

Permanently separated from his family, Antonio discovered his heavenly Father never left him.

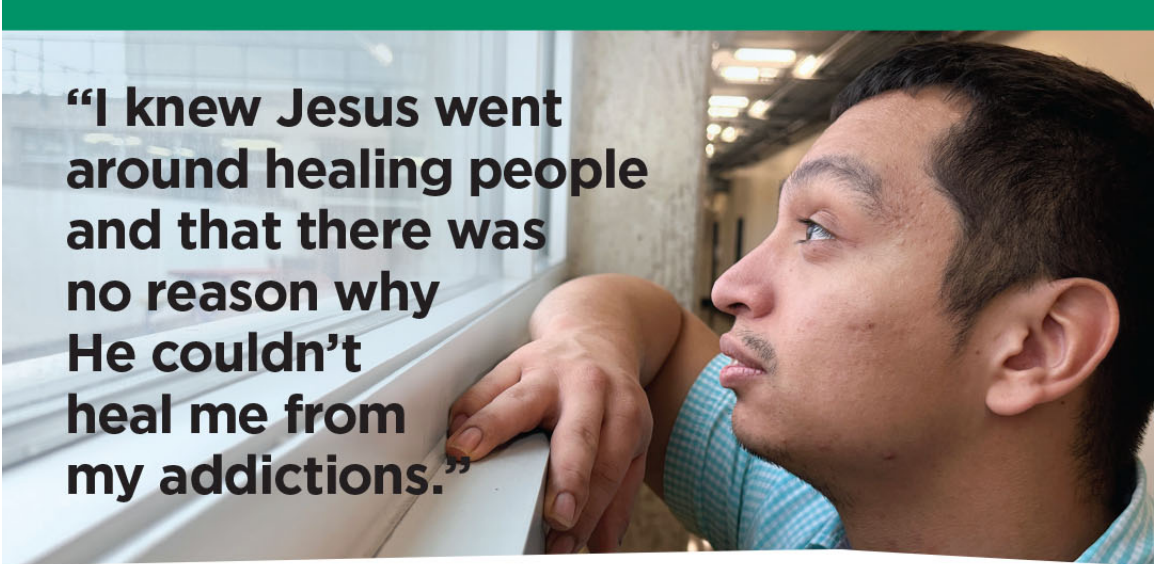
I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT GOD'S GRACE AT PGM.

One trend we continue to see here at PGM is an increasing number of young people coming to us for help. This month, we will share the story of Antonio, a young man in his twenties. It is hard to imagine being separated from your parents and all your siblings as a young child, but that is the reality he had to face. Angry and alone, he lashed out and had to learn some life lessons the hard way, but after coming to PGM, he has begun learning a new way of life and discovering God's grace, freeing him of a life of anger and pain. We hope his story encourages you, and we thank

you for helping give Antonio a place of refuge, peace, and wisdom.

ANTONIO

"My name is Antonio Johnson, and I am from Wichita, Kansas. I got into a lot of trouble when I was young, being picked on and getting into a lot of fights. That led me to a lot of years of incarceration. I grew up in a lot of group homes/foster care, and I felt that it was not my fault that I was there. I felt like it was unjust, and I spent a lot of time missing my parents. I was mainly angry at them, which led me down a steep hole that I had dived

A man with dark hair and a light blue shirt is looking out of a window. His hand is resting on the windowsill. The background shows a blurred view of a building exterior.

“I knew Jesus went around healing people and that there was no reason why He couldn’t heal me from my addictions.”

into with years of anger.

“My dad got deported when I was a kid and I was one of seven, so the state just viewed my mother as unfit to care for seven children on her own. I was about five years old when I got into foster care. They put all seven of us into foster care, we all separated, and now they are just strangers to me.

“I got into a whole bunch of trouble when I was about 15, and I ended up doing a few years in a juvenile prison. I got out when I was 19. I violated my probation a whole bunch and lived in county jail. I got in trouble doing some drugs and got hooked on

methamphetamines for five years. I was drinking, smoking weed, and all kinds of things. It destroyed my life. I was so out of it that I didn’t know where I was half the time.

“After that, I got out on parole. A lot of people I was incarcerated with were praying for me. When I got out, people would come and share the Gospel with me and a lot of time, I would just brush it off. I had no plan of learning about God or serving God, but my plan didn’t really matter. Eventually, I was invited to church and there were times when I would go to church but then go out and party.

“I was down to my last dollar and this lady blessed me with some money and a ticket to come here. My first night, I stayed on the streets of Chicago, which is a bit scary for the first time. But I waited all night just to get into this place and in the morning, I came in. I had no idea what was going on here. I just needed a place to rest my head. I was exhausted from a life of sleeping on different people’s couches and knew something had to give.



Antonio sits in PGM’s computer lab waiting for a class to begin.

Antonio volunteers in the PGM cafeteria.

“The first two weeks, I just sat in the dayroom and thought this was an ordinary homeless shelter, and then someone talked to me about joining a drug and alcohol program for 90 days. They said that it was a Christian-based program, which drew me in because I had tried other programs, but they never really seemed to stick with me. When they said that, I understood the healing power of Jesus. I knew Jesus went around healing people and that there was no reason why He couldn't heal me from my addictions. So, that is what got me into the addiction recovery program.

**“For by grace are ye
saved through faith; and
that not of yourselves:
it is the gift of God”
—Ephesians 2:8 KJV**

“I started going to these groups and got a ministry assignment serving the overnight guest men, talking to them and sharing the Word of God. I was in this position of serving these men and doing God's work. Halfway through the 90-day program, I asked God why He had me where I was because I didn't want to be doing it, but I knew it was good for me. I graduated the New Day program, and I am now in the New Life program.

“The biggest thing I have learned about God is His grace. It is not by my works. For years, I had this feeling of



unworthiness—that I was unforgivable. Once I started learning about grace, it stopped being about me not being able to be forgiven and being unworthy, and my mind went to knowing that I am worth the love of Christ. I am worth forgiveness. That makes me a whole lot less angry. It has brought me a whole bunch of peace.

“I would read the Bible or go to church off and on in the past, but I had never really learned about the Scripture or memorized it, nor had I learned about grace and what it can do. Some of the classes/small groups I go to cover stuff like Biblical manhood and the Gospel. I have always struggled with anxiety and worrying, but something I can say is that I am living for today.

“My biggest need now is to stay at peace and be less anxious. That is something that I pray about for myself a lot. I also want to keep growing in understanding and memorizing Bible verses. None of this is by my doing at all. I

have to give the Lord credit for that. Some days are very peaceful and I am not worried about anything; other days, I feel like I need to get everything figured out right now. I have been off parole for three years, which is pretty amazing. It is an accomplishment for me.”

Antonio is still here at PGM and is now in the Bible program. Each day, he helps to serve the transient guests who

stay here. This process of serving others and learning about God’s Word is helping shape Antonio into a man of God. This journey of healing and growth he is on here at PGM would not have been possible without your support of our ministry. We thank you for helping people like Antonio. With proper mentorship, prayer, and structure, young and old alike can find a new life in Jesus Christ.



A New Day Graduation!

In one of our most recent New Day graduations, we had one of our largest graduating classes yet. All these men and women completed the 90-day addiction recovery program and have at least three months of sobriety under their belts now. Taking that step to quit using drugs is not easy and might be one of the most challenging things they have ever done. The unique approach we take to

addiction recovery, incorporating both Biblical teachings and modern approaches in classes and counseling, gives them the resources they need to succeed. With the support network here at PGM and the Gospel of Jesus Christ prayerfully threaded through our curriculum, it provides them the opportunity to become fully functioning followers of Jesus Christ.



Please donate using your phone. Just scan this QR code with your phone’s camera, and it will direct you to the PGM Donate page. *Thank you!*

GIVE NOW pgm.org/donate

Visit our website at pgm.org to learn more about PGM’s multiple ministries to the needy.



A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

STORIES OF HOPE

It is a blessing when I hear personal stories from the guests themselves. Here is a sampling.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. PGM, you have helped me in so many ways when it was certainly needed. I recently lost my father and took it so much harder than I thought I ever would. Since then, so many things have taken place that have literally brought me to my knees and in need of the Lord's guidance. He brought me here to PGM to embark on this journey and to reenlighten and restore my faith. PGM has been nothing but caring and thoughtful every step of the way. Thank you, PGM, for being a lighthouse in my choppy seas of finding myself once again." —Vereen

"A gentleman came into my office and asked, 'Do you believe in God?' When I said yes, he asked, 'Why?' I told him, 'When I called on Him, He answered me.' I shared my testimony with the man, and

he told me he was trying to understand faith. I told him that we all struggle. If you don't have faith, you can ask God for faith. That day, he gave his life to Jesus in my office." —Roberto, Intake Specialist

"This place has been good to me for the last nine months I have been here. Blessed, I learned a lot from this place. It kept me from getting into trouble. I learn a lot about the Lord!" —Robert

"Places like this are rare, to be able to listen about God and love Him without fear. I have a special place in my heart for PGM. It's a place to find God who lives in us. This building is a miracle from God." —Adib

Continue to pray for us on the front lines of the battle. I am so thankful Pacific Garden Mission continues to be what it has always been: a lighthouse for those in need. Thank you for your love and support.

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 April your support made a true difference:

562 average number of homeless people who received aid and Gospel services each day

34,092 plates of food were served (est.)

1,165 clothing items were distributed (est.)

3,137 media outlets around the world broadcasted *UNSHACKLED!*

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

5 mothers with their **7** children were sheltered at PGM

113 people professed saving faith in Christ and became new believers at PGM

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

GODLY STEWARDSHIP THROUGH OUR LEADERS



Terry Cunningham,
VP of Operations

A crucial part of godly stewardship at PGM is employing leaders who are not only skilled at their vocation, but also have a deep love for the Lord and a heart for service. Over the coming months, we will introduce you to incredible leaders working tirelessly in various capacities at PGM.

At PGM, the smooth running of day-to-day activities depends on a strong leader who can juggle a wide range of responsibilities. This leader is Terry Cunningham, our Vice President of Operations, whose role touches every aspect of life at the Mission—from maintaining facilities to ensuring food services run smoothly, housekeeping is top-notch, technology works, and safety measures are always in place. For Terry, managing operations feels a lot like running a typical household

(albeit one 150,000 square feet in size!).

Terry's journey to PGM began years ago when she came to know the Lord as her Savior. At age 17, her grandmother recited the entire book of Jonah to her from memory, a powerful act that opened Terry's heart to the message of salvation.

Before joining the Mission, Terry gained extensive operations and managerial experience through positions at an oil company, insurance firm, and even a giant Chicago-based fast-food company. The Lord used these roles to uniquely prepare her for the operational challenges she faces today.

One of Terry's most cherished moments at PGM was when she briefly stepped out of her operations role and gave a devotional to women guests on Valentine's Day. The topic was love—the incomparable love of Jesus. She spoke from the heart, reminding the women that they are deeply loved, even in their most challenging times. With teary eyes, some of the women became followers of Jesus that day.

Terry's leadership reflects her heart for the Lord and her commitment to service. **We are truly blessed and thankful to have her guiding the operations of PGM.**

PGMNews JUNE 2025 • Vol. 90, No. 6
Published monthly by Pacific Garden Mission
Philip Kwiatkowski, President
Daniel Woolman, Editor
Paul Higdon, Design

1458 South Canal Street
Chicago, IL 60607-5201
P: 312.492.9410 F: 312.492.9414
Email: pgmnews@pgm.org
Websites: www.pgm.org www.unshackled.org

Learn more about our Mission, where lost souls find hope, compassion, and purpose.