



Ron has become a vital
Christian leader in the city!



**PACIFIC
GARDEN** **MISSION**
Transforming lives since 1877

“I FOUND A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST AT PGM AND RENEWED MY LIFE”

Later this month, spring will bring renewed life. At Pacific Garden Mission, we see lives restored through Jesus Christ, reminding us that lasting change is possible through a relationship with God. In this month’s issue, we share Ron’s story. He struggled with addiction, and after deciding suicide was not an option, he submitted his life to God. Thank you for making stories like Ron’s possible.

RON CHILDERS

“I grew up raised by my grandmother. I went to school and pretty much had a normal upbringing.

At the end of high school, one of my friends was going away to college, so I decided I would attend college too. It was a completely different world for me. I was not aware of the insecurities I had. Still, once I left the circle of my grandmother and family, my insecurities started to manifest themselves, and I began to gravitate toward drugs and alcohol during my college career.

“Things started to snowball out of control. After a while, things just started to get worse and worse. I had entertained the thought of suicide a couple of times, and every time those thoughts came up, the one thing that would bring me back to reality would



“I came here broken, a shell of a man, suicidal, not knowing what would take place.”

be thinking about my sons.

“I found myself at a point where I had made my mind up suicide wasn’t an option, so what would I do now? I was still here with a broken life, no hopes, no dreams, and no way of conquering the things enslaving me. The sinful lifestyle I was living was all-encompassing and destroying me

from day to day.

“I joined the program and started to get into the Word of God. I learned about this God I said I put my trust and faith in, but I didn’t know exactly what I was doing at the time. The Bible program taught me I didn’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, that I just knew about Him.



“I came here broken, a shell of a man, suicidal, not knowing what would take place. What I did know is I was ready to submit to whatever God had for me. The program offered me a relationship with Jesus, and going to classes, counseling, and church on the weekends, something started to change in my heart and my life. I started studying and humbling myself, surrounding myself with godly men and women, listening to godly council, and it began to change my life and heart.

“Today, I work at Pacific Garden Mission and serve as the Guest Services Manager. I disciple a team of ministers whose sole purpose is to share the Good News with the men,

Ron is now happily married and a good role model for his children—shown here with his son.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 4:19 KJV

women, and children coming into our facility. My team is responsible for helping our guests find housing, employment, and assistance with medical and mental health services. I have the blessed opportunity to be able to share with those who have no hope, the true hope that is my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I can look them in the eyes and honestly say, ‘If He saved me, He can save you also!’

“I have also been blessed to marry the woman of my dreams. We have been married for almost eight years and have recently moved into our new home with two of my sons. I have just received my Master of Divinity (MDiv) in Pastoral Studies from Moody Theological Seminary. I have also been asked to serve as the Senior Pastor for The Garden Church (a new church plant on the South Side of the City of Chicago), where our mission is *To Cultivate Hope Through Freedom in Christ*.

“Being on this journey with Christ has afforded me a fresh and vibrant understanding of two particular verses of Scripture: ‘For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:

and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.’ —Matthew 16:25, and, ‘The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ —John 10:10.”

When Ron arrived at PGM, a broken shell of a man, it was hard for him to envision that years later, he would still be an integral part of the ministry here. As a genuine ambassador for Christ, Ron serves as a leader and an example to those in the dayrooms and Bible programs that true life change is possible through a relationship with Jesus Christ. The Gospel message is changing lives here at PGM. Thank you for being a part of our ministry during a time of ever-growing need.



Ron leads a morning devotional with fellow PGM staff in the courtyard.

You are part of something special.

As a donor, when you partner with Pacific Garden Mission, you are participating in a simple and complex community of help. The Gospel message is the simple part, and we stand true to our 145-year commitment to bringing it to the people we help. The complex part is the structure and services we provide. In meeting one's basic needs, such as food and shelter, we create a safe environment where life transformation becomes possible. Along with ongoing spiritual and physical assistance, a healthy and supportive social structure based on Christ's love is vital for one's continued success.

When you give to PGM, you're providing a family of friends and loved ones to some of the most down-and-out and lonely people. At the Mission, there is always a shoulder to cry, laugh, and lean upon. Our guests receive Biblical counseling from people who care, many of whom were once in a similar situation. Sixty-five percent of our staff initially came through our doors for help themselves. Through every aspect of their pain and healing, the people you help at PGM will have what they need to succeed. As we approach Resurrection Sunday, we invite you to continue being a lifesaving agent for those in need...a messenger of hope. By returning the enclosed Note of Hope you'll be a blessing to someone at our dining room table, reminding them that they are loved and not alone.

Thank you for being an essential part of who we are!



GIVE NOW pgm.org/donate

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



A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski
President, Pacific Garden Mission

LIVES CHANGED FOR HIS GLORY!

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” —Matthew 28:19-20

A story like Ron's is so encouraging as it is in line with the Great Commission. Our big picture at PGM is to take individuals off the streets, meet their physical needs, and introduce them to the Gospel. They are then invited to join our drug program or discipleship program. Upon completion, they can enter career development where we find housing and employment for our residents. They are then sent out into

the world much different than when they came in, now as fully functioning followers of Christ.

Ron followed this blueprint, and to see where he is today compared to where he was when he walked through our doors with an addiction problem is encouraging. As he walks down the aisle to receive his Master's degree this May, with his wife and children in attendance, as he begins his calling as a pastor this fall with the church God has used him to plant, my mind races back to the broken man with no direction and no hope who washed ashore at our doors over a decade ago. People often ask me what keeps me going, and my answer is always people like Ron. If we were not here, he just might be another sad

statistic in the never-ending war on drugs. But because of Jesus, and through your support, his story is so much different.



Ron shares his powerful testimony with the overnight guests and program students during a Praise & Testimony Service in the PGM auditorium.

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LOOKING BACK IN GRATITUDE

Philemon Hayibor,
Division Manager Of Ministries

As I reflect on the past year, I am grateful to the Lord for His faithfulness and His intentional involvement in our lives and in the lives of the ministry residents.

David said in the 34th Psalm, ***"I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."***

As we rest trustingly in Christ, we recognize that God has called us to focus on serving and loving our men, women, and children with the Good News of Jesus Christ. In the Discipleship Ministries, our men and women are learning to read, understand, and apply the Scriptures to their lives, while the Recovery Ministry provides our residents a Gospel-centered approach to overcoming addiction. Though we may expect a certain outcome in the lives of

the residents during their time in the respective ministries, we acknowledge the fact that God is sovereignly in control of their transformation, regardless of what may unfold at the end of their time. The Gospel is the foundation upon which we serve our residents, and it is encouraging to witness lives transformed by the movement and power of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the God's Word.

Our ministry team has kept focused on one vision and purpose this year, and it is ***to help those we serve experience the love of Christ***. In a season of life where emotions, pain, loneliness, confusion, discouragement, and despair are a constant struggle and reality for our residents, our team continues to faithfully provide an environment where they can experience the love of Christ. Your constant prayers and support enable us to serve the men, women, and children God brings to our doors. To that end, I invite you to ***magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together!***

THE IMPACT WE MAKE TOGETHER

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 support us financially, you're not only giving *to* the Mission, but *through* the Mission to people who need your help the most. In January your support made a true difference:

On average, **517** homeless people received aid and Gospel services each day

About **31,219** plates of food were served

26,000 items of clothing were distributed

3,154 media outlets around the world broadcasted *Unshackled!*

44 men and women were enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board

16 mothers with their children who were sheltered at PGM

83 people professed faith in Christ

With your encouragement and support, we minister hope to the homeless, addicted, and brokenhearted.