

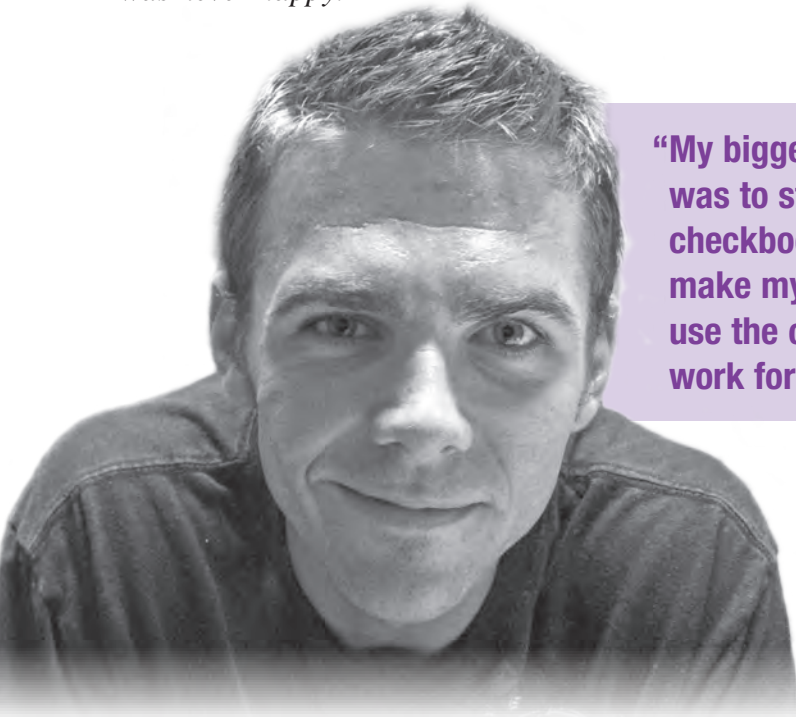
THE CROSSING

RENO-SPARKS GOSPEL MISSION, INC
Sharing and Caring in Northern Nevada since 1963

EASTER ISSUE 2011

I'm getting a second chance here at the Mission... *and I am finally becoming the person God wants me to be*

My name is Michael. At one point in my life I had an endless supply of money, which I needed to support my methamphetamine addiction. I spent most of my time stealing the identities of others. My biggest scam was to steal people's checkbooks and then make my own false ID to use the checks. I didn't work for a dime. After all, I was making up to \$1,200 a day in my criminal activity. I might have had plenty of money, *but I was never happy.*



"My biggest scam was to steal people's checkbooks and then make my own false ID to use the checks. I didn't work for a dime."

In my younger years I was a responsible person. I even ran an after-school program, helping kids with their homework, always doing my best to help them excel. But when I later dropped out of college, I took the road that led to marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamines. I cared about nothing but drugs.

This is my second time around

I've been to Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission before — back in 2007 — as part of the youth offender program. I went through the program and then became a firefighter. I loved my job. But I got a DUI one night after a firefighter crew party. So here I am again, back at the Mission — and grateful for a second chance.

I'm now 26 years old, and I'm learning that nothing is free in life. You've got to work hard for what you want — and that's what I'm doing now. I'm back in the good graces of the fire department, and I'm working

for every cent I make. I've made many mistakes. But I know I'm now heading in the right direction.

I have so many people to thank for my recovery. Thank you for helping me see the light...and for allowing me to be in a place where I can finally put my life back in order.

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Luis Santoni, the Mission's Director of Development, has been recognized as one of Northern Nevada's top young leaders and rising business stars.

Santoni was one of only 20 selected out of this year's 165 nominees for the Reno-Tahoe Young Professionals and Reno Gazette-Journal's "Twenty Under 40" program, which annually bestows the honor to top professionals working to make a difference in their communities.

Judges based the award on several factors, including exceptional business leadership, professional achievements and community involvement. Santoni was nominated for his passionate work in developing more than 100 partnerships with area businesses to help the Mission's work with people who are homeless, poor and addicted.

These partnerships — from major casinos and retail stores to grocery stores and furniture outlets — have greatly reduced expenses while increasing revenue through the sales in the Mission's six Thrift Depot thrift stores. Santoni, who holds an MBA, also coordinates an extensive network of community agencies to help clients in the Mission's recovery program by providing help with educational needs, vocational training, credit repair, resume writing and computer skills.

Santoni shies from the recognition, stating that he's simply doing what God wants him to do. **"It's not about me. It's all about Jesus," he said. "As long as we put Him first in everything we do, we'll be all right."**



An Encouraging Word from Rick Redding

Of the many things I'm thankful for, you, our faithful donor, quickly jump to the head of the list. You give of your hard-earned money. Some of you are unemployed yourself, yet you come to the Mission to help others in need three to four times a week. And when you come, you rub shoulders with people suffering from addictions, with women who've sold their bodies for yet another fix and with men and women who've looked desperately for solutions in a bottle. God bless you for doing the difficult thing.

But whether you come to the Mission to serve homeless people or not, you continue to be the wind beneath our wings. Your donations keep us financially stable, and your prayers encourage our staff and those we serve.

You're helping us serve 1,000 homeless men and women every day

Because of your generous support, we've been able to feed an additional 500 homeless people each day — bringing the total number to 1,000 daily. We believe God wants us to have faith...and that often means living on the edge. *But is there really any other way to live?* In the process, we continually ponder how to minister more effectively. We want to run lean and become even better stewards of your generosity.

Now in a few weeks it will be Easter. But we don't need to wait until Easter Sunday to declare the hope-filled message of new life, revival and resurrection to our guests. Easter is an *everyday occurrence* at Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, thanks to a loving God and your generous, ongoing support.

The good news is this: a resident of the Mission who begins to feel loved and in partnership with a forgiving, caring God soon realizes he or she has undefeatable resources. Thank you for helping us provide these resources and to be your hands and feet in this ministry of rescue, not only at this Easter season but throughout the year.

Your servant,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Redding".

Rick Redding, Executive Director

"Easter is an *everyday occurrence* at Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, thanks to a loving God and your generous, ongoing support."

The Mission relies on you once

As the number of homeless people throughout the United States rises to an all-time high, thousands find themselves living in the woods, on our streets, in doorways, in parks and in abandoned cars because they have nowhere else to go. And their numbers are only growing.

There are many reasons for homelessness. For many, a series of poor life choices has kept them from building a solid foundation to carry them throughout life. For others, homelessness may be a result of sickness, loss of employment or situations beyond their control.

Getting out of the rut of homelessness is an inside job

But whatever the reasons for living a homeless lifestyle, Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission is here to share God's hope with those men, women and

You want to know what hell is like? Give me two minutes and I'll tell you

My name is Ada. When you're a prostitute, you never know what's going to happen to you. For most of my life I've showed up in the wrong place at the wrong time. I've been raped multiple times and have barely escaped. One trick made three attempts to kill me. I've been addicted to drugs, alcohol (taking my first drink at age 6), done prison time for drug trafficking and possession and have lived too long with a horrible temper. During all this time I felt like a non-person. Drugs were my family and my lover. As a prostitute, I didn't even like sex. It was just what I did. It's all I had to hold on to.

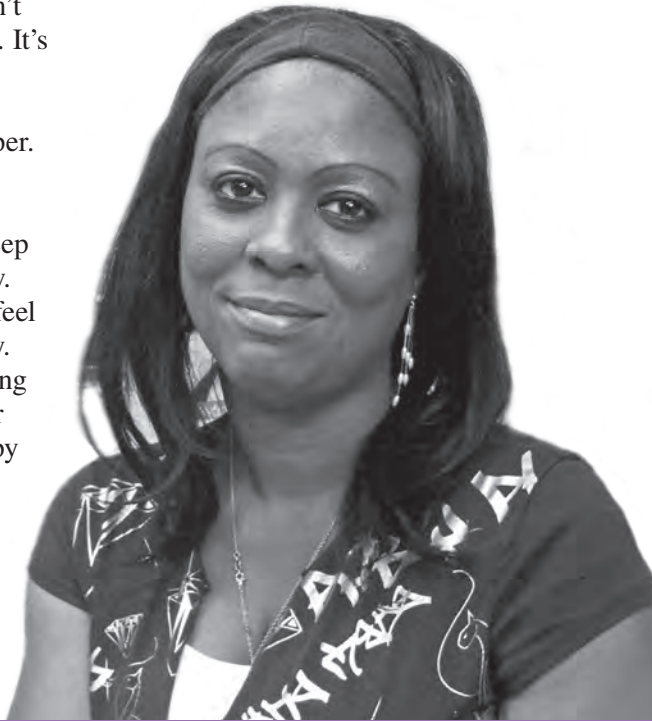
When I came to Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, I still had my temper. If you tried to connect with me, I might have to tell you how much I was hurting. I needed a wall to keep myself safe. But I feel different now. When I wake up in the morning, I feel a new kind of energy. It's not phony. The staff here is genuine. I'm making progress in my new life. My hooker name was "Madison." But I'm happy to announce that we had a burial service for Madison. *She no longer exists.* I'm now Ada...a child of God who wants to do the right thing from now on.

"When you're a prostitute, you never know what's going to happen to you."

Thank you for giving me back my life

When I leave the Mission, I know I need to remain faithful to my Lord. I'm learning about the Bible, and I'm allowing it to direct my thoughts. I'm finally heading in a positive direction. I may no longer be getting \$200 an hour, but that doesn't matter. That's because I'm allowing God to change my life.

Thank you for your part in supporting this place of rescue. Thank you for helping me get out of my self-imposed hell. What greater gift could you give any person on earth?



The Gospel Mission had 90 men and women march in Reno's Veterans Day parade to honor veterans who comprise one-third of all homeless men and women in America.

The Mission group was colorful as each man and woman dressed in red, white or blue. Many enthusiastically carried American flags and waved to the thousands of spectators lining downtown Virginia Street. Thirteen veterans from the Mission rode in the back of two pickup trucks, wearing beanie caps embroidered with their branch of service.

Many were moved by the touching words from spectators, some of whom thanked the veterans for their service.

Rick Redding, Mission Executive Director, said the Mission's entry was meant to shed light on the plight of U.S. veterans across the country.

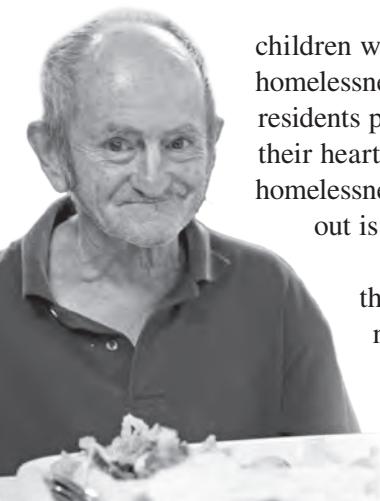
"It's a sad commentary on our society when one-third of homeless people and those seeking recovery treatment are veterans," Redding said.

"It absolutely breaks our hearts when we see a vet sleeping on the sidewalk. They gave to our country and we need to give back to these brave men and women."

again to help touch needy lives

children who choose to get their lives back on track. We understand homelessness and its many causes. We also know that unless our residents place the power of a living, loving God at the center of their hearts, nothing will change. Getting out of the syndrome of homelessness is an inside job, and changing people from the inside out is what God does best.

You have been a faithful friend of the Mission throughout the past several months. To continue to touch the lives of needy men, women and children during the Easter season, please use the remit slip — or you may donate online on our secure website www.rsgm.org. Thank you for your friendship and support of Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission.



The Mission's "Street Treats" Outreach

About 500 homeless men, women and families were treated to goodies at the Mission's first "Street Treats" outreach. Staff members and volunteers dressed in colorful costumes and decorated their cars in themes as **they gave out thousands of items to the homeless, including can openers, hygiene kits and winter clothing accessories.** The Mission hopes to expand the event next year and have corporate sponsors competing against each other for best car theme.



Tammie Nevins, Thrift Store Manager, passed out lollipops and other treats

Rick Redding, Executive Director, greets guests in his best pirate imitation



Clothing Supervisor Vanessa Sweglar and her husband Chevy, along with Danielle Hall, Receptionist (right), had warm clothing for all those who came down their yellow brick road

Holiday Wrap-Up

A record 75,000 hot meals were served by the Mission to homeless and needy people during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season.

For the 2010 calendar year, the Mission:

- Served nearly **330,000 meals**
- Gave away **50,000 articles of clothing**
- Provided about **45,000 nights of lodging** and emergency shelter to men, women and children
- **Graduated 30 men and women** from its year-long substance abuse recovery program, the largest in Northern Nevada with 100 beds

More statistics will be provided in the upcoming annual report, but the Mission staff and board of directors extend a grateful "thank you" for making a difference in 2010!



We served nearly 330,000 meals in 2010!

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My Easter Gift

YES, Rick, because so many people in need come through the Mission's doors, I will always do whatever I can to help meet their needs.

- Please bill my credit card (please print):
 VISA MC

Here's my best gift of:

- \$20.50** to provide **10 meals** and other assistance
 \$30.75 to provide **15 meals** and other assistance
 \$61.50 to provide **30 meals** and other assistance
 \$_____ to provide as many meals and as much care as possible

Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission, Inc.
P.O. Box 5956
Reno, NV 89513-5956

ACCOUNT NO. _____ EXP. DATE _____

NAME _____ SIGNATURE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please use this completed form and return it with your Easter donation, or donate online at www.rsgm.org. Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.