



ARTICLE BY DEAN LAKE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WELCH

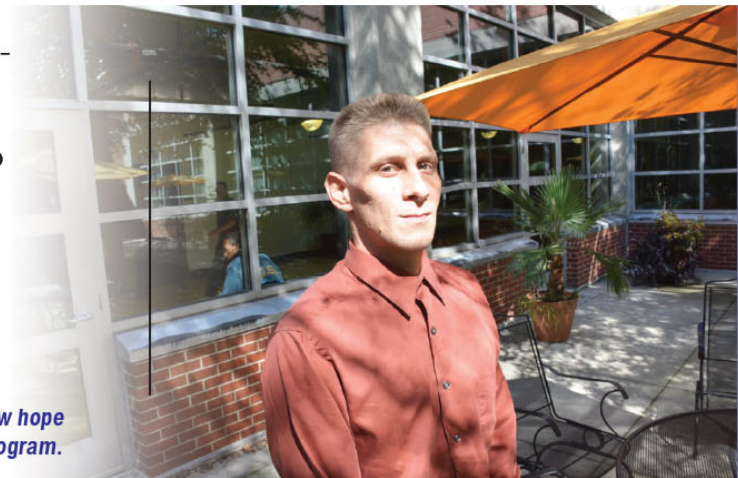
THE HOLIDAYS DRAW UPON US. I so much would like to write something wonderful about Thanksgiving, about turkey dinners and stuffing and mashed potatoes being served at the Old Lighthouse. However, I feel the need to share with you something of a different nature, of a need that is affecting so many these days. A lady on our New Day program remarked, "I am thankful the mission is seeing the value of health-care for those of us joining the New Day program." Many of those who have abused their bodies, lived reckless lives, through drugs and/or alcohol, need not only spiritual and emotional help but help for their physical bodies. We have a spiritual remedy for people; now, though, we are better understanding and bet-

ter addressing the need to meet the physical needs of those passing through our doors.

There is one heinous drug affecting America—namely, heroin. The number of deaths from heroin has risen dramatically. This is a drug that crosses all ethnic and economic backgrounds. "Heroin use no longer predominates solely in urban areas. Several suburban and rural communities near Chicago and St. Louis report increasing amounts of heroin seized by officials

continues on page 2

Former heroine addict John Rigoni found new hope and new life through PGM's unique New Life program.



Saved From Heroine Addiction. Continued from page 1

as well as increasing numbers of overdose deaths due to heroin use. Heroin use is also on the rise in many urban areas among young adults aged 18-25. Individuals in this age group seeking treatment for heroin abuse increased from 11 percent of total admissions in 2008 to 26 percent in the first half of 2012" (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2012). And what now in 2015? A phrase has recently been coined called "Heroin Highway" as people venture from the suburbs to the city to buy and use heroin. Seems there was a time when needles were needed, but now the potency is so strong that one can, as it is termed, just *snort* it. So, yes, sadly even teens are now becoming users.

As I shared earlier, I so wanted simply to write an uplifting message of Thanksgiving, of how your giving is providing an uplifting turkey meal with all the trimmings—and indeed your giving does this so very much. Oh my goodness, thank you so very, very much for this! Yet, I also want to share the realities of what we here at the Old Lighthouse are facing, meeting, and ministering to each and every day, whether it be an April frost or a blistering August day.

Our medical clinic has undergone a shift these past months to more fully address those with physical addiction. I sat down and spoke with Beth Bilsley, a new staff member, herself a nurse practitioner of thirty-five years, who said, "I am glad we have this on-site medical service here at PGM. Often, even though someone has insurance, that person, because of his/her addiction, may not always be treated respectfully and believed or, sadly, may manipulate the medical system to gain opiate-based pain medications. So I am able to help residents schedule appointments and

**Daniel Woolman
credits the Lord
and PGM for his re-
covery from twelve
years of severe
heroin addiction.**

even accompany those here to their appointments and help in that person's treatment plan. I primarily, though, treat those in our New Day and New Life programs. Our goal is to get everyone in the programs a physical and routine lab work to see where each person is. People are getting their immediate needs taken care of."

I want to share with you three testimonies, three whose heroin highway nearly led to death but now are on a highway to Heaven.

John Rigoni, a New Life resident, spoke with me about his highway to heroin journey. "I was twelve when I first tried marijuana, but it was not till I was thirty that I began using heroin. I sold drugs to make money. It was, though, when my mother and father both passed away within a short time period, I stopped doing everything except doing drugs. I turned to heroin, and everything just turned inwards. I went through all my savings of fifteen years in about two years. I began having blackouts. I remember waking up one morning and having no idea where I was or what day it was; that was a turning point in my life. I have overdosed twice. You know, if I could not have snorted heroin, I would not have done it—needles were a barrier for me from trying heroin. I came to PGM from a hospital where I had checked myself in. The New Life program has



THANKSGIVING

AT





been excellent—Pastor Bower, Pastor McNeill, Pastor Percy, Pastor Green have all helped me to understand what the Bible says. I am growing spiritually and also learning to deal with my anger and lack of patience, but I am trusting in God.”

New Life graduate Daniel Woolman shared how his life was nearly ruined by heroin. “I was twelve when I drank for the first time, fifteen when I smoked marijuana, and from sixteen to eighteen I experimented with so many different drugs. At eighteen, I first snorted heroin and within two weeks was shooting up with a needle. Within a month, I had lost all my savings and started stealing. I traveled to the city twice a day to get heroin. I sought heroin more than food—I would rather use and know I was going to die than not use and live. I became a slave to it. I would get clean and then relapse, a cycle that kept going on and on. I realized I could not beat this thing, so I tried to kill myself by shooting up a large amount of heroin. But, I just woke up the next day. It was then that I realized I really needed a change. I went to a thirty day program and then came straight to PGM. I had went through twelve years of addiction. I thank God because I have been clean now for nearly a year and a half. My mind is sharper, my memory improving. I realized that I had to release my addiction to Jesus, to surrender myself.” Daniel does the camera work

and computer editing for PGM’s Saturday television show.

Dustin Blackwell, a young man of twenty-one on our New Life program, said, “I was twelve when I began smoking weed, at thirteen I ended up smoking meth, and fifteen when I tried heroin. I had tried many different drugs, but heroin hit me as something unlike any of the others. Eventually, I was spending most of my money on heroin. I went from snorting to using needles by the age of seventeen. I overdosed at one point and was afraid of going to hell. I am so glad that now I have come to know the Lord. I tried rehab more than once, but not knowing God, getting sober just left me empty. Now, the Holy Spirit has filled my soul and replaced the addiction, and I have grown up while here on the program. I hope one day I can do some type of street ministry because I have lived on the streets. In the meantime, I hope to go to medical school.”



Dustin Blackwell is now fully recovered and demonstrates a life full of joy and purpose in the Lord. He would like to pursue a career in medicine.

PGM



As you, with such gladness in your hearts, await relatives and friends to join you in your house for a Thanksgiving meal, please also remember us here at PGM as we prepare with such joy for the arrival of over a thousand suffering souls.



I am just so in awe right now, for as I sat and talked and talked with these three, I realized something wonderful—I, myself, am not so alone, not so lonely—yes, loneliness is a horrid, nearly unbearable part of homelessness beyond description. I casually looked up as I spoke with these three and gave a casual smile upwards which only God saw and knew. And when I looked back down and into the faces of the three with whom I was conversing, they were smiling at me. And I saw before me that I am part of a family of Christians here at the Old Lighthouse. And you, our donors, our supporters, made this possible for me, me! For, as you know, I was once so forlorn and so empty in my soul. I wish there were a stronger expression for *Thank you* in the English lan-

guage, rich as it is. If so, I would say it to you. We ask you to come alongside us, and you do. I am, though, really only left with those simple English words—*Thank you*, thank you so very much for what you have done in my life and so very, very many thousands of others here at PGM. *Thank you*. Thanksgiving holiday is upon us, and I am so thankful to the God I now serve and you who reached out to me in my time of great pain and need. *Thank you*.

National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2012). *What is the scope of heroin use in the United States?* Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/heroin/scope-heroin-use-in-united-states>

PGM NEW DAY BIBLE PROGRAM GRADUATES— CONTINUING SUCCESS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!

(back, l-r) David Mead, Brian Mat-
tey, Vallan Oliver, Tiwon Sims, Lenard
Spicer. (front, l-r) Abigale Hamilton,
Randall Gaestel, Christopher Tuttle,
Carolyn Williams-Estes, Vernon
DuBose, Shirley Nelson, Virginia Au-
brey, Terrence Carlton, Anna Lucas.



All graduates had members of their family in the auditorium to see their loved one honored for their hard work and accomplishments. Families are reunited at PGM where we offer life answers through faith in Jesus Christ, through any season of life, so that our guests become fully functional followers of Jesus Christ.

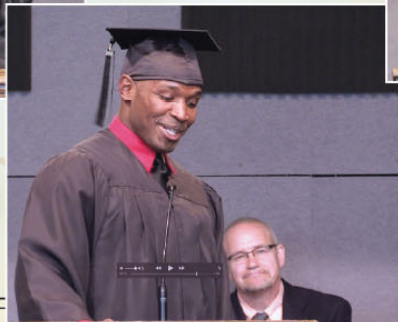


Vallan Olivera:
*"I just want to thank
God and all the people
here at PGM. I just
want to shout out a big
'Thank you!'"*



Brian Mattey:
*"Jesus saved me from a life of
popping pills and snorting heroin.
I am alive because He lives!"*

Tiwon Sims:
*With family members pres-
ent Tiwon spoke of his new
enthusiasm for a life fully
committed to Jesus Christ.*





A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

Ordained Coincidence

I love to share amazing stories that we come across. In 1 Corinthians 1:4, we read, **“Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”**

One of the reasons that a believer may go through trials or tribulation is to help someone else in a similar situation.

Three years ago, the son of a pastor arrived through our doors as a broken man. Raised by godly parents, this man made a series of bad decisions that led to what he calls rock bottom. His first breakfast was a reality check: as he stared at his grits with an egg, looking around at all the other homeless men, he thought, “It’s over.” He at one time ran a company, had a family, and had a nice suburban home...now he has only the clothes on his back. He walked out the door and down the street where there is a bridge over the Chicago River and wanted to jump. He stood there and thought long and hard about jumping but thankfully thought better and returned to the mission. He decided to surrender his life to Jesus Christ and join the Bible program, and his life changed. He has reconciled with his family and upon graduation found meaningful employment.

He told me recently he was walking past the same spot on the bridge, and a stranger asked him if he could use his cell phone.

As he inquired further, the stranger said that he wanted to jump off the bridge and into the river. He was amazed. He told the stranger, “You won’t believe this, but three years ago I stood at the same spot and wanted to do the same thing.” The stranger declared that he was not a Christian, so the man proceeded to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with him. The stranger heard about hope in our Lord—how he can be forgiven—and was given an invitation to come to Pacific Garden Mission. 911 was called, and the stranger was taken to a hospital, but not before a solution was offered, the solution of hope in Jesus Christ. We never know when God will use some of the pain of our past to comfort someone else with the comfort we received by God. Look around yourself; maybe God has placed someone in your path who needs to hear a message of hope and salvation because at one point you needed that hope too.



Since 1877, Pacific Garden Mission has been a place of refuge and transformation. Millions weary of struggling through life’s storms have come to the “Old Lighthouse” seeking food, shelter, clothing, and medical and dental care.

They also come seeking the answer to life’s struggles. At Pacific Garden Mission they are offered the answer: life through faith in Jesus Christ. But the power of the Holy Spirit doesn’t stop with salvation—PGM has a mission to provide discipleship to men and women who profess faith in Jesus.

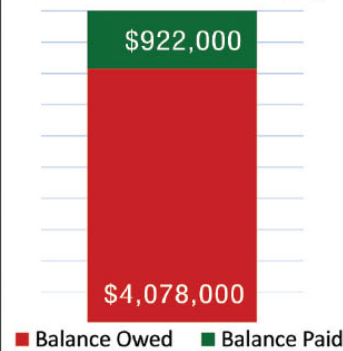


David Fuller: VP OPERATIONS

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Thank you for your gifts and praise God for the expansion of our base of faithful donors! This was the first summer in several years that PGM didn't have to reduce reserves to meet financial obligations. This is progress. There is still much to be done in order to ensure that donations meet monthly expenses, but thank God for momentum in the right direction. Also, thanks to those who have been making donations to the debt retirement fund; little by little the mortgage is being reduced.

At the time of this publication, an additional \$77,000 has been paid toward principal reduction in the last three months. Blessings to you. Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

\$5 Million—PGM Mortgage



Any designated contribution to help PGM erase its mortgage debt would substantially help our ministry.

WHAT YOUR MONEY SUPPORTS {September Numbers}



Nights of Safe Lodging

808 • Daily average of homeless sleeping overnight.

Bible Study Program

104 • Number of men and women enrolled in our Bible Study Program and provided room and board.



Meals for the Hungry

47,610 • Approximate number of plates of food served.

Clothing Distributed

62,264 • Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions.



Medical/Dental Aid

30 • Number of patients professionally treated in our free Medical/Dental Clinic

Professions of Faith

154 • Number of persons who heard the Gospel at PGM and committed their lives to Christ



Unshackled! Radio

3,112 • Stations broadcasting in 15 languages (Albanian, Arabic, English, Farsi, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Macedonian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, & Turkish).



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PGM receives no city, state, or federal aid. Areas of ministry include the Mission for Men, Women's and Children's Division, Medical/Dental Clinic, "Unshackled!"

Radio, Bread of Life Outreach, Polish Evangelism, PGM Choir, and "New Day" Addiction Program.

PGM, producer of "Unshackled!", is a member of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB).

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION
Transforming lives since 1877

THANK YOU!

Please make a special note to visit us online at www.pgm.org. Please help us share the Mission. Tell your family and friends to contact PGM to receive this monthly newsletter and join with you in the support of this ministry.