



YOU HELPED ME FIND MY GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL

To see those who come full circle—from brokenness to wholeness, from homeless to having a home, and from being disciplined to now ministering to others—this is what our Mission is all about. Your gifts are spreading hope to the hopeless . . . and not just hope in a vague feeling of hope, but solid hope in a God who can change us from within. Samantha shares just such a testimony, and the transformation she has undergone reflects the ongoing power of God who continues to work through our ministry with your support.

SAMANTHA

“My name is Samantha Pecunia. I came to Pacific Garden Mission because I didn’t have a place to stay. I got evicted from my apartment, and I didn’t know where I was going to go. At the time, I didn’t know God was going to change my life, but I joined the Bible program.

“My mother abandoned my two sisters and me, so our grandmother raised us. Even within my family, my sisters and I were called dumb, and we were told we would end up like our mother because she abandoned us. While I was dealing with abandonment



“I remember my first Thanksgiving and Christmas here at PGM, and thinking God had given me a new Spiritual family”

and verbal abuse, I was also molested by my uncle. I developed low self-esteem. At that age, I just felt like God had failed or left me. At the age of 15 I ran away. I was trying to find love in many different places, and I came to find out that wasn't the love I was looking for.

“After being evicted, I heard in my spirit to come to Chicago. I didn't know where I was going to go but I ended up here at Pacific Garden Mission—the police brought me here. It was my first time in a homeless shelter, and it was kind of scary. I felt all alone. I started reading the Bible. I heard the Spirit tell me to go upstairs and join the Bible program. The first couple of months I was in it just to be in it. Then I'd say about the third month is when Pastor Green said something to me that really stuck. He said that I can't be friends with the world. I was trying to fit in

every place I went, and the pastor shared James 4:1-10 with me. I just grabbed hold of that scripture and I allowed God to come into my life. I surrendered everything to Him, and He cleansed me.

“I now work in mothers and children. I didn't want to work in there at first, but that is what inspired me to go to college. Once I passed my GED test, I went to college. I was kind of nervous, because I felt like I was dumb and stupid. But I prayed and asked God to help me on every assignment, and I was getting A's! It really just made me feel good, the better I would do in school. Being called



Even simple acts of helping a child adds a fulfilling contentment to Samantha's ministry.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” —James 4:10

dumb as a child really had a powerful impact on how I saw myself. But now I have my associate degree in early childhood education (with honors) and I am now transferring to DePaul with a scholarship. I also gained an apartment and have gotten married since graduating the PGM Bible program!

“When I came to the Mission, I was a very angry individual. I didn’t want anyone to say anything to me, because all through my life I was abused. It made me become an angry person, and I was never able to express myself to anyone. I kept all of those feelings inside, and I put up a wall against people. Being at PGM has helped me begin removing some of those walls. I’m now considering working in a public school where I can help some of the kids that came up like me.

“Holidays can be very difficult for many people—it’s very important to be surrounded by family during this time. I remember my first Thanksgiving and Christmas here at PGM, thinking God had given me a new Spiritual family. When we went down for dinner, I was amazed at how much food was donated and the volunteers that would leave their homes to spend it with the homeless by serving and make others feel loved. I took the opportunity to go around the women’s program table to ask what each of us were thankful for as a way to start a new tradition with my new family. I told them I am so thankful that Pacific Garden Mission helped me heal, get my

GED, graduate the Bible program, and restore my relationship with Jesus our Lord.”

Samantha’s childhood sent her down a hard path in life with a mindset that limited her beliefs in God and herself. She went from being called dumb and not finishing school to graduating with honors and attending a four-year college, all while working in ministry here full-time. Her story shows she always possessed potential, but she just needed a loving, Godly environment to allow her to forgive, heal, and thrive. As a supporter, you help make stories like Samantha’s possible. The ripples of change being made here are growing into Godly waves of revival, transforming and restoring lives . . . and we will only see the full extent of our impact when we are in His kingdom!



Samantha displays her Certificate of Induction into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION'S THANKSGIVING MINISTRY



Feeding ever-growing numbers of homeless while maintaining safe social distancing isn't an easy task! But with diligence and resourcefulness, we will continue serving our much-anticipated holiday meals. A warm dinner served with love and a smile from a stranger who cares can have a significant impact on the morale of the homeless. The little things we take for granted can go a long way in opening someone's heart to ask for help. Thank you for providing Thanksgiving meals this year through your giving and thank you for your kindness in filling out encouraging notes on placemats for each guest.



"Pacific Garden Mission has been home to many men, women, and children from different walks of life—and through the donors, the holidays have been a blessing, whether it was monetary, gifts, or spending time with us." —Samantha

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A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

THE REASON PGM EXISTS

In today's world, many issues fight for our attention. COVID-19, riots, looting, and violence—recent attacks left ten people dead and 45 wounded in Chicago. While there are many causes we could give our attention to, I am reminded why we are in the middle of it all.

We received a message from someone that stayed here—never joined a program, never was in a newsletter, just stayed at the Mission, was basically anonymous, and left. The message reads, “Hi, my name is David Church and I stayed at Pacific Garden Mission for two years on and off. I was in a really bad place at that time, but what kept me going was the preaching of Jesus Christ and services which gave me hope that one day I will overcome my homelessness and my drug addiction. I decided to go into rehab for two years. Now I’m going on five years at my job. I got an apartment, I have a nice car, and life couldn’t be better. I owe it all to my stay at Pacific Garden Mission, who kept on giving me shots of hope. God bless Pacific Garden Mission.”

This story is why we are here. We cannot end gun violence, quell the riots, or cure COVID-19—but we can proclaim the life-changing message of Jesus Christ and see lives change. This Thanksgiving season, many will walk through our doors looking for hope, and that is one thing we *can* offer. We

may not know their names, but God does, and that is why we exist.

A modern-day parable tells of a lighthouse along a bleak coast, that was tended by a keeper who was given enough oil for one month and told to keep the light burning every night. One day, a woman asked for oil so that her children could stay warm. Then, a farmer came. His son needed oil for a lamp so he could read. Still, another needed some for an engine. The keeper saw each as a worthy request and measured out just enough oil to satisfy all. Near the end of the month, the tank in the lighthouse ran dry. That night, the beacon was dark, and three ships crashed on the rocks. More than 100 lives were lost.

When a government official investigated, the man explained what he had done and why. “You were given one task alone,” insisted the official. “It was to keep the light burning. Everything else was secondary. There is no defense.”

As the church, we were given one task: Mark 16:15 says, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” While there are many good causes, we were given one task, and may we be found faithful when our Lord comes.

Thank you for your part in this vital Gospel ministry.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” —Luke 19:10



GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Stephen Welch,
Director of Development

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” —1 Peter 4:10

According to Merriam Webster, **stewardship** is “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

Being a good steward in this world is one way of expressing our love for God and our thanksgiving to Him. Knowing why we serve and who we serve is foremost and Biblical at Pacific Garden Mission. We understand that this is God’s ministry and it is a ministry serving others—our guests and our donors. We believe we are managing the affairs of the Kingdom and the most important message given to man by God—the Gospel and His Word in the person of Jesus Christ. Yes, we serve the homeless and lost, but we are also called to serve

you—those who are faithful in supporting this ministry. We read your notes and cards of encouragement and appreciate your prayers. We sense your presence here serving alongside us, and we pray for you daily.

Our mission statement is to serve with the compassion of Christ and minister with the transforming message of the Gospel. We have seen you demonstrate Christ-like compassion in so many ways, and those acts have carried us all through some very trying times. You are part of this amazing ministry of transformation, and we want to thank you. Without you and Jesus Christ, there is no Pacific Garden Mission. Together we are the body of Christ reaching the lost with the Gospel of Christ and making a difference for all eternity. When things look tough, I remember who we serve and why we serve in this ministry.

This Thanksgiving, we want you to know how much we appreciate your partnership, fellowship, and faithful support in reaching the lost with acts of love and sharing the Gospel of Christ.

Happy Thanksgiving! Blessings to you and your family.

PLEASE PRAY WITH US!

- **As the weather gets colder, pray for the homeless men and women struggling on the streets.**
- **Pray that God will give us wisdom to know how to care for them safely, to be a place of shelter from the cold while also maintaining social distancing while COVID-19 continues to be a threat.**
- **Pray that God will provide the financial resources needed for our ministry in this uncertain time.**
- **Pray for our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations – though they will look different this year, we still want them to be times of great rejoicing for our guests in all that God has done.**

Learn more by visiting Pacific Garden Mission, where lost souls find hope, compassion, and purpose.