

APRIL 2016

# PGMNews

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION  
SINCE 1877, REACHING THE LOST  
WITH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Phil Lacey (second from left) of PGM's Guest Services Department made a difference by locating and reuniting Virgil with his twin daughters who haven't seen their father in forty years. Miracles happen every day at Pacific Garden Mission.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

*We pray for the compassion to make a difference in one person's life.*

ARTICLE by STEPHEN WELCH

I HAVE NO GREATER REWARD than working from my heart and making a difference in someone's life. I never get tired of doing little things for others, because sometimes those little things occupy the biggest part of their heart. I believe that Ephesians 2:10 is something to live: "For we are his workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Next to Proverbs 3:5-6, this could be my life verse, because I can attribute so much Joy and Peace to helping others throughout my life. Yet nowhere have I seen a model for "making a difference" in lives of others so

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*Caught on Camera: The actual moment when Virgil is reunited with his daughters*

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well executed, and at such a scale and with so much love, as at Pacific Garden Mission. Yes, our purpose is to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ; there are, however, people here making a difference, as Jesus did so often in the Gospels. I want to give you a peak behind the scenes at the men and women on our front line—the Guest Services Department—and how they are making a difference.

Pastor Phil recently held devotions with the Ministry staff members, saying that “compassion is the spiritual heart” of the Ministry gathered. He shared, “I prayed about it this morning, that when I went to the Day room today, I wanted to make a difference in one person’s life. The fact that I woke up today, and that I walked through these doors, I wanted to make a difference. So I grabbed a guy and started questioning him about his salvation. It is so easy with the multitude of people here to lose our perspective.” Then Pastor Phil related a version of the well known “starfish story” to the group.

The story describes the narrator walking along the beach early one morning in the pre-dawn twilight; there were thousands of starfish washed up by a storm the night before. The narrator is observant and subtle, but skeptical, when he sees a boy in the distance picking up something off the sand and throwing it into the sea.

As the boy walked, he paused every so often and repeated the motion. As he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still, and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?”

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves,” the youth replied. “When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I’m afraid you won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”\*

Pastor Phil continued, sharing that it mattered to Virgil, who was reunited with his family after 40 years. It mattered to the parents of a young man that Walter Thomas drove to the airport, making a difference in that family’s life. We have to have compassion. It’s not just making a difference; it’s doing it with compassion.

And so we turn to some stories that are everyday occurrences in this historic Gospel rescue mission, where Jesus is alive indeed.

**Ron Childers’** story of wanting to make a difference, and returning to Pacific Garden Mission after several years in corporate America.

\* Adapted from *The Star Thrower*, by Loren Eiseley (1907–1977)







*Joi and Toi after 40 years of separation.*



**Ron Childers, Guest Services Manager**

"I came in broken; a shell of a man, suicidal, not knowing what was going to take place, but I knew I was ready to submit to whatever God had for me. I was in the Day room listening to a Gospel message preached by Brother Otis McClam; I saw the conviction that was in his heart, and in the message he preached, and I knew that was something that I wanted. I talked to Brother Otis, and he mentioned the Men's Bible program; I said that's what I want to do. I joined the program and started to get into the Word of God, and to learn about this God that I put my trust and faith in. The program taught me that I didn't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, I just knew about Him. I started getting into the Word of God, going to classes, to counseling, to church on the weekends, and something started to change in my heart, and in my life, and I realized there was a lot of truth contained in these 66 books that I didn't know about. I started studying, humbling myself, surrounding myself with Godly men and women, and listening to Godly counsel, and it started to change my life and my heart. In my eighth month I entered the Career Development Program;



a job fair was set up, and Jewel Osco was there. I obtained an entry level position with them, and went full time when I graduated. I moved into the management training program, and became a department manager. I worked with them several years, but on my days off I made a bee line back to the mission, because that's really where my heart was, helping and giving back. Then Pastor Phil offered me a full time position with the mission, and I jumped at the chance. I talked to my bosses at Jewel Osco, told them what my plan was, and with their blessing I resigned and came back to the mission.

When I was offered the position I assumed it would be in Administration, but Pastor Phil wanted me to head up the Guest Services Ministry, where we deal with the broken men, women and children coming in to our building for the first time. It was a little out of my comfort zone, as I was used to working in an office, and here I was, God was bringing me to an opportunity to be able to help those coming through the doors exactly as I did. No matter what position I was placed in, I was willing to serve, so I jumped on it. Sometimes we don't know what's best for us, but God does, and working in that ministry gave me the oppor-

**Walter Thomas, Guest Services**





tunity to make a difference in somebody's life that was broken just like I was."

The following is a letter to **Walter Thomas** from the young man's family—the Reber family, about their son Samuel.

Dear Mr. Thomas,  
It has been one week since you kindly extended yourself to assist our son, Samuel, in having a place to stay at the PGM, and then transporting him to the airport. You even took the time to make sure he was able to get a cell phone. I can only imagine the words of encouragement and exhortation you spoke to Samuel. Your work of mercy and the words we exchanged over the phone – especially on Saturday night when I bothered you at home – can only come from a heart that has been transformed by our Great Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our joy and the reason for our lives. Our prayer daily is that He would penetrate the heart of Samuel by His

all powerful Holy Spirit and bring him to the place of true repentance and faith in Him. Both my wife Celina and I, as well as his grandmother, Margarita, who lives with us, want you to know that we are so thankful for your willingness to help in our time of need. My wife calls you an Angel from heaven. And indeed you are even as you bring God's message of grace and mercy to so many at the Pacific Garden Mission. God Bless You, Mr. Thomas! We are keeping you and the PGM in our prayers before our wonderful heavenly Father. Please greet your wife, Martha, who also had to put up with my phone calls last Saturday evening.

In Christian Love,  
*Fred, Celina, and Margarita (The Rebers)*

P.S. As you know Samuel made it to Los Angeles. He is in a program named New Start. He continues to struggle, but he is safe for now.

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## GUEST SERVICES AT PGM

*"And of some have compassion, making a difference:" —Jude 22*

God performs miracles every day at Pacific Garden Mission because people are making a difference. We couldn't do it without your faithful support which provides staff and training on our front line ministry known as Guest Services. They serve with the compassion of Christ and minister with the transforming message of the Gospel. We want everyone that walks through our doors to receive the attention that restores and mends lives.

Guest Services is on the floor ministering 365 days a year, 7 days a week and 24 hours a day. Pray that we will be able to hire more men and women to meet the needs of an ever growing stream of souls who walk through our doors.

*Guest Services—the men and woman making a difference on the front line every day.*

**Back Row (L to R)**  
Phillip Lacy, Corey Neal, Melvin Appleby, James Black, Telly Hudson, Rodney Sessoms

**Middle Row (L to R)**  
Joseph Thompson, Walter Carey, Terrence Carlton, Walter Thomas, Mark Williams, Ronald Childers

**Front Row (L to R)**  
Lisa Starks, Melanie Wagner, Carolyn Braverman, Hope Appleton, Opal Morris, Memory Kadange, Evelyn Davis

**Not Pictured**  
Kathy Vukits, Kevin Goode, Kent Hall, Nathan Tanner







## A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

*President, Pacific Garden Mission*

### One Person at a Time

**I** WANTED TO FOLLOW UP on last month's amazing stories. I never want the individual to get lost in the sea of faces we see at the mission. Virgil, the man that was reunited with his family after forty years, was taken home to live with them; we received statements from both of his daughters:

"With God, all things are possible, but I did not see this coming! My Father, Virgil Lee Yates, who I have not seen in almost 40 years, who I never believe I'll see again, 'God's got him!' But, an angel here on this earth, Mr. Philip Lacy, said

'Virgil, what can I do for you?' And my Dad replied he wanted to see his daughters, Joi and Toi. One week after my 56th birthday, I got a letter from a Mr. Lacy; when he mentioned a Virgil Yates, I was in shock! Praise be to God! I got my Father back! Mr. Lacy and Pastor Phil, God Bless you both! May you at Pacific Garden Mission be always blessed! A family that was torn apart is now whole again! Joi and I are forever grateful! Love Always!"

—Toi Yates Anderson

"I don't know where to start; I guess I will just say this: When you wake up every day, you



*Surrounded by love:  
Joi, Virgil, and Toi.*

pray for a good day. I pray every day asking Our Lord and Savior to watch over my family, and keep them safe and strong. I always include my Father, even though I don't know if he is still alive.

On my flight from San Diego, California, I kept thinking this is not real, God has given me many blessings, and I just said I will stay strong for my twin sister, and my younger sister and two brothers. Then a miracle. Right before my eyes, my Father! Dad! The man I wanted to hate but never could. I had forgiven him a long time ago. Tears of Joy, Happiness, unconditional love, were all that was inside of me. Then I realized I had said something at the beginning of this year. I said something

huge was going to happen, something life changing. And it did! My Father Virgil Yates is alive! And we love him and thank the Lord for you, Mr. Lacy, and PGM for finding the missing piece to our family. God Bless You."

—Joi, Daughter of Virgil Yates.

A family that was torn apart was made whole again, what a powerful statement. Jesus Christ is the great reconciler.

**W**HAT ABOUT MOHAMMAD, the young Palestinian man that was a Muslim and received Christ last month? He has decided to join our New Life discipleship program, and is now here at the Mission growing in his new found faith. It is exciting to see him asking questions and serving our Lord. When I think about coming to the mission or supporting the mission, all I want to do is make a difference in one person's life for eternity, and that is what is happening. We do not warehouse vast numbers of people, just giving them the basics in life, we seek to share the gospel, and see people's lives transformed. A bowl of soup is for a moment, but salvation is for eternity. With all the problems facing society, it sometimes feels overwhelming, but let's just focus on making a difference in one person's life.



*Mohammad in  
the New Life  
Program with  
his counselor  
Philemon*



## **FINANCIAL UPDATE** Stephen Welch, Director of Development

One godly man or woman can make a dramatic difference, even in the darkest of circumstances. Jesus put it this way: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." (Matthew 5:13)

Our Lord is telling us that we, like salt, should make a difference in the situations we are in. Just as a little salt can either improve or worsen the flavor of something, a little influence can go a long way.

I came across the following written by Sarah Dunn Clarke, founder of Pacific Garden Mission, written in 1893, her 15th year in operation: "We are greatly indebted to our kind friends, especially for their generous aid in helping to maintain the work, and may we not find it in your hearts to continue to stand by us during the coming year, which we hope, under the blessing of God, to make by far the most successful in the history of the Mission."

We continue today in a desire to raise the standards here at Pacific Garden Mission. We also know that we would be more effective if we had the employees to manage the ever growing demands. As you read the success stories that will become eternal, won't you pray about coming along side us to make an eternal difference? We realize that not everyone can help more, however if God has blessed you we invite you to invest in Pacific Garden Mission. Transforming lives since 1877

## **WHAT YOUR MONEY SUPPORTS AND PROVIDES**

Pacific Garden Mission's budget is completely donor funded. We receive no government funding. We are eternally grateful for the individuals, businesses, churches and foundations that make it possible for PGM to serve thousands of homeless men, women and children each year.

When you come along side of us financially you're not giving to the mission, but through the mission to the people that need your help the most. We are serious about demonstrating our stewardship, and we invite you to learn more by visiting Pacific Garden Mission where lives have been transformed since 1877.

### **Here are just some of the ways your giving is measured (February)**

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**883**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**121**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**49,083**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**57,884**

Number of patients treated in our free dental clinic....**137**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**128**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3142**

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