

# A Beacon of Hope



2021 Impact Report





# A letter from the CEO

2021 marks 110 years that the Erie City Mission has been restoring hope and transforming lives in the name of Jesus Christ. While we remain steadfast in our mission to serve, we also continue to move forward with improvements to our facilities, including a new sound system in our chapel, improved internet connectivity, and renovations at Grace House. With the purchase and demolition of the former Elks Club building, development also continues down 11th Street as we look to the future in the heart of our city.

Our focus has been and always will be on those we serve—our guests and participants who come to us seeking hope in their desperation. Hope comes in many forms: food, emergency shelter, long-term recovery programs, spiritual life education and connection, transitional living, youth mentoring and leadership training, clothing and furnishings, transportation to meetings, and much more.

I believe the greatest desire of the human heart is to know and be known. Our guests and participants want to know that someone loves them and cares for them, and to be known by name and recognized as someone significant. They long for a place to experience consistent unconditional love, see hope restored and needs met. They want to be convinced that God created them for a unique purpose and that they can “cast all [their] anxiety on Him because He cares for [them].” (1 Peter 5:7, NIV)

This vital human connection occurs daily at the Mission. Hundreds and thousands of these moments of relationship—moments of love—take place within our walls through our caring staff and volunteers. Light begins to enter the world of those we serve, those who often experience a much darker daily reality, and God continues His transforming work.

In this Report, you will meet some amazing people and get a glimpse into the miracles that we see happen every day. May God receive the glory for each miracle, in each life.

On behalf of the Board, staff and volunteers of the Erie City Mission, thank you for your partnership with us. This is Our City, Our Mission. God Bless You.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stephen Westbrook", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Stephen Westbrook, CEO**



New Life Program

# Josh's Journey

In 2010, at the age of 15, Josh began questioning his worldview—everything he had believed in up to that point didn't make sense anymore. His understanding of who God was had been shattered when he was faced with the death of a close friend. Looking for answers, Josh turned to drugs.

He would spend the next five years chasing whatever he could get his hands on, leaving all his morals behind in an effort to just escape. Eventually, Josh would be staring at the bars of a jail cell for the third time, faced with the reality of his decisions and the expectation of serving three to seven years in a state prison.

In a moment that could only have been orchestrated by God, Josh was given yet another chance. Against many recommendations, the court was willing to overturn his sentence in exchange for his enrollment and completion in a long-term recovery program. *“At this point, luckily, a very real change happened within me mentally. I broke down and realized I am one of these people...I have a severe problem and it's going to kill me pretty soon.”* Faced with this new beginning, Josh was ready to take his first serious step toward recovery.

After completing a three-month program at Guadenzia in Erie, Josh felt led to continue his recovery journey with the New Life Program at the Erie City Mission. During his time in the program, Josh began to ask questions about his purpose in life and what had led him to this point. *“The comprehension that I should have been dead a long time ago really set in. Me being here on any level is evidence that God has more of a purpose for me.”*

With that purpose in mind, Josh began to thrive in the New Life Program, making incredible changes. Now, celebrating six years in recovery, he is living a sober life and continuing to seek God's purpose for his life. Josh is currently self-employed through his painting and pressure washing business and gets to be the father he always wanted to be for his son.



New Life Program

# Nathanael's Journey

A self-defined late bloomer, Nathanael had never touched drugs, drank alcohol or even tried a cigarette until after high school. It was gradual at first; he started drinking with friends and smoking marijuana. Having no rules at home and no legal consequences from his new lifestyle, Nathanael believed he was just having a good time. But his recreational drug use progressed to psychedelics, cocaine, methamphetamines and eventually to his drug of choice: heroin.

Nathanael's drug use would bring him to some of the lowest points in his life. Feelings of abandonment, self-hatred and lack of purpose kept him chasing the high, because it was easier to use and forget than to face those feelings head on. *"I was so bad that a group of my using friends all got together and formed an intervention to tell me that I was doing really bad. I got sent to rehab by heroin addicts."*

For the next several years, he would go through a continuous cycle of completing short-term rehab programs, just to go back to using. Nathanael knew the short-term options were not working and that he needed a program that would help him transition from rehab to recovery. He was finally ready to commit, knowing that if he did not get it right, it could be the end of his life.

Looking for a long-term program, Nathanael applied to the New Life Program at the Erie City Mission and began putting in the work to remain sober. Through classes, counseling and time spent with others in recovery, he learned to embrace who he was and to love himself again. He was also given the freedom to experience life in the Erie community during his stay at the Mission and was hopeful for what his future would bring.

*"My life has been quite a journey... but I wouldn't change a single moment of it. Every action that I have made has led me to this moment right here; and this moment right here is amazing. I wouldn't change a single thing."* Nathanael graduated from the program in 2016 and is currently employed at the Erie City Mission Donation Center.



Grace House

# Kristin's Journey

It was Kristin's high school boyfriend who introduced her to heroin. And although she had already been experimenting with other drugs, she will never forget the moment when her teenage partying advanced to what would become a decade long struggle to regain her sobriety and identity.

Like many teenage girls, Kristin struggled with low self-esteem—and in those moments when she felt lonely and depressed, she relied on drugs to fill the void. By her late twenties, Kristin found herself in total despair. During her decade of active addiction, her decisions led her to 14 different treatment facilities, six stays in county prison, one trip to state prison, three overdoses and losing custody of her older children.

*“Every night I prayed to die. I wanted to get clean but I didn't know how. It [drugs] was the only thing that made me feel better. I didn't know any other way of life, because I had been doing it for so long.”*

Knowing she would never get clean on her own, Kristin made the tough decision to enroll in a long-term treatment facility at Guadenzia.

After six months of sobriety, Kristin entered the New Life Program at Grace House, where she spent the next year focusing on her recovery in a way that was inviting and comforting to her. The care and love she experienced from the counselors, instructors and volunteers allowed her to regain her identity as an individual and not just an addict. She committed herself fully to working through her struggles, staying sober and moving forward toward a healthy life. *“Grace House has played a huge role in my recovery...those women loved me when I could not love myself. I will forever be grateful for this program.”*

During her time at Grace House, Kristin was able to repair her relationship with her family and her older children. Having celebrated three years in recovery, she is enjoying a successful career as a certified medical assistant and feels blessed to have her own home, and to be the mom that she has always dreamed of.

## Youth Spotlight



### Elverton Family

Gabriel and Nathanael enrolled in Urban University at the start of their 7th grade year at East Middle School. *"I choose to go to Urban University because I want to learn how to be a leader, be a good role model and inspire others,"* Gabriel said. The introvert of the two, Gabriel shares that his time in the program has allowed him to step out of his comfort zone, meet new people and experience new things.

For Nathanael, Urban University has challenged him to develop as a leader, both at home and at school. *"Without Urban University I wouldn't have some of my friends, I wouldn't have as much of a social life, I wouldn't talk to people, I wouldn't go out of my comfort zone at all,"* he admits.

With their time spent in the program, their mother, Yarikza, has watched them grow in maturity, leadership, academic success and personal faith. *"They are learning so much about how to be leaders, how to inspire other kids, how to really find a direction in their lives and get ready for their future,"* said Yarikza. *"Our experience with Urban University has been great. I cannot wait for my kids to continue and to one day become Junior Mentors themselves and work with younger kids in this area to make sure this keeps on going."*

Both Gabriel and Nathanael have participated in workshops for podcasting, youth commerce, art and outdoor exploration. As a family, the Elverton's have participated in gardening workshops, the programs monthly "Movie with a Message" discussions and many of the family engagement events that are offered. Yarikza joined this Fall's course offerings as a guest teacher for the International Baking course.



## Carrie Walter

In 1994, Carrie Walter began her volunteer service with the Mission serving in the kitchen around the holidays. She helped by preparing food and serving guests who came to the Mission for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Having a young child at home, Carrie shared, “I really didn’t have much flexibility at the time.”

Years later, through her work with Youth for Christ, Carrie began taking a small group of kids to the Mission to serve dinner to the residents of the New Life Program for men.

After 27 years, Carrie still serves Wednesday dinner to the men as a way to show them kindness and love.

“I don’t feel it’s my job necessarily to minister to the men spiritually as much as to serve them with kindness,” Carrie explains. “A lot of these men are so rough when they come in from the streets and they just haven’t seen much kindness.”

Carrie’s commitment to serving the men over the years has expanded her own depth of compassion and empathy for God’s people. She has developed many close friendships with the men she serves weekly and has been given opportunities to pray with, support and encourage them in their journey toward recovery.

“You don’t have to go to the mission field, because it’s in your backyard. I firmly believe we are not meant to just sit in the church pew. When I serve [the men] I get to be the hands and feet of Jesus and their appreciation is a reward in itself.”

# By the Numbers

**105,089** meals

**10,300** shelter bed nights and showers

**17** students enrolled in Urban University

**70** men served in the New Life Program

**9,056** volunteer hours

**60,001** customer visits to the Thrift Stores

**20** graduates of the New Life Program

**287** guests in the Samaritan Care Men's Shelter

**790** new donors gave to the Mission

**463,460** pounds of linens baled and sold

**39** filled crisis requests



# 2021 Financials

## REVENUES\*

Donations: Individuals, Churches, Businesses, Foundations, Other	\$2,189,564
Social Enterprise/Program**	\$1,174,217
Government	\$704,150
Bequests/Endowments	\$18,030
Events, net	\$6,746
<b>Total Public Support Contributions</b>	<b>\$4,092,707</b>

## EXPENSES\*

Prevention	\$207,171
Intervention	\$1,504,468
Social Enterprise/Program**	\$948,701
Community Awareness/Development	\$333,477
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,993,817</b>

\*Fiscal year October 1, 2020 through September 31, 2021. These numbers are unaudited and do not yet include In-kind and Depreciation. We receive an annual independent financial audit at the end of every year.

\*\* Includes Thrift Stores/Donation Center



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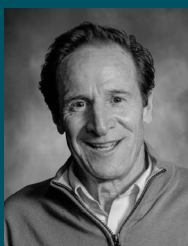
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**OUR MISSION:** Restoring Hope, Transforming Lives

**OUR VISION:** Cultivating a Community of New Life, Breaking the Cycle of Hopelessness, Building the Kingdom of God

**OUR VALUES:** Rooted in Jesus Christ; We go the second mile; We lay down our stones; We are in the City, for the City; and We run to win the prize.

SALES

	30%
	40%
	50%
	75%

BOYS  
MENS T-SHIRT \$2.99  
SWEATSHIRT \$3.99





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Erie City Mission is a member in good standing with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Financial reporting is from FYE 9/30/2021. Complete audited financial statements are available upon request. A digital copy of this annual report can be downloaded at <http://www.eriecitymission.org/news-and-events/publications>.

