

A Beacon of Hope



2022 Impact Report





Steve Westbrook, CEO & Darrell Smith, COO/Incoming CEO

From the Board of Directors

It's that time of year when the seasons change in northwestern Pennsylvania and we behold the beauty and majesty of this sacred and God-directed transition. The purpose and strength of one season flows into the purpose and strength of the next.

The seasons are also changing at the Erie City Mission, and our current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Steve Westbrook will be moving on in January. Steve is the 13th CEO in the history of the Mission and will have served seven years. "I deeply thank the board, staff, and this community for the tremendous privilege of leading the Mission in its profound work of serving those in desperation, in the name of Jesus Christ." (Steve Westbrook, CEO)

"It has been a pleasure to work alongside Steve. His love for our city and our mission resonated throughout Erie County. We will never forget Steve's passion, hard work, and dedication, and we wish him and his family the best as he enters the next chapter of his journey." (Ben Wilson, chairman of the board)

The Erie City Mission Board of Directors has unanimously chosen a successor. The 14th CEO in the history of the Mission will be Darrell A. Smith, the current chief operating officer and director of men's ministries.

"Over the last 7 years, I have walked side-by-side with Darrell through the challenges and triumphs of our great organization and he has shown integrity, professionalism, humility, vision, expertise, loyalty, and Christ-centered leadership. I believe he will take up the baton of leadership and run his leg of the race valiantly to win what God has prepared for the Mission and those we serve." (Steve Westbrook, CEO)

"Darrel has been passionate about the Mission, the people, and the community it serves since 2004. He is a great leader and a natural fit to be the next CEO of the Mission." (Leo Heintz, personnel committee chair)

"There have been so many genuine leaders at the Mission during my time here. My hope is that I carry the Mission forward and that I honor our tradition of service." (Darrell Smith, COO/incoming CEO)

Please join us in thanking Steve Westbrook for his successful leadership, and help us welcome Darrell A. Smith to this essential role and very special moment in the Mission's history.

This is Our City, Our Mission!



Justin's Journey

As a teenager, Justin started experimenting with drugs, first alcohol and pot, then opioids. He remembers his substance use being just “normal teenage stuff,” but Justin’s teenage experiment would tragically spiral him into a decade-long addiction.

Justin couldn’t picture his life any other way. “When I found those drugs, they kind of gave me something I never really had before, and I didn’t want to stop using at the time. I didn’t really think I could,” recalled Justin.

Over the course of the following eight years, he would cycle in and out of various treatment programs, rehabs, and three-quarter houses, never remaining clean for more than 6 weeks at a time. “It had destroyed everything. My family didn’t have much to do with me at that point. I couldn’t hold a job. I had no money. I had nothing to show really for being 24. I hated myself. I just didn’t like who I was at all.”

In 2015, Justin entered another treatment facility, but before he could complete a day of the program, he was told his insurance would not cover another treatment and he needed to leave. He remembers walking around Erie looking to get high. “I don’t know what happened really, but I just had this overwhelming thought of ‘what are you doing? You don’t know anyone up here, you’re hours away from home, your family won’t talk to you...what are you doing with your life?’”

It was then that Justin found himself outside of the Erie City Mission, where he would stay in the emergency shelter for a week before entering the New Life Recovery Program for men.

Over the next several months, Justin worked the 12-step program. He attended classes and meetings, he learned about the tools he would need to remain sober outside of the Mission, and he reconnected with God.

“The Mission has done so much for me. I’d probably be dead if they didn’t take me in that day. I don’t know if they realize how a decision like that can change somebody’s life.”

Justin graduated from the New Life Recovery Program for men in May of 2016 and celebrated seven years of sobriety in September of this year.



Shyan's Journey

Growing up, Shyan was a troubled kid. Her parents, having exhausted all other options, signed her over as a ward of the state at 11 years old. She spent her adolescent years in over 11 different places. “I think that led into my excessive drug and alcohol use,” recalled Shyan. “I had no sense of belonging...in a family sense. I just didn’t belong anywhere.”

“I knew pretty early on that I had an issue with drugs and I had an issue with just being myself. I don’t think I was ever in denial about being an addict. I just didn’t have the will to change it.”

Shyan graduated from high school and continued to abuse alcohol and cocaine, and eventually, methamphetamine. “My addiction took everything from me,” shared Shyan. “I let it take everything from me. There was literally nothing left of me, no joy, no spark.”

Over the next several years, Shyan’s spiral continued. She couldn’t hold a job, was in and out of abusive relationships, and could not care for her newborn son—relinquishing custody to her aunt after he was born addicted to methamphetamine. “My hatred for myself was so much more than my love for my child, I just couldn’t get it.”

Her saving grace would come when she violated her probation and was required to attend a treatment facility for her addiction. After completing long-term treatment, Shyan made the decision to continue her journey with the Erie City Mission’s New Life Recovery Program for women at Grace House.

“Everything else that I did, I had to do—through the courts, through my probation officer—I had to do it, but the Grace House program was a choice,” Shyan remembers.

While in the program, Shyan attended classes on recovery, participated in Bible studies, received one-on-one counseling, and had the opportunity to put her recovery skills into action. As a result, she learned who she was in Christ and experienced radical life change.

Today, Shyan is five years clean and sober and is focused on building a life of meaning and belonging for her own family—her six-year-old son, who she gained custody of in 2021, her one-year-old daughter, and her loving fiancé.



New Life Program

Joseph's Journey

When Joseph first came to the Erie City Mission, he had reached the end of his rope. A battle with drug addiction had done him in, and he was in need of a lifeline.

“My home life was great,” shared Joseph. “I had all the love I needed; I had anything I wanted. The only thing was me; it was my choice.” For Joseph, the pressure from his peers and his desire to be part of the in-crowd took him to a place he never imagined he would be, a place he never wanted to be. He would stay in that place for more than 30 years.

“It destroyed everything in my life. My relationship I had with my mom and dad, my relationship with my sister and brother. I guess it even destroyed my self-esteem. I just wasn’t a good person...it brought out the devil in me. It wasn’t until my 40s that I think I just got sick and tired of being sick and tired, and just making it through the day and not having a future. I had a foot in the grave and a foot out of the grave. It was either take that foot in or call yourself out.”

That’s when Joseph saw an addiction commercial on television and picked up the phone.

“For me it was, I had to change the person that I was, and I don’t know who likes change, I don’t,” Joseph said. Over the next few months, Joseph would enter his first detox before entering the Erie City Mission’s New Life Program for men in March of 2016.

During his time in the program, Joseph was assigned a counselor who worked alongside him in his recovery. He attended classes and meetings, and learned new coping methods, developing important tools that would help keep him on track.

“I have a peace of mind today, that is the most important thing. The car doesn’t count, the house doesn’t count, the job doesn’t count. The peace of mind is what really counts.”

Joseph graduated from the New Life Recovery Program for men in October of 2016 and will celebrate seven years clean and sober in December.

Board of Directors



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“I am very thankful. They have given me an opportunity—an opportunity to help me get to where I need to be...by using the resources that they have.” – William, shelter guest

By the Numbers

119,135 meals

11,535 shelter bed nights and showers

28 students enrolled in Urban University

67 men served in the New Life Program

9,628 volunteer hours

60,973 customer visits to Thrifty Shopper

15 graduates of the New Life Program

448 guests in the Samaritan Care Men's Shelter

692 new donors to the Mission

480,980 pounds of linens baled and sold

87 filled crisis requests



2022 Financials

REVENUES*

Donations: Individuals, Churches, Businesses, Foundations, Other	\$1,887,151
Social Enterprise/Program**	\$1,325,339
Government	\$671,593
Bequests/Endowments	\$66,658
Events, net	\$30,051

Total Public Support \$3,980,792

EXPENSES*

Prevention	\$235,846
Intervention	\$1,649,881
Social Enterprise/Program**	\$1,087,989
Community Awareness/Development	\$364,871

Total Expenses \$3,338,587

*Fiscal year October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. 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 fiscal year.

**Includes Thrift Stores/Donation Center and other programs



\$.79

Life-Changing Programs and Services

\$.11

Community Awareness/Development

\$.10

Administration



Louis Geramita

Being a volunteer with the Erie City Mission's youth program has played an important role in Louis' life—opening the door to pursue his life-long dream of becoming a tailor. It started with a small commitment—a couple weeks in the summer during his teenage years volunteering as a mentor for the youth summer camps, helping to teach kids culinary arts, sewing, and Taekwondo. "I really enjoy working with kids," he shared. "When I heard that was the focus, and trying to help kids better their situation, I was all for it."

Louis' involvement with the youth program connected him to a tailor in Erie who was looking for trainees. "I always had an itch to scratch for menswear and tailoring," he explained. "I found that opportunity through someone who volunteered [in the youth program]." Seven years later, Louis, now the owner and tailor at Primo Tailoring, has found a way to integrate his passion for the youth of our city with his love for fashion and tailoring.

As part of Urban University's youth commerce offerings, Louis and his team at Primo Tailoring facilitated a four-week course during the fall of 2021. "I saw this as hand-in-hand with the business," he said. "I wanted to find a way to connect the two, and using it as a business opportunity just kind of made sense to me."

Students were challenged—as teams—to put together an entire fashion line that would be presented during a live show at the end of the course. With Louis' guidance, they learned how to start a small business in the fashion industry and how to get started on a low budget. They focused on upcycling, finding items in the Mission's thrift stores and turning them into their own pieces. They learned how to sell, market, and brand their fashion line, all while working together to create a cohesive product.

"It was very rewarding," Louis commented. "Seeing them at the end, having everything done, and every kid—from the most naturally gifted, to the ones who struggled—come together and help each other...it was extremely rewarding." After completion of the project, the student teams' fashion lines were displayed in the windows of Primo Tailoring, located in downtown Erie.

We are thankful for our dedicated partners like Primo Tailoring who are helping to shape this generation's next future leaders.



Volunteer Spotlight

Katie Hamilton

As a retired LPN, Katie Hamilton spent her entire career caring for those who were hurting, so it is no surprise that she has dedicated her retirement to serving in the kitchen at the Erie City Mission. Today, Katie works for hugs. “It’s my heart’s desire to serve God and His people,” she shared. “The Mission gives me a good chance to do just that.”

Katie’s commitment to and passion for volunteering at the Mission started over five years ago when she offered to be put on the substitute volunteer list, to be on call when a need arised. Not being able to serve in a full-time capacity because of her work schedule, Katie made herself available to step in when the calls came. By July of 2017, she had adjusted her schedule so that she could volunteer regularly in the kitchen.

From early in the morning until late afternoon, you will find Katie in our kitchen, preparing food for the public lunch, passing out perishables in the pantry line, serving hot meals to the men, women, and children who walk through the lunch line, and helping to clean up when it is done—all with her characteristic smile and free hugs.

Katie’s strong desire to serve God’s children is seen in every task—from stirring a pot of soup, to her determination to never miss one of the men’s graduations—even during COVID-19. “I just love helping people....,” she explained. “I thought I was coming to bless people. But I’m the one who gets the blessing. My socks have been blessed off of me because of here. I just want to be here; I don’t want to be anywhere else.”

We are thankful for volunteers like Katie who share their passion, dedication, and time. The Mission is able to do what we do because we have the most outstanding volunteers who make our vision a reality on a daily basis.



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
In the City, for the City
We run to Win the prize





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Photo on cover is of a guest in our public lunch