

CITY RESCUE MISSION

HELP, HOPE & HEALING

VOL. 13, NO. 1, FEBRUARY-MARCH 2010 800 W. CALIFORNIA AVE. OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73106

THE LIGHT KEEPER

Your help means
SO MUCH MORE THAN MEALS!



PLEASE VISIT OUR NEW WEB SITE AT WWW.CITYRESCUE.ORG

A Golden Anniversary



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Oklahoma City, OK 73106
(405) 232-2709
www.cityrescue.org

Rev. Tom Jones
President/CEO
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We invite you to join as partners in this project only as you feel led by God to do so and not out of any feelings of obligation. We believe God will provide for the needs presented here through those who respond. All gifts received will be used to care for the poor all year long. We ask all to pray for our ministry.



**ASSOCIATION
OF GOSPEL
RESCUE
MISSIONS**

Because You Gave

Your gifts provided the following services for the homeless from January through December 2009. Thanks for your continued generosity!

Total number of beds provided: **4,864**
Total meals served: **325,851**
Average number of families served per night: **31**
Average number of individuals served per night: **441**

	Emergency shelter	Bridge to Life	Interns	Total
Men	232	35	20	287
Women	55	28	15	98
Children	9	31	16	56
Total	296	94	51	441



50 Years of Serving the Poor

There's a chance your parents or grandparents celebrated a 50th wedding anniversary. Maybe you were blessed to celebrate your own! If so, you know how inspiring it is to witness a love that has lasted for so many years.

This year, City Rescue Mission celebrates 50 years of extending Christ's love to those who are poor and hurting in Oklahoma City. And during that entire time, every meal served...each night of shelter provided...has been an expression of kindness from caring friends like you.

These past few months have been filled with kindness, from the outpouring of donated food and volunteer hours at Thanksgiving and Christmas to the Oklahoma City Thunder's visit that cheered so many children and their parents! You can read about those events and more in this issue of *The Light Keeper*.

As you look over this newsletter, I hope you'll be inspired to show more of your kindness to our poor and homeless neighbors today. Just in this coming month, we expect to serve many meals—and we literally can't do it without you! Too many men, women and children are cold, hungry, and feel hopeless. Will you reach out with a generous gift of support today?

One of our clients, speaking of the Thunder visit, said, "It does touch our hearts." You touch hearts yourself with every gift and prayer to help people in need. Thank you for caring and for helping City Rescue Mission reach this golden anniversary!

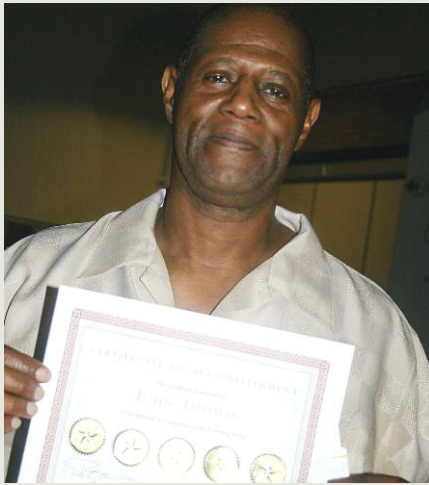
In His Service,

Rev. Tom Jones
President and CEO

"We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.
In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.
May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD,
even as we put our hope in you."

- Psalm 33:20-22, NIV

John Comes Back into the Light



By all accounts, John had everything going for him. He was brought up in the home of his grandfather, a deacon in the local Baptist church. His pastor was “a member of the family,” and they studied the Bible every Friday night. John was told from an early age that he should be a pastor himself when he grew up.

But John had other ideas.

Even though he was the model student in high school—football, wrestling, choir—John developed a rebellious streak. “I was always looking for something more,” he says. “Something to get the adrenaline going.” That “something” included drinking and dating older women.

Not surprisingly, college tempted John with even more adrenaline rushes, mostly in the form of drugs. “I would try anything once,” he admits. Still, John graduated with a degree in Business Management and launched a successful career.

“The dark side”

John’s standing in the business world rose. He married and became a stepfather to two small boys. But he couldn’t stay away from what he calls “the dark side.”

“I just kept wanting more and more. I was trying to fill a hole, to feel like somebody. I started dabbling in stuff

that I shouldn’t do”—specifically, cocaine. As John’s habit grew, he started selling crack for extra money.

“It really bothered me,” he remembers. “I felt like something had snatched me. It was the first thing I didn’t share with my wife.” When she learned of his involvement with drugs, she moved out, taking her boys with her.

As John watched his personal life spiral out of control, he kept up a good front at work. “People had no idea what I was doing on the other side!”

“You’re not getting off that easy!”

John couldn’t keep up the façade indefinitely. “I was always considered a good employee,” he tells us, “then the bottom would fall out. I’d work to bring myself back up and then fall again, and it would be worse than the first time.”

The death of his mother, followed by serious health problems of his own, prompted John to question the God of his childhood. “I begged God to just kill me. I was tired. I heard a voice and He said, ‘Do you think I’ve given you all this grace just to die? You’re not getting off that easy!’”

At that moment, John decided to do “whatever it took” to turn his life around. He came to City Rescue Mission in April of 2008 and joined the *Bridge to Life* program that August.

“God doesn’t give up!”

“This program gave me the opportunity to learn about God, to feel comfortable going to Him, to learn that He’s not just God, but my Father!”

Now graduated from the *Bridge to Life* program and pursuing a job opportunity, John says, “There’s always hope! That will be part of my ministry, to show that people my age can change, that it’s not the end, but the beginning. Don’t give up, because God doesn’t give up!”



Oklahoma City Thunder Scores with City Rescue Mission

November 25, 2009: City Rescue Mission witnessed a great moment in basketball history as a little boy lofted a shot over the outstretched arms of Oklahoma City Thunder forward Serge Ibaka...and scored!

The day before Thanksgiving, Thunder players, coaches, their families and staff members served dinner to more than 400 homeless men, women and children at the Mission as part of their annual Holiday Assist initiative. “This is a great opportunity for us to give something back to the community,” said Sam Presti, Thunder General Manager and Executive Vice President. “We’re thankful for the kind of players we have because they enjoy doing this so much.”

After dinner, kids staying at the Mission enjoyed a little one-on-one with Thunder players and a visit from Thunder mascot Rumble the Bison.

“I’m really happy they decided to come and share with us,” said Tonya, a *Bridge to Life* resident. “It makes us feel good. A lot of people overlook homeless people. It does touch our hearts.”

MORE THAN JUST MEALS

With help from friends like you, City Rescue Mission served over 300,000 meals to Oklahoma City's poor and homeless last year. But so much more happens here every day, and we want to share it with you!



When families lose their homes, all they have is each other. At City Rescue Mission, they have plenty of opportunity to spend quality time together.



The littlest victims of homelessness find a sense of security and continuity within the walls of City Rescue Mission.



Classes in our *Bridge to Life* recovery program provide educational, economic and spiritual development to help people regain the basic necessities of life.



Your support helps men and women continue their education and sharpen their skills to succeed in a competitive job market.

Making a Difference, One Box of Food at a Time

This past holiday season, hundreds of our near-homeless neighbors braved the cold, waiting in line for hours to take home the fixings for a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner.

More than 7,000 people were blessed with boxes of food containing turkeys, Cornish hens, hams, stuffing, mashed potatoes and more. This food helped to make the holidays special for those struggling in a tough economy. "Times have just been hard the last few months," said one woman as she received her box of food. "I'm a single mom, and it seems like when I work, it's just enough to pay the bills and get by."

All of us here at City Rescue Mission are very grateful for the generous outpouring of time and donations that made this important community outreach possible. If you would like to see more, please watch the video on our website at: www.cityrescue.org.



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