

God had a special calling on Jacob's life he only learned at Pacific Garden Mission.

“YOUR SUPPORT BROUGHT ME FROM PRISON TO CHRIST”

Many people trapped in cycles of addiction and destruction are not only running from drugs or alcohol—they are running from the heavy weight of guilt. The shame of past mistakes and the pain they've caused others often becomes unbearable, leading to deeper patterns of self-destruction. Jacob's story is one of those journeys, where guilt consumed his life until he discovered that only Jesus Christ can truly free a person from the bondage of shame and give them a new beginning.

JACOB

A Life of Addiction and Prison

“My name is Jacob Ellis. I'm from Peoria, IL. I came to Pacific Garden Mission to fill the void I had carried my whole life. Drugs and alcohol had consumed me, and prison became a revolving door. I spent over 16 years incarcerated on charges ranging from burglary and property damage to assaulting a police officer. My darkest day came during a high-speed chase after fighting with my girlfriend. I wrecked the car, left her at the scene, and woke up in the hospital. That memory still haunts me.

“You can have everything the world offers, but without God, the emptiness remains.”



“I was just a dead man walking.”

“Even in prison, I didn’t escape addiction. I started selling meth, then using it, and soon I was hooked. When I got out, I was paranoid, stuck in psych wards, weighing only 118 pounds, and pushing everyone away. For a while, I’d clean up enough to get a job or a girlfriend, but my addiction always dragged me back. I burned every relationship until I was homeless, bouncing from couch to couch.

Hitting Rock Bottom in Chicago

“Last winter, I hit another low. I was in Chicago, sleeping on the bleachers at an outdoor basketball court, freezing, drunk, and hopeless. I rode buses all night or hid in bus stops just to stay warm. One night, I cursed at a cop who kicked me out of a train station. The next morning, I saw him again. Instead of arresting me, he told me about Pacific

Garden Mission and gave me directions. That was a turning point.

Finding Hope at Pacific Garden Mission

“I came to PGM and sobered up. After hearing the Gospel and the testimonies here, I joined the New Day program—a 90-day drug and alcohol recovery program. I finished, but when I left, I thought I could handle life on my own with a job, a girlfriend, and some fun. I relapsed almost immediately. That’s when I realized you can have everything the world offers,



Jake currently serves in the PGM laundry services department.

Jake receives his New Day graduation diploma.

but without God, the emptiness remains.

“I returned to PGM, broken but ready to change. This time, I started really building a relationship with God. I read the Bible every day, faced the damage I’d caused, and confessed how I had manipulated and hurt people. For years, I numbed my guilt with drugs and alcohol, but here I found hope. I had thought I belonged in prison—that it was the only place for me. But God showed me *I belong to Him*.

Learning to Live Free

“Now I have faith that life can be different. I’ve learned that the real challenge isn’t surviving prison but living right once you’re free. At PGM, counselors who’ve walked this same road are helping me stay accountable. I’m learning honesty, humility, and character. I don’t want to just finish a program—I want real transformation. When I leave, I want people to see Christ in me.

The Good News of Forgiveness

“Jesus gave His life for us on the cross. He showed compassion and forgiveness to sinners like me. For so



long, sin controlled me and destroyed everything around me. But now I know the Good News: through Christ, I am forgiven. I don’t have to keep beating myself up. I can lean on Him in my struggles, confident that He has given me a second chance.”

Jacob’s life is living proof that the Gospel is stronger than guilt. At Pacific Garden Mission, he has learned that he doesn’t have to carry the crushing weight of his past—because Christ has already carried it to the cross. Thank you to our faithful donors, whose support makes it possible for people like Jacob to not only find food and shelter, but to experience the life-changing freedom of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Through your partnership, lives once lost in guilt and despair are being restored with hope and purpose.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. —1 John 1:9 KJV



PGM BRINGS HOLIDAY HOPE

At Pacific Garden Mission, Thanksgiving is one of the most meaningful times of the year. For many who come through our doors, it is the first time in a long while they've experienced the warmth of a family-style meal, the kindness of volunteers, and the hope of hearing the Gospel. On Thanksgiving Day, hundreds of men, women, and children who might otherwise go hungry are welcomed to a table overflowing with turkey, stuffing, and all the traditional fixings. More than just food, this meal represents belonging, dignity, and the reminder that each person is loved by God and not forgotten.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of friends like you. Every turkey carved, every plate served, and

every prayer spoken over our guests comes from the faithful support of donors who make this ministry possible. When you give, you're not just providing a meal—you're offering hope, compassion, and the love of Christ to someone in desperate need. This Thanksgiving, we thank God for His provision and for each of you who make it possible for Pacific Garden Mission to open our doors wide with the love of Jesus.



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

THE GOSPEL BRINGS LASTING CHANGE

For many who struggle with addictions, their use of an intoxicant is to mask more profound, unresolved trauma that they do not know how to face. Ephesians 4:26 teaches us that to go to bed with unresolved issues gives the enemy a foothold. Anger unresolved turns into a grudge that gives birth to bitterness.

Bitterness for many is a self-destructive poison that destroys lives. **“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled”**
—Heb. 12:15 KJV.

Listen to some of our residents, *“I hid a lot of trauma, grief, and*

wanting to be loved by others. When I say trauma, I mean childhood trauma and trauma as an adult. I just ignored it and buried every feeling I felt deep down inside . . . I started drinking to numb my feelings. That created someone mean and angry.”

Another resident writes, *“My infidelity was the key component of my crack addiction. I cheated so much . . . it had me searching for some type of relief and that ended up being crack.”*

So whether it was childhood trauma and guilt from sin, like Adam, we try and use a fig leaf to cover our shame but to no avail. Pacific Garden Mission is a place where real, lasting change can happen, but only through forgiveness and redemption in Jesus Christ. Continue to pray for many of our residents who need to be broken from the bitterness of their past and start a new life in Christ.

Your love, prayer, and support make this possible. Thank you.



Working in the men's dayroom, a PGM staff member shares the love of Christ with a needy guest.

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

STEWARDSHIP AT THE HELM: PASTOR PHIL KWIATKOWSKI LEADS PGM WITH FAITH AND COMPASSION



PHIL
KWIATKOWSKI
President, PGM

At Pacific Garden Mission, we believe no one walks through our doors by accident—including our President, Pastor Phil Kwiatkowski.

Born in Chicago and raised in Oak Lawn, Pastor Phil came to know Jesus at age 20 after a co-worker invited him to church. That life-changing moment ignited a call to ministry. While attending Moody Bible Institute, he joined PGM in humble roles—tour guide, bus driver, and switchboard operator. Over time, he served in nearly every area of the

Mission, including working in the servicemen's center, supervising the transient program, and serving as Program Pastor and Vice President of Ministries. In 2013, he was appointed President.

Today, Pastor Phil leads America's oldest continuously operating Gospel rescue mission with humility and purpose. "The greatest blessing," he says, "is watching someone walk in broken, addicted, and lost—and walk out transformed by Jesus." His favorite verse, Proverbs 14:4, reminds him that ministry is often messy, but eternal fruit grows from it. Pastor Phil holds fast to the power of the Gospel and the God who never gives up on people.

He is especially grateful to have served alongside his wife Anne, and to have seen three of their children involved in the ministry.

We at Pacific Garden Mission are thankful for Pastor Phil's faithful leadership and for all who support this ministry through prayer and giving. Together, we are a part of God's work to rescue and restore the lost.

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 September your support made a true difference:

12,166 total nights of sleep provided to our homeless guests

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

10,000 clothing items were distributed (est.)

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

33,147 plates of food were served (est.)

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

14 mothers with their **25** children were sheltered at PGM

95 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.