

HOPE FOR TODAY

HOPE RESCUE MISSION, 645 N 6TH ST, READING PA 19601

DECEMBER 2018 EDITION

JEREMY'S JOURNEY

I moved to NYC to pursue a film career in 2008. After film school, I decided to stay and made my home in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. I spent the first five years working regular jobs, until I finally made enough money to buy my first camera and start a small film business. I made a website featuring a few short films I had made and some photographs I had taken. Within a week I landed my first job filming a dance recital. Over the next five years, I built a successful business and received awards for short films I produced. Little did I know, my life was about to take a downturn.

In January of 2017, my roommate of five years moved another man into our apartment. After two months, he stopped paying his share of the rent and squatted for the next six months. Since my name was on the lease I was responsible for the full rent. After months of legally attempting to remove him, I eventually got behind on the rent and couldn't afford the lawyer I hired. I was overwhelmed and lost my home and my business, forcing me to move back to PA with nothing.

I was so frustrated, depressed and exhausted. I checked myself into the hospital. After a month there, I took a taxi to the Hope Rescue Mission and walked up those 19 steps. When I walked through the doors, lost and terrified, Frank the deskman took one look at me and assured me everything was going to be alright. "You're in a safe place, and we'll take care of you brother." When he said that, I felt this overwhelming sense of peace and comfort. The same day I also met with Pastor Steve, a Bronx native who's been through it all and then some. Pastor Steve explained the Mission's programs and assigned me to volunteer in the kitchen. As I was leaving his office, I went to shake his hand and he pulled me in to give me a much needed hug.

I loved working in the kitchen as much as I could. I also enrolled in Bible studies two days a week, which began to change my life. I started to grow mentally and spiritually, learning to love God and the good people around me. One day while I was working in the kitchen, my supervisor, Miss Cindy, told me I was doing an excellent job and offered me a paid position as one of her assistants through the discipleship program. Without hesitation I took the job and enrolled in the program. I can say it was one of the best decisions I made. Today I'm one of the cooks and a lead person helping to run the kitchen daily. The mission has given me something that money can't buy, a chance to better myself as a man, and find salvation and Hope!

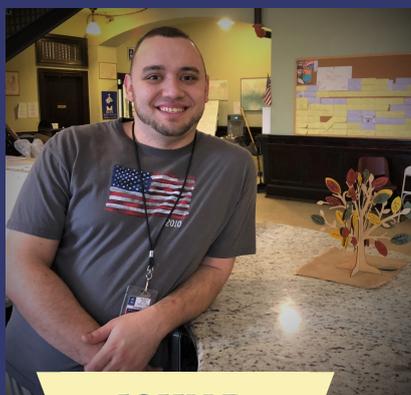


JEREMY C.

TESTIMONY TIME

As a child, John suffered from anger issues and depression. At the age of 12, John was sent to a residential youth program in PA that was investigated for child abuse. After being sent to a different boys group home, John began running away regularly. At age 15, John was placed at The Children's Home of Reading. He says he felt stuck and angry. He graduated in July of 2013 and asked his mother to sign enlistment papers for

the US ARMY. She was happy to sign, because it provided him with structure. After serving for two years, John received a medical discharge, and his life took a negative turn that included a drug addiction and losing parental rights to two children he fathered. He first came to Hope in November 2017, with no hope to continue living. A Mission Case Manager helped John enter PA Adult & Teen Challenge's recovery program, and he credits that decision with saving his life. John returned to Hope a new man in November 2018, and he is pursuing a bachelor's in addiction counseling while working full-time at the Mission's Welcome Center. "I was that guy you wanted nothing to do with. Now I can truly say I'm blessed! I want to follow God's plan for me and help others wherever I go."



JOHN R.

THE STAFF AND RESIDENTS OF HOPE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPENINGS

- Hope's Annual "Daylight Saving Dash" 5k fundraiser will be held on March 3, 2019 at PSU Berks! Please visit www.HopeForReading.org/5k to register online!
- Hope's Banquet held on October 6th was a huge blessing with over 475 guests in attendance and over \$160,000 raised!
- Due to kitchen renovations at Hope, Craig Poole, Margaret Morgan, and their staff team at DoubleTree-Reading hosted a beautiful Thanksgiving Day meal for our men and their guests!



THANKSGIVING DAY AT
DOUBLETREE-READING!

PARTNERS IN HOPE

Oley Valley School District collected toiletry items throughout the month of November. The Middle School Student Council came to the Mission to organize gift bags to hand out to men during Code Blue!



A group of women from Phoebe Berks made the men some beautiful, hand-knitted scarves and hats!



LCBC-Berks sponsored Hope through their "Be Rich" campaign and sent eight groups of volunteers to help at our Thrift Store and serve meals. They also donated 250 new chairs to our dining hall!



CODE BLUE SEASON

Over the coldest months, Hope does not turn men away from overnight shelter unless they pose an immediate threat to those around them. We call this refuge program Code Blue. This year's start of Code Blue has been particularly challenging. With renovations to our facilities, we have had to temporarily house Code Blue guests in our chapel overnight, and we have already had over 200 men staying at the Mission since the end of November.

Many Code Blue guests struggle with addictions. Many struggle with loneliness, depression, and hopelessness. Our staff meets them at their lowest point in life, and we view this as a great opportunity. Men in Code Blue yearn for love and compassion in their lives. While they receive immediate, physical help at the Mission, they are offered lasting, spiritual Hope through the Gospel. We see some of the greatest transformations in the lives of Code Blue men. All of our volunteers and donors are a crucial part of the healing process that men experience here. We thank you for partnering with us to provide every meal, every toothbrush, every pair of gloves, every shower, every cot with a pillow and a warm blanket, and every opportunity to be rescued from the cycle of homelessness.



ANTONIO, CURRENT CODE BLUE
GUEST, WITH PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
STEVE OLIVO.