

A Beacon of Hope

Since 1911



2023 Impact Report



From the Board of Directors

As the snow begins to fall, we are reminded of those in our community who do not have a warm and safe place to live. The Erie City Mission exists to serve our struggling neighbors. We see every person who comes through our doors as a divine appointment, where the love of Jesus can be shown.

2023 has been a year of transitions. The Board of Directors is excited about the future of the Mission, and with that in mind we set out to find a leader who could guide the organization toward our strategic goals. The board took a comprehensive approach during the search process. Alongside the search committee, the management team at the Mission actively participated in interviewing potential candidates. And after a national search we are proud to introduce Brian Johansson as the new President and Chief Executive Officer beginning November 1, 2023.

Brian, originally from New York City, has over 30 years of non-profit management experience. He spent 20 years at the Historic Bowery Mission in lower Manhattan. As Vice President of the Bowery Mission, he led a team of 200 as they expanded into Harlem, the Lower East Side, Mid-town, and Pennsylvania. Brian also served as a Chaplain working closely with the NYPD and NYFD during the 9/11 recovery efforts.

Brian, and his wife Peggy, are looking forward to being part of the Erie community. They have dedicated their lives to loving and caring for those who have fallen through the cracks of society, and as you read through this year's annual report, you will discover that's what the Mission has always done for Erie. The Mission is more than a hot meal and a warm bed—it offers life changing programs for men, women, and youth.

We are so grateful to our donors, our staff, our volunteers, and the community for their support. Please keep the Mission, Brian and Peggy, and those we serve in your prayers.

This is Our City, Our Mission!



Dr. Benjamin D. Wilson, Ed. D.
Chairman of the Board



Brian Johansson, MPA - President/CEO

Curtis' Journey

Out of desperation for a place to stay, Curtis turned to the Erie City Mission. But he received so much more than a bed; he found the hope and healing he didn't know he needed to repair his life. Without the support of the Mission, "I'd probably be dead...I wouldn't be here," he says. Instead, Curtis has a new life.

Curtis never thought he'd end up an addict—and he definitely didn't think he would be seeking help for his addiction at a rescue mission. Exposed to alcohol from a young age, Curtis remembers drinking and smoking regularly with his school friends. Then, like so many others, through his recreational use of alcohol and marijuana, he was introduced to crack cocaine.

"I was smoking crack daily," he recalls. "Wasn't bathing, wasn't changing clothes, didn't care about nothing. I was robbing, stealing, and cheating. That was my life for sixteen years."

It wasn't until Curtis was incarcerated and required to complete a long-term rehab program that he realized he might have a problem. After successfully finishing the state program, and an additional 45-day residential treatment program, Curtis made his way to the Erie City Mission.

Once in our care, Curtis was introduced to our New Life Program for men, where he not only discovered the hope in Christ he craved, but the long-term counseling, tools, and training to build a new life in the Lord.

"I'm at peace today. I'm happy where God has me at today, because He is first and foremost in my life. When I was in my addiction, He was last in my life," he shares.

Curtis also recognizes that after experiencing his own life-transformation at the Mission, he feels called to help others who are struggling just as he was. In fact, over the past 20 years he has served as the Program Coordinator for the Mission's emergency men's shelter, proudly caring for hundreds of men who are struggling with homelessness.

"The Mission means love, hope, peace, and restoration. That's what they have done for me and how they have changed my life."



New Life Program

Courtney's Journey

After years of active addiction and many cycles of seeking help then relapsing, Courtney knew she needed to change her life, and she needed to find a place that would truly care about her in order to succeed.

Courtney began using opioids to cope with trauma that went all the way back to her childhood. When she would use, she didn't have to think; didn't have to feel. "It made me feel great, it numbed the pain. I just didn't think twice about it, I just did it," she recalls.

No matter how many times Courtney made the decision to stop using, that dependency kept pulling her back—she would get some clean time and then relapse again. "This is not the life I want to live," she remembers telling herself. Separated from her daughter, homeless, and living on the streets, Courtney knew she wouldn't be able to turn her life around on her own; she needed to find a long-term treatment program.

In the Summer of 2023, Courtney enrolled in our New Life Program for Women at Grace House, where God began working in her heart to overcome the years of trauma and abuse that pushed her to use. She started setting goals for herself and accomplishing them—recently reaching six months clean and sober. "I have learned to believe in Jesus and God more, I have learned what real friendship is, and how real people are supposed to treat you in real life."

As Courtney continues her journey toward healing and life-long sobriety, she is able to appreciate what she has gone through and where she is heading. Courtney is grateful for the things she has, like a roof over her head, caring Grace House staff who make sure her needs are met, and still being able to be in her daughter's life. She is also grateful for the things she doesn't have—like old "friends" and bad influences in her life.

Courtney will graduate the New Life Program for Women in May 2024 and plans to move into a three-quarter house in the Erie area. She knows the lessons of true faith and love learned at Grace House will help her continue shaping the life she always wanted.



Grace House

Franklin's Journey

Long before Franklin walked through the doors of the Erie City Mission and found the fresh start he so desperately needed, he'd lost nearly everything else in his life—including hope.

It all started with an invitation to a New Year's Eve party. As a member of the motion picture studio mechanics union, it was common for the cast and crew to celebrate after they finished on set. Franklin, who rarely attended these parties, decided he would let loose and join his fellow co-workers. It was there, amongst the notable of Hollywood, that Franklin was introduced to cocaine. "That's when my life went off the rails," he says. For the next three years nothing else mattered.

During one of his darkest days, Franklin can remember hiding in a closet to smoke a crack pipe so his father wouldn't notice. "I couldn't control myself to not do what I was doing. It had such a grip on me."

Franklin knew he had a problem, one that would end his life if he didn't change the way he was living. That's when he first heard of the Erie City Mission.

From his home in New Jersey, Franklin boarded a greyhound bus and arrived in Erie, where he applied to the New Life Program. Like so many other men in our care, Franklin spent the next several months attending classes, receiving counseling, working the 12-step program, and ultimately finding the hope and new life he was seeking.

"As I went through the process and completed the program, I started to understand the things that I went through," he recalls. "It all gave me hope. Hope for a new life, you know, for a new future. The possibilities."

After completing the New Life Program in 2004, Franklin joined the Erie City Mission's staff, where he has spent the last 19 years being a servant leader to men struggling with homelessness in the Mission's emergency shelter. "That's why I'm here...to serve the people, to love on them, to meet them where they are, and to encourage them the best way I can."



New Life Program

Board of Directors



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Real Estate



"I have made so many good friends at the Mission during public lunch and the food is always great; I have also been able to attend the chapel services and have learned so much."
– Roberta, lunch guest



By the Numbers



2023 Financials

REVENUES*	
Donations: Individuals, Churches, Businesses, Foundations, Other	\$1,776,188
Social Enterprise/Program**	\$1,537,457
Government	\$481,830
Bequests/Endowments	\$64,597
Events, net	\$30,729
Total Public Support	\$3,890,801

EXPENSES*	
Prevention	\$248,366
Intervention	\$1,721,366
Social Enterprise/Program**	\$1,144,051
Community Awareness/Development	\$373,378
Total Expenses	\$3,487,161

*Fiscal year October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. 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 and other programs



\$.79	\$.11	\$.10
Life-Changing Programs and Services	Community Awareness/Development	Administration

Neveah's Journey

The summer after 6th grade was shaping up to be just like any other for Neveah Lindemann, a shy girl who wore her hair in front of her face and was nervous to meet new people. But all of that changed when her “auntie”—one of her mom’s good friends—told her about the Erie City Mission’s Urban University Program.

The rest, as they say, is history.

More than a year later, Neveah is a committed student of Urban University, taking classes on art and leadership, steadily developing her skills as a servant leader. Even though she knew no one when she signed up for that first class, she has built relationships with other students and looks up to the mentors who teach the classes. “It was a little bit of a challenge meeting new people,” she recalls, “I went in kind of expecting to be off to the side, but I came out having made so many new friends.”

Neveah will tell anyone who asks about Urban University that the environment is welcoming and friendly, that the mentors really care, and that you can set and achieve your own goals all while learning leadership skills. Neveah is personally becoming a better communicator and learning to step out of her comfort zone.

“I’ve been able to talk to people better than I was able to talk to people before. When I meet new people or have an assignment with somebody that I don’t usually talk to, I am able to communicate with that person better than before I came to Urban,” she says.

While the classes are fun, Neveah has also learned the value of growing in her own leadership and becoming a servant in her community. One particular course, Max Leadership, took place at WLD Ranch. The students served daily meals and participated in other service projects. “It showed me that when you do something for somebody, even though you really won’t benefit from it so much, you still do it because you have helped somebody.”

Neveah, now in 8th grade and applying for Collegiate Academy High School, no longer uses her hair to mask her face. Instead, she confidently smiles at everyone she meets and continues to push herself out of her comfort zone. She has grown more than she thought possible.



Urban University



Thrifty Shopper

Allen's Journey

After 47 years in prison, Allen Brown was finally released—as a 62-year-old man. When he went to jail, he was just 16, Erie's first juvenile tried as an adult and sentenced to life in prison. The world changes quickly, and nearly 50 years later, Allen needed to learn a lot. He couldn't drive a car, didn't know how to operate a microwave or a cell phone, and even crossing the street was a challenge after so many years without streets to walk and vehicles to avoid.

Adjusting to life outside of prison, Allen worked hard to catch up after all the years he lost.

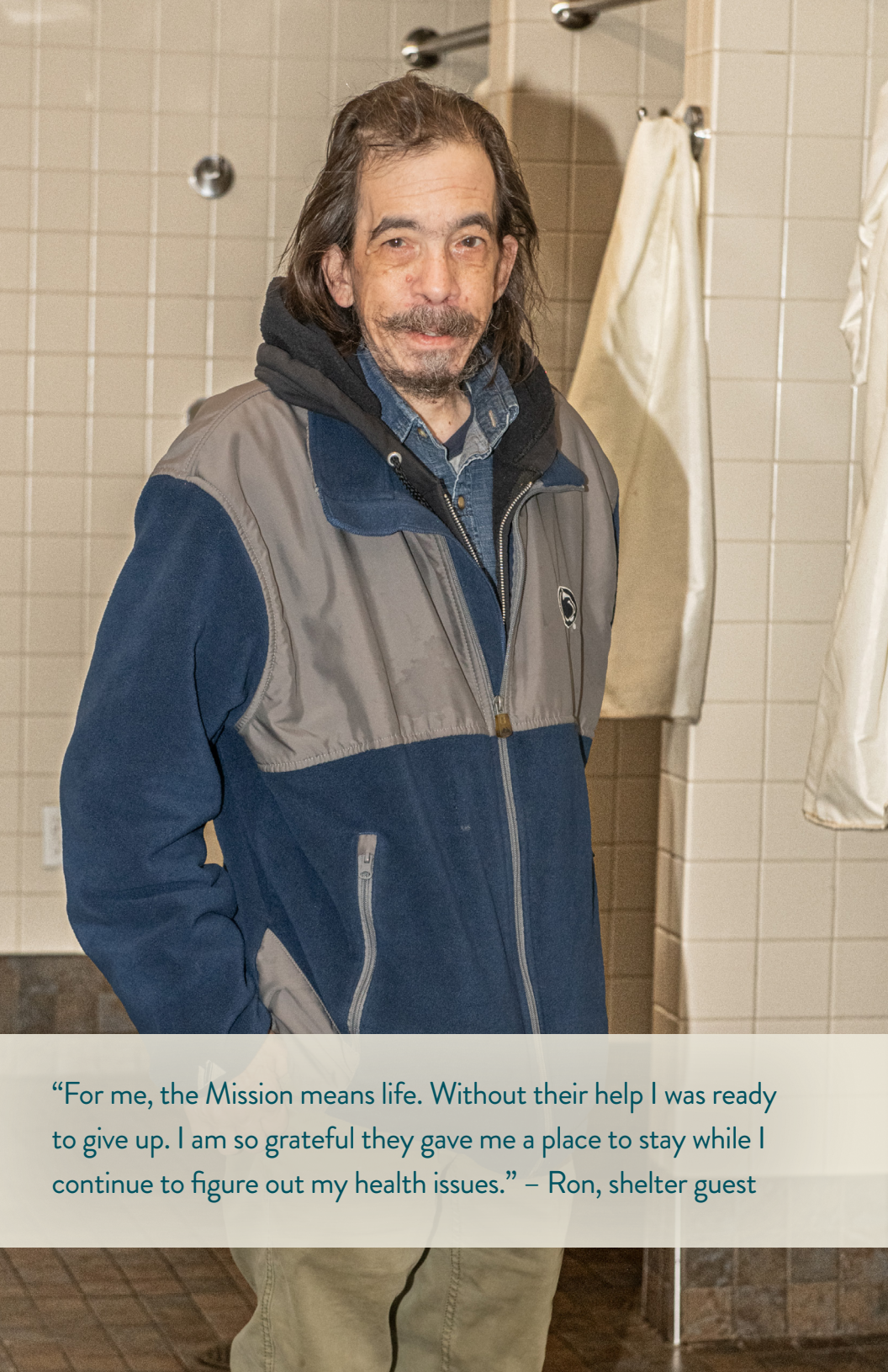
As his only mode of transportation, he rode his bike everywhere: from his home in Fairview, to his job in Erie, to the store to buy groceries, and around the streets of Erie to explore the city that he never got the chance to experience growing up.

During one of his exploration rides, Allen discovered the Erie City Mission Thrifty Shopper. "My sister used to take me thrift shopping all the time," he said, and so he became a regular customer. Allen purchased everything he needed for his new life outside of prison, from shoes, shirts and suits, to cookware and entertainment. Allen became the store's most faithful shopper, and friends with those who worked there. "It was about seeing the people, interacting with people I knew cared about me. It wasn't just a store. Shopping there became a no brainer for me."

Visiting the Thrifty Shopper became a frequent pastime for Allen. One particular day he parked his bike outside the store and was inside for only a few minutes. As he left the store, he discovered his bike was gone. His only way home, stolen.

The staff of the Thrifty Shopper rallied around their friend and gave him a new bike from the store. "Getting the bike," Allen says, "made me feel like family. It was more than just a store. To this day, whenever I need something, that's where I go to get it."

Allen is now a peer mentor for the YMCA, helping men as they transition out of prison. He teaches the skills he had to learn, helps men find jobs and homes, he recommends a great store for all of the household necessities, and most importantly, he is available for conversation. "Sometimes you're gonna fall a little bit," Allen tells them, "But it's not the fall you gotta focus on, it's having the strength to get up and keep moving forward."



“For me, the Mission means life. Without their help I was ready to give up. I am so grateful they gave me a place to stay while I continue to figure out my health issues.” – Ron, shelter guest

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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Erie City Mission is a member in good standing with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Financial reporting is from FYE 9/30/2023. 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>.

