

MISSION Update



Washington Street
MISSION

408 N. FOURTH STREET • SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702 • (217) 544-9011

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THE OPEN HOUSE KICKS OFF CELEBRATION OF NINETY YEARS OF MINISTRY

Ninety years ago on Monday evening, January 10, 1910, Washington Street Mission opened its doors for the first time for a Gospel service. This past month on Sunday, January 9, 2000, we celebrated that event with an open house, throwing the doors open for people to visit and see how the ministry of the Mission continues to touch the lives of people in need in Springfield.

The ninety years since that first Gospel service have brought many changes to Springfield and to the Mission. Most visibly, the Mission has changed location several times, first from the original location on Washington Street to several locations on Eighth Street, with the most recent move to our current location on Fourth Street occurring in 1974.

Although we no longer conduct a nightly Gospel service or provide shelter at the Mission, the message of the Gospel is consistently proclaimed in all of the Mission's activities. Whether the activity is providing coffee and doughnuts, clothing, children's programs or youth gatherings, each ministry is designed to maintain the focus on the Gospel. The Mission has continually responded creatively to changes in society as God has led in reaching out to meet the spiritual and physical needs of people here.

As we participate in the ministry that God has designed for the Mission in today's society, we want to encourage people to see what God is doing here and to join us in this vital ministry. Throughout these ninety years God has been faithful in touching the lives of people in need who are drawn to the Mission and the message of the Gospel.



Visitors to the anniversary open house listen as Board member Bill Ilch explains the ministries of the Mission to the homeless and other people in need who come to the coffee hall.

About two hundred people visited the Mission during the afternoon of the open house. Many of the visitors took advantage of the opportunity to tour the facilities and to listen to the presentations on the history and programs of the Mission offered in different areas of the building. The cookies and punch also drew a crowd.



Current Board president Tom Kay and his wife Jan chat with long-time Mission supporters Charles and Georgia Northrup during the open house in January.

During the open house, Board members and Mission staff were stationed in various areas of the building to guide and inform visitors. Dave Beatty was responsible for the chapel. Board president Tom Kay was able to focus on the history of the Mission from his position in the parlor.

Bill Ilch presented the ministry of the coffee hall and Larry Lipka showed visitors through the clothing shop area. In the learning center and youth room, our newest staff member Ricky Fritch outlined the Mission's ministries to children and youth.



Circles of people gather in the "big room," the general activity area at the Mission, to enjoy refreshments and learn about the ministries of the Mission during the anniversary open house.

Ken and Mary Lynn Mitchell were stationed in the "big room," the general activity area of the Mission, to respond to questions, to point out the table with the historical display, and to keep the refreshments flowing.

One of the most popular features of the open house was the display of historic photographs and articles about the Mission. Many people were able to identify friends and family members in the old pictures. One woman recalled attending the Bible classes on Saturday mornings and

earning ice cream cones for memorizing verses. Other visitors also told stories about the impact of the Mission on their lives.

Many people commented that they had not visited the Mission in a long time and were impressed by the size and versatility of the facilities and by the extent of the ministries here.



Visitors in the Mission's parlor enjoy telling and hearing stories during the anniversary open house about the history of God's faithfulness to this ministry over the years.

Refrigerator magnets the size of typical business cards were distributed at the open house to remind people that the Mission has been "offering comfort and the Gospel since 1910." We hope that the magnets will both remind people of the services available here and encourage them to pray for the Mission's ministry to people in need in Springfield.

The open house was a delightful way to begin what we hope will be a year-old celebration of how faithful God has been to this ministry in so many ways throughout the past ninety years.

MEMORIAL GIFTS HONOR LOVED ONES AND THE MISSION

Many of the Mission's supporters over the years have found that memorial gifts are an excellent way to honor both loved ones and the ministry of the Mission. Gifts in any amount can be designated as memorial gifts and will be recognized as a fitting tribute to family or friends.

A number of significant gifts have been given to the Mission as memorial gifts over the years and have been an important source of support for this ministry. These gifts are especially appropriate in remembering people who had a tender heart for the kind of ministry provided here to some of the most vulnerable people and children in our society.

Gifts can be designated as memorial gifts by simply indi-

cating this intention on the donation card or a note enclosed with your check. If you wish to have the Mission notify the family or someone else that a memorial gift has been received, please include the appropriate address with the card or note. We will be happy to provide the desired notification as well as acknowledging your gift.

We are truly honored when supporters choose to remember the Mission in this way. It is also a fitting way to honor those who have a special place in your heart and in your memories.

YOUTH MINISTRIES EXPAND AS RICKY FRITCH JOINS THE MISSION STAFF

Taking advantage of a unique opportunity to expand our outreach, the Mission has added Ricky Fritch to the staff as full-time coordinator of youth ministries. An Indiana native and graduate of Johnson Bible College in Tennessee, Ricky moved to Springfield this past Fall to take a position as varsity basketball coach at Calvary Academy.

Working at the Mission has enabled Ricky to minister well beyond the boundaries of the basketball court and the walls of the school. His heart for ministry is complemented by both academic training in social services and practical experience working at a group home for juvenile offenders and organizing an inner city basketball league.

Although Ricky can be a fierce competitor on the basketball court, he has a much broader perspective on ministry. "Basketball is valuable as a tool for ministry to inner city youth, but having a good team is not my goal for ministry at the school or at the Mission," Ricky explains. "I want to see lives changed by a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and work with youth who are growing deeper and stronger in their faith."

Under Ricky's leadership, the number of youth attending the Thursday evening Bible study at the Mission has significantly increased. The typical six or seven who attended when the youth group was started during the Summer have turned into about fifteen who are participating on a regular basis. The increase has occurred even though the focus has not been on drawing a crowd.

The focus of the expanding youth ministries at the Mission has been on practical training in the application of biblical truths to daily life. Ricky often lifts up topics like commitment and discipline during the Bible study times and tries to draw the youth into down-to-earth discussions of how responding to God's love can make a real difference in their everyday lives. "The youth seem to be catching on," Ricky says. "They are asking very practical questions and seeking prayer for very real problems in their lives."

As the ministry to youth continues to grow, we plan to help these young men and women take advantage of summer employment opportunities, improve their academic performance, develop leadership skills, stretch their horizons to include college as a reality rather than an unattainable dream, and grow into maturing and vital Christian witnesses in their daily lives.

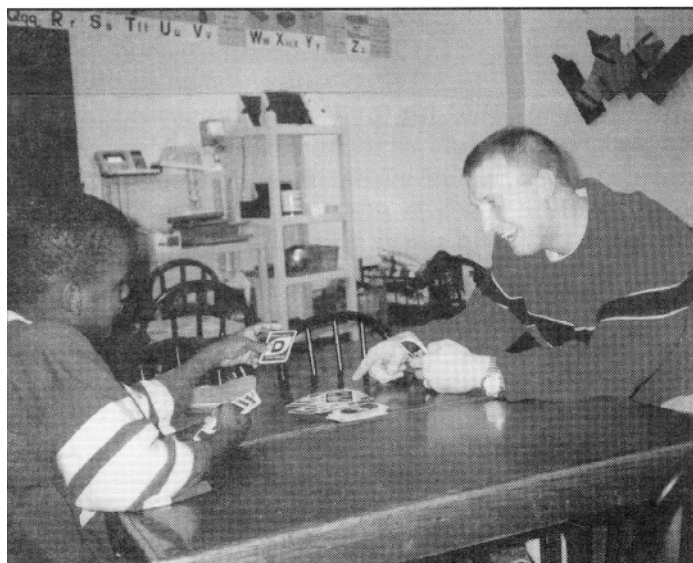
Ricky's career as an outstanding high school basketball player in Indiana and his stints on teams at Division I James Madison University and two Christian colleges give him some instant respect and credibility with the youth. From the struggles in his own life, he can also understand the challenges the youth at the Mission are facing in their often difficult circumstances.

Ricky and his wife Andrea have twin three-year-old sons and are expecting another child in April. Learning to develop a strong family life has made a significant impact on Ricky during the past several years.

The connection with Calvary Academy is also an asset that Ricky brings to the Mission. The closer contact with the two children the Mission sponsors at Calvary has enabled us to assist them more effectively. Ricky has also been able to bring students from Calvary to volunteer at the Mission serving coffee and tutoring children.

Two special Saturday breakfasts for people who regularly come to the coffee hall have been organized by Ricky over the past few months. The breakfasts have been appreciated by the people who have been served and have also given students from Calvary the opportunity to serve people in need.

We are very excited about what God is going to be doing through Ricky's ministry here in the days ahead.



Ricky Fritch, new coordinator of youth ministries at the Mission, interacts with one of the children in the afterschool tutoring program.

"WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I DROP OFF THESE CLOTHES?"

Our clothing shop ministry depends on people who remember us when they clean out their closets or dispose of clothing from garage sales or estates. But often people ask us, "What exactly happens with these clothes after I drop them off here?"

One way to answer this question is to walk through the process we use to handle clothing donations here. When a donation of clothing is received, it is first tallied to provide a running total of the number of donations being received. If requested, a receipt is provided to the donor for tax purposes. New donations are next taken to the sorting room for processing.

The sorting process can sometimes be a challenge, but we try to stay on top of it. Items are initially separated into broad categories: women's, men's and children's clothing, and household items. Items that are needed for immediate distribution are placed in the appropriate locations in the clothing shop area. The best off-season items are placed in storage for later distribution.

Items that are not needed because of their condition, or simply because we have more than enough of that type of clothing, are given to other social service agencies, such as the Goodwill or Salvation Army. Incidentally, other agencies also share their excess clothing donations with the Mission.

We also regularly sort through the items in the clothing shop to discard clothing that has not been taken. Keeping a fresh supply of the most useable clothing on the racks and in the boxes used in the clothing shop is a challenge.

When the clothing shop is open, individuals check in at the front desk in the reception area and then proceed to select clothing. The area for men's clothes is located in the clothing shop hall. Women's clothing includes boxes covering seven or eight tables that are placed in the big room, the general activity area in the Mission. Although these items must be moved and stored between clothing shop times, the volume of clothing cannot be handled effectively without using this additional space.

When each individual has completed selecting the items they need, they return to the front desk in the reception area. The items selected are counted, recorded on the individual's record, and bagged by volunteers. A brief Gospel tract or message is also included in each bag. Other volunteers often come to help re-fold and put away the clothing when the clothing shop closes.

OUR MISSION

To share the love of Jesus Christ with the people of Springfield by providing opportunities that meet their spiritual and physical needs.

In addition to describing this process, however, we can also answer the question about what happens to clothing after it is dropped off with a few statistics. During 1999, the Mission gave away a total of over 65,500 items of clothing through our clothing shop. During the single month of January this year, we distributed over 8,000 items.

Individuals are allowed to come to the clothing shop to pick up clothing once a month and specific days of the week are designated for men and for women. During 1999, the clothing shop experienced nearly 3,000 total visits, averaging about 111 visits by women and about 83 visits by men each month.

Obviously we can only distribute this volume of clothing and serve this number of individuals and families because of the volume of donations that come in throughout the year. We appreciate the generosity represented by these consistent and continuing donations.

But process and statistics may still be inadequate in answering the question. The clothing and household items dropped off at the Mission have a direct and vital impact on the lives of individuals and families who are struggling to meet basic needs in their lives. Men, women, and children are clothed through this ministry. Families are enabled to meet basic needs. Budgets that are inadequate are stretched. The love of Jesus Christ for people in need is demonstrated in a practical way.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES AT THE MISSION

Coffee Hall: each weekday morning from 9:00 to 11:00 A.M.

Children's Ministry: tutoring, meal and Bible study on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4:30 to 7:00 P.M.

Youth Ministry: activities, snack, and Bible study on Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Women's Bible Fellowship: Bible study and luncheon on first and third Tuesdays of the month from 10:00 A.M. to noon

Clothing Shop: open for men on Mondays and Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M., open for women on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M.

Drop-Off of Clothing and Household Items: each weekday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to noon