

February 2021



# The Beacon

## The Mission Carries On

Despite the pandemic, this past year was not a stagnant one for hundreds of our guests who made amazing progress through our residential and community programs. Neighbors in need were able to receive physical, emotional, spiritual and social support for healing. Even more, graduates of our programs have continued to build on their achievements. Hearts are restored and lives are transformed every day at the Erie City Mission.

The overwhelming support of the Erie community has made it possible for the Mission to carry on in spite of the new challenges that face many of our guests. As an essential service, we remain open to care for the men, women and families who are experiencing increased hunger, homelessness and addiction throughout the pandemic--and we will remain open after the pandemic to meet needs for those who will continue to struggle.

If we can do all this in the throes of a pandemic, how much more can we do in 2021? Together we face uncertainty with hope, and we thank you for your unwavering commitment to stand with us.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

109 YEARS of SERVICE

*Annual Banquet*

## WHO NOW SHALL WE BE?

VIRTUAL CELEBRATION

The Erie City Mission, commemorated 109 years of service this past October, with a virtual celebration that honored three of our New Life Program graduates on their journeys of recovery. Their "Stories of Hope" were featured throughout the month of October on the Mission's banquet website.

Congratulations to Chris, Ashlee and Matt, on being named Alumni of the Year. We are proud of the hard work you have done to make lasting change in your lives, and we pray God's blessing over the next

victorious chapters still being written.

This year's "Stories of Hope" are available for viewing on our website at [eriecitymission.org/our-impact/stories](http://eriecitymission.org/our-impact/stories). For a physical copy, please contact us at 814/452-4421.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

UPMC HEALTH PLAN





## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It has been a year since our last newsletter, but hopefully you received our *2020 Impact Report* back in November.

One word has stood out to me this past year--clarity. At the onset of the pandemic it became very clear, very quickly that the Mission, as an essential service, simply needed to continue being the Mission. Those we serve, our guests and participants, needed our lights on and our programs and services to continue. So, we purposed to operate safely and most importantly, *"keep our eyes fixed on Jesus"* and *"run with perseverance the race marked out for us"* [Hebrews 12:1,2].

There was also a contrast between our Mission and so much of what we saw in the world. We had our generous community behind us and could place our trust in God, who's greater than any challenge or threat.

Where there was loss and uncertainty, we brought hope; where there was disruption, we brought calm; where there was hate, we brought love; where there was fear, we brought peace; where there was isolation, we brought a sense of community; where there was hunger, homelessness and struggle with addictions, we provided food, shelter and recovery programs; and where there was darkness, we could introduce our guests to His light.

Throughout this newsletter, you will see other examples of the Mission simply being the Mission.

Let's celebrate together and move forward with hope and purpose.

This is Our City, Our Mission!

—Steve

*Pictured below: Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution 2018. Steve Westbrook, CEO greets guests waiting in line in the Courtyard. Photo courtesy of Thom Henry Photography.*



### CONTACT INFO:

Administrative Office  
1017 French Street  
Erie, PA 16501

Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 407  
Erie, PA 16512

Email - [contact@eriecitymission.org](mailto:contact@eriecitymission.org)  
Phone - 814/452-4421  
[www.eriecitymission.org](http://www.eriecitymission.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Benjamin Wilson, Chairman  
Alan Hamilton, Vice-Chairman  
D. Rick Prokop, Treasurer  
Kathy Griffith, Secretary  
Malcolm Beall, Jr.  
Albert Ganzer, Jr.  
Leo Heintz  
Joseph Kuvshnikov  
Marsha Marsh  
Doug Nelson  
Matthew Sahlmann



## Celebrating New Life Amidst Uncertainty

Restrictions on gatherings have not stopped the Erie City Mission from celebrating together. Since May of 2020, the Mission has recognized 19 men who have moved into a new season of promise, graduating from the New Life Program.

Currently, graduation ceremonies held in the Mary Jane (Surgala) Chapel, are limited to the graduates, current program participants and our men's ministry staff. Family, friends and those wishing to celebrate alongside our men, are invited to join the ceremony through the live stream provided by Community Access Media (CAM).

The unpredictability of the pandemic has made the recovery journey challenging, yet despite this added complexity, our graduates have stayed committed to their sobriety and together we celebrate their success.

## Congratulations...

Raymond J., Don R., Jermaine K., Kent W., Shawn R., James P., Wilbert B., John M., Shawn R., Kevin K., Christopher B., Peter J., Michael B., Jake B., Joshua K., Charles B., Brandon Y., John C., Shawn B.

Join us virtually at [www.camerie.org/eriecitymission](http://www.camerie.org/eriecitymission) for our next graduation on Thursday, April 8 at 4:00 pm.



## Leadership In Action

### A COVID-19 Update from Youth Ministries

With the transition of the Erie School District public schools to virtual learning, the Erie City Mission's Urban University Youth Leadership Program turned a challenge into an opportunity.

RoseMarie Lackey, the director of youth ministries, and her team quickly pivoted and developed a successful online campaign--engaging students through Instagram with fun and engaging activities and encouragement.

As in-person gatherings resumed in July, students returned to the Mission campus. Although the classes and workshops are smaller, they have never been more intentional in their purpose to engage and develop student leaders.

With the program entering its Winter/Spring semester, it introduces several new partnerships with local organizations, businesses and entrepreneurs. A Human Bean course, hosted by The Women's Care Center, will help students navigate self-image, boundaries, and healthy communication and relationship patterns. Leadership In Action will offer students the chance to interview leaders locally, nationally and internationally. And a Youth Commerce Collaborative, with RJ Messenger and his staff at Iron Empire Clothing, will provide an immersive experience, teaching students every facet of their business: design, silk screening, marketing, sales and distribution.

During this season of disruption and limitations, the Mission's Youth Ministry has demonstrated leadership in action, never losing focus on its purpose to develop, encourage and share Christ's love with their students.

Connect with Urban University by following them on Instagram at @uueriepa or Facebook at Urban University.



## Upcoming Events

**April 8** -- New Life Program, Men's Graduation

**August 10** -- Erie Gives 2021

**October 28** -- Erie City Mission, Annual Banquet 2021

**October 29** -- Erie City Mission, Annual Banquet 2021

**February 15, 2022** -- Knockout Homelessness 13, Bayfront Convention Center



Our Thrifty Shopper stores located in Erie and Girard remain open for guests to shop, save and give! When you shop thrifty or drop off items at our Donation Center, you help provide a meal, house a man in our shelter, help men and women overcome addiction and give youth an opportunity to learn. Check out one of our two locations today. Erie - 2064 West 16th; Girard - 10081 West Ridge Rd.



The Erie City Mission celebrates the life and committed service of a dear friend and longtime volunteer Judy Garrett, who passed away on December 27, 2020. For over 15 years, Judy served alongside her husband Carl weekly, preparing and serving meals for our public lunch guests. Her sweet smile and infectious joy will be greatly missed.



## THE FIGHT ISN'T OVER YET!

Knockout Homelessness, Round 13 has been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions; but that doesn't mean the fight is over! You can still support our efforts to "knock-out" homelessness by helping our team prepare for the fight on **Tuesday, February 15, 2022**. We are actively seeking event sponsors, advertising sponsors and live raffle and basket sponsors.

If you or your business are interested in supporting this unique event please contact Erin Layden at [Erin.Layden@erocitymission.org](mailto:Erin.Layden@erocitymission.org) or 814/452-4421 x234.





# Thank You For Giving Hope

## Your Support Transforms Lives

In the midst of significant challenges, the Erie City Mission experienced profound blessings over the holiday season, from you, our donors, and from our community. You stepped up and gave to make sure our Mission remained stable and strong—allowing us to continue focusing on the need and not the funding. The outpouring of love and support in the midst of so much uncertainty is why we say this is, 'Our City, Our Mission'.

**Thank you for helping us serve the hurting and homeless during the holiday season.**

### Lives you transformed

2020 Holiday Statistics

**1,300** turkeys and bags filled with all the fixings for a Thanksgiving dinner.

**21,081** hot, nutritious bagged lunches distributed to men, women and children.

**30,000** pounds of perishable and non-perishable goods distributed to guests in December.

**100** gift bags filled by the Koinonians of Erie for distribution to men in our shelter and recovery program this Christmas.

**Countless** opportunities for our staff and volunteers to share the love of Jesus Christ with our guests.

### Because you gave...

Giving Statistics for November - December 2020

**5**

Women received rehabilitation, recovery and shelter at Grace House.

**21,081**

Bagged lunches prepared and distributed during our free public lunch.

**61**

Men received rehabilitation, recovery and shelter.

**1,398**

Volunteer hours recorded by 289 volunteers.

**5**

Crisis requests fulfilled through our Thrift Stores for a value of \$991.00

**1,321**

Safe overnights in our Samaritan Care Shelter for men.