

CHANGING LIVES

129 YEARS OF SERVICE

A MOTHER'S PRAYER



DENVER
RESCUE
MISSION

HOW YOU PROVIDED A SAFE HOME FOR THIS FAMILY

NEW PARTNERSHIP OFFERS RESTAURANT VOUCHERS FOR FAMILY

Dear Friends,

More and more in the communities where we work, housing instability is directly linked to income instability. The rising cost of rent and homeownership throughout Colorado is burdening thousands of households trying to make a living. It's easy to assume that housing insecurity is directly related to something someone *did*. However, in the current housing market, being cost-burdened has become the new normal. Staff at Denver Rescue Mission often hear from individuals entering our shelters for the first time and from families like Derricsa's, who have had stable housing in the past, that they were surprised when their rent went up by 30 percent. At an increasing rate, owners of apartment complexes have converted them into condominiums or stopped caring about basic maintenance while they waited for a property to sell.

Along the Colorado Front Range, first-time homelessness is on the rise, which means our Mission staff are working hard to re-house individuals and families that would otherwise languish in homelessness. Family Rescue Ministry (FRM) is one of the Mission's longest-running programs, simply because it works. Many households experiencing homelessness have income coming in, but it is not enough for them to save for a security deposit and first month's rent payment. That's where FRM steps in.

However, financial support is only a portion of how FRM supports a family. As you will read in Derricsa's story, FRM creates relational connections and community support by introducing families to mentor teams. Our mentors love families so well. They come alongside them, cheer them on, and provide emotional and tangible support. Too often, financial poverty is linked to relational poverty—when there is no one to call for help. Through our mentor teams, we overturn this cycle of relational poverty.

Within each of the Mission's programs, our aim is to assist participants in four key areas: employment, housing, habits, and healthy community. It's easy for us to understand the first three of these four focus areas, but we don't always think about how healthy relationships impact our long-term stability. FRM provides a platform for us to not only re-house those experiencing homelessness, but to also introduce them to a support system.

Thank you for being part of our healthy community and investing in the lives of people currently struggling with housing instability, homelessness, poverty, and addiction.

Blessings,



Josh Geppelt
VP of Programs



A MOTHER'S PRAYER



Derricsa wholeheartedly believes in the power of prayer. It's the foundation of her parenting as a single mother of four. It's how she wraps up every day with her children during bedtime. It's the way she connects with her mentors, whom she met through Denver Rescue Mission's Family Rescue Ministry program. For Derricsa, prayer is the reason she and her children have a safe place to call home.

Ten-year-old Serenity's personality is just like her name suggests: serene, peaceful and lovable. Her little sister, Isyss, is a spunky, outspoken five-year-old. They love their new neighborhood in Aurora, where they ride their bikes around with friends and live walking distance from their new schools.



"I truly just want to say thank you," said their mother, Derricsa. "If it weren't for the donors, me and my kids wouldn't have a place."

One of Derricsa's favorite verses, which was an encouragement during her time of need, is Matthew 7:7, *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."*

PRAYER PROTECTS

From August to November of 2020, Derricsa and her four children, Serenity, 10, Jedidiah, 9, Isyss, 5, and D'Cairo, 2, were homeless and temporarily staying at her father's place in Colorado Springs.

Prior to that, they were staying at an apartment that felt like anything but a home. With constant bed bugs, a landlord who ignored her maintenance requests, and an unsafe neighborhood that negatively influenced her children, Derricsa knew she needed to get out of there.

"I wanted better for my kids," she said. "I wanted to show them what it means to be stable."

With the weight of providing for four children without support from their father, Derricsa tried to come up with a solution. She had received a Section 8 housing voucher, which would cover a portion of her rent, and she was receiving Social Security Disability Insurance due to an injury. But she didn't have enough money for the deposit required to secure an apartment. "I was sitting there at my dad's, just wondering, *are things going to be like this forever?*"

PRAYER WORKS

One simple call to 211 connected her to the Mission, which is how she found out about Family Rescue Ministry (FRM), a program that helps families secure stable housing by providing funding toward a security deposit and first month's rent payment. She applied immediately.

"They called and told me they accepted me in to the program," she said. "They gave me a check, and I was able to give it to the landlord. It felt so good. That's why I'm saying, prayer works."

When she walked into her three-bedroom home in Aurora in November of 2020, it felt like night and day from her previous apartment. Derricsa was blessed to see her children's reactions. "They were ecstatic," she said.



*Photo does not feature Derricsa's eldest son



Become a Mentor for Family Rescue Ministry



Last year, FRM helped 369 individuals experiencing homelessness transition into permanent housing, and 93 percent of families remained in housing one year after completing the program.* Mentors like Mike and Kathy play a key role in families' ability to maintain stability by helping with budgeting, setting goals and providing relational and spiritual support.

Learn more about mentorship at DenverRescueMission.org/Mentor.

**Numbers reflect Fiscal Year: July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021*

PRAYER STRENGTHENS

FRM also connects families with mentors to provide the relational support needed to help them maintain stability. This has made a tremendous impact on Derricsa, who reaches out to her mentors, Mike and Kathy, any time she needs someone to talk to and pray with.

"Ever since the first meeting we had with Derricsa, we've always ended our conversations with prayer," Mike said. "Something that really impresses us is that she truly does trust the Lord and is a model for us as well. She puts God first, and everything else follows."

Mike and Kathy are the people she confides in about her past, her struggles and her goals. "I never feel judged after those conversations," Derricsa said. "That's really who my family is up here—my mentors."

PRAYER SUSTAINS

Derricsa appreciates the Mission's Ministry Outreach Center (MOC), where she goes once a month to receive clothing, hygiene items, undergarments, and cleaning supplies for her new apartment. She also received donated beds for her children at the MOC. "[For] as many people as there are in the house, I don't have the funds to always go shop," she said.

With her basic needs met, she's been able to prioritize spending one-on-one time with each of her children and is raising them to know and love God. "You never hear her complaining," Kathy said. "She's an incredibly strong person—raising four kids on her own. It is encouraging to see her strength in times of adversity and her reliance on God."

A former certified nursing assistant, Derricsa's goal is to go back to school once her youngest child is in preschool and pursue a career as an esthetician, which is one of her passions. "It's mainly for my kids," she said, "to show them that you can do something even with a setback."

When Derricsa looks back on her journey, the one constant in her life has been prayer. "I know my blessings have come from God. I wouldn't have this place if it weren't for me praying consistently every day. My faith has grown tremendously." ■



"At the end of the day, as much as I wanted to give up, I still had four kids who wanted a home," Derricsa said.

It's because of faithful supporters like you that a door opened for Derricsa and her children after months of prayer. Be the answer to the prayers of other families in need. Give today at DenverRescueMission.org/ChangingLives.





BRICE FLAMANT

Brice Flamant is the founder and president of Fork A Meal, a nonprofit organization that launched in October 2020 in response to the pandemic.



What is Fork a Meal's main purpose?

Fork A Meal (FAM) builds relationships with local restaurants to provide families with a meal coupon to bring a "moment of comfort" when they need it the most. With FAM, one donation has twice the impact since a donation helps feed a family while supporting restaurants that were impacted by the pandemic. We want to make sure no one is at risk of food scarcity or serving food at a loss.

Will you describe FAM's partnership with the Mission's Family Rescue Ministry (FRM) program?

FRM helps families and seniors experiencing homelessness secure permanent housing and provides resources to help them start new lives. One of these resources is a FAM coupon for the entire household, so they can celebrate the milestone of moving into their own home. It is heartwarming to hear how excited families, like Derrisca and her family, are to share a meal together in a restaurant—something they haven't done in months! We are extremely grateful FRM trusted us and our vision. We have invited almost 100 families to enjoy meals so far, and we are thrilled to see our partnership extend to other Mission programs like Family Refugee Services.

Why did you choose to partner with the Mission?

I volunteered to serve dinner at the Lawrence Street Community Center in the past. I was really impressed with the impact the Mission's services have on people's lives. And that was only looking at one shelter! I really love that the Mission is not only serving people who need help right now, but also helping them for the long term through transitional programs and community outreach. I feel like people always deserve a second chance.

LIVE ONLINE EVENT!

ILLUMINATE

Bringing to Light
the Pressing Issues of Homelessness

Thursday, September 9, 2021
7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Join us to hear from a panel of experts from the Mission and the City's Department of Housing Stability discussing how we are working together to eliminate barriers to emergency services.

Register at DenverRescueMission.org/IlluminateOnline.

OUR CORE STRATEGIES

-  **EMERGENCY SERVICES**
-  **REHABILITATION**
-  **TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS**
-  **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

LOCATIONS

- Lawrence Street Community Center:** Meals, restrooms, showers, laundry, clean drinking water, and access to Mission staff for encouragement and guidance 
- Lawrence Street Shelter:** 24/7 shelter for men and chapel 
- Holly Center:** Overnight shelter for men assigned weekly and lockers for storage 
- The Crossing:** Transitional program for families and rehabilitation program for men 
- Harvest Farm:** Rural rehabilitation program near Fort Collins 
- Fort Collins Rescue Mission:** Meals, shelter and access to resources and services 
- Ministry Outreach Center:** Central warehouse facility including food, clothing and furniture distribution 
- Administration & Education:** Entry point for Mission transitional programs and home to the Mission's administrative and development staff 
- 48th Avenue Center:** 24/7 shelter for men, operated in partnership with the City of Denver 

THOUGHTS?

Send your questions and comments to Newsletter@DenRescue.org.