurring disorders, trauma-informed care and wellness. By going through the training to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Kenneth said, he has also learned how to come to terms with the emotions he never let himself feel when he was in the depths of his addiction.

"We did a lot of role-playing, opening up to our emotions, diving deep and practicing," he said. "I came to realize that because I felt abandoned by my parents when I was younger, a lot of negative feelings had built up inside of me, including guilt, shame, a sense of loneliness, feeling like I didn't belong anywhere, like I didn't fit in, feeling confused, confined, disrespected, and oh, so angry. Without realizing it, I was trying to keep all of those feelings bottled up. I had to let all that stuff out so I could come to an agreement with myself. That has helped me to be even more open than I was before about letting myself be known – in order to better myself and others."

apply for a job as a Recovery Aide."

How does he connect with others who are in earlier stages of recovery?

"I'm not a counselor," Kenneth said. "Still, what I'm able to do is to get many of the residents to open up and allow me in. I've learned that you don't always need to have the answers. More often than not, it's about listening, letting them know I care, and allowing them the space and time to open up. I'm here to help calm the situation in their head. Now, I always start by asking them, 'How are you feeling?'"

He added, "Particularly when someone is standoffish, not knowing how to express their feelings, or even understand what they're feeling, I'll say, 'Let's go for a walk.' Sometimes, it is about just saying something encouraging. Sometimes, they may need to hear

"I didn't need a mirror to know how bad I looked. But I was starting myself down. And I was busy trying to hide from myself."

a stern warning. You have to connect with people where they are. Because they know I've been where they are, sometimes they'll ask me to hold them accountable. And I'll let them know that, in my early stages of recovery, I knew what I needed to do, but I wasn't doing it. So, I was just lying to myself, and to others. Then I let them know that if they want to lie to themselves, there is nothing I can do to help them. But if they want to be truthful, I'm here. And I'll listen and help in any way I can."

"Sometimes," he said, "out of the blue, someone will come to me and confide that he feels the street calling him. And I'll ask him to think about what he'd be giving up if he answered that call. I tell him, 'You've got to fight for your recovery. I'll be straight and honest with them. So, I have a lot of individual conversations, where someone feels they can express their doubts and fears. And I try to provide hope. Still, they know I'll give it to them straight. About themselves, about their

Helping Lynne Get Back On Her Feet

After a long stay in a hospital, Lynne came to The Mission's Shelter at the beginning of this year. "Tyree and his Case Management Team helped me get back on my feet," she said.

"They helped me get insurance, renew my driver's license, and find a new job," she added. For nearly a half-year now, Lynne has been working at LaserShip, where she helps package items for shipping.

While she is on a short waiting list to obtain her own efficiency apartment, which she hopes to get soon, Lynne is still staying at The Shelter, where she receives warm meals, has a safe place to sleep, stores her belongings, and has access to health care.

Lynne, who has a Permanent Resident Card, grew up in Port-au-Prince,

where she lamented, "It is very scary what is going on there now." While she worries about her friends and family who are still in Haiti, Lynne has been creating a new life for herself. She recently completed a Medical Assistant Program, and is currently studying to take her Civics Test.



Since coming to The Mission's Shelter a half-year ago, Lynne has gotten her insurance, driver's license, a new job, and is on a short waiting list to obtain her own efficiency apartment.

recovery, about life, about whatever. I let them know that if they don't start believing something different about themselves, the past will always haunt them. And they won't be able to let it go. It all comes down to letting them know that I'm here. And they know I've been there."

Kenneth now finds his identity and his purpose in working at The Mission, reminding others that "If there was something for me, you've got to believe there is something for you." He said, "That's not to say that every day is a breeze. There's a reason for the gym," smiling, he added. "If things get tough for me, like they will for anyone from time to time, you

know where you'll find me...working out more at the gym."

Still, every now and then, Kenneth thinks back to when he was walking the streets at night, not seeing a hint of light through the darkness, feeling completely lost, with no way home. Then his grandmother's voice returns. And he knows that what he lost along the way, he has found again.

"Now, I'm here as a grandfather. I've become Pop-Pop. For my daughter and my two grandkids, I'm here to make a difference. So, in all aspects of my life, I am storing up my blessings – and hoping to inspire others, who can go on to inspire someone else."



Feeding those who are hungry, housing those who are homeless, counseling those seeking recovery, and providing life-changing opportunities.

Creating a Warm Welcome For Everyone Who Enters Our Food Pantry

Just before Katherine Hatton retired from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Mary Marrone-Polo from the Foundation got in touch with us to let us know that a beautiful commemorative chair had been created in Katherine's honor – and that Katherine wanted The Mission to have it.

On the back of the chair is an engraving to Katherine, who had been at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation since 2004, where she left as Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary at the Foundation.

Throughout that time Katherine, personally, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, corporately, have both been very generous, compassionate, and steadfast partners of The Mission.

And, as it turned out, around the same time, Barbara Bocchino gave us an exquisite quilt, which she created for The Mission. The colors, design and artistry are absolutely stunning. Barbara shared that she was inspired by a mural that was



Waiting their turn to enter our new Food Pantry, Josselyn rocks her son Junior in a commemorative chair the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation created for Katherine Hatton, a dear friend of The Mission.

hung in our shelter after two other generous donors and volunteers had the walls of our Shelter painted in bright, vibrant colors.

So, when Mary Gay Abbott-Young, President of The Mission, heard about this commemorative chair and the beautiful quilt, she immediately thought that the entrance to our new Food Pantry was the perfect location for these thoughtful

gifts. That is where mothers with their children wait for their turn to enter the

“Together, the quilt and chair now help to create a warm welcoming feeling, where mothers are able to rock their children comfortably as they wait to enter the Food Pantry – bringing solace to those in need.”

Food Pantry so they can select free items to fill a shopping cart with fresh fruit, vegetables and meats, along with wholesome prepared meals.

We formally opened our Food Pantry last September, which we never felt the need to undertake before. Since the onslaught of the pandemic, however, the need for this new Food Pantry rose unmistakably from our community. In less than ten months, we have provided nutritious meals to nearly 9,000 individual family members.

Together, the quilt and chair now help to create a warm welcoming feeling, where mothers are able to rock their children comfortably as they wait to enter the Food Pantry – bringing solace to those in need.