



The Midnight Journey

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDNIGHT MISSION

Fall 2018



Steven James Collins Photography

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO



NIMBY-ism is a word we have all heard in the last year as cities and counties try to come up with solutions for the growing number of people who are homeless and living on the street. “Not in my backyard!” many cry, desperate for a solution to homelessness, so long as that solution isn’t a shelter in their own neighborhood. People often look at individuals and families who are homeless and think in terms of “them” or “they” instead of “us.” We distance ourselves from people who are at their lowest point without thinking that person is someone’s child, brother, mother, grandchild, etc. At The Midnight Mission, we know the solution requires growing away from the idea of “us versus them” to simply “us”. We must broaden our thinking from “not in my backyard” to an attitude of “Not In My Backyard – Not Anywhere!” Homelessness should not exist anywhere. .

The Midnight Mission has responded to the emerging community needs by enhancing and increasing our services. Our Courtyard program in the County of Orange continues to help people who are experiencing homelessness and has connected 363 people to stable housing. Our Women’s Crisis & Bridge Housing program has connected 83 women who were homeless to sustainable employment and permanent housing. Our Recovery program continues to change the lives of those struggling with addiction through 12-step programs, structure, and accountability. Our HomeLight Family Living program helped 19 families connect to permanent housing with sustainable income and served as a family reunification resource so children could exit the foster-care system to live with their parent. We are amazed by the strength and resilience of the individuals and families who come to The Midnight Mission for a hand up, and we’re humbled by the dignity and courage that marks their journeys.

Our work is far from done. There are still over 53,000 individuals and families without a place to sleep, eat, work, play or live in LA County. That’s enough people to fill Dodger Stadium. Over the course of a year, that is about 200,000 people, which is enough to fill the Rose Bowl – twice.

We are grateful for you – our volunteers, donors and advocates, who are committed to partnering with us in our work to break the cycle of homelessness, poverty and addiction. Please join us in embracing the attitude of “Not in My Backyard, Not Anywhere” as we help those in need. We count on your partnership to help us get people off the streets and into productive, successful lives so they can reconnect with their families and community. Your continued support saves and changes lives every day.

With sincere gratitude,

G. Michael Arnold
President & CEO of The Midnight Mission

Alumni Check In - Ben Shirley

It's been more than 7 years since Ben Shirley walked into The Midnight Mission looking for a place to stay after losing everything due to drug addiction and alcoholism. A resident of The Midnight Mission for 26 months, through his commitment to recovery, Ben has come a long way from the broken man who enrolled in our Healthy Living Program in May 2011. After attending Los Angeles City College and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Ben is now a classical composer and aspiring film composer, living in Hollywood.

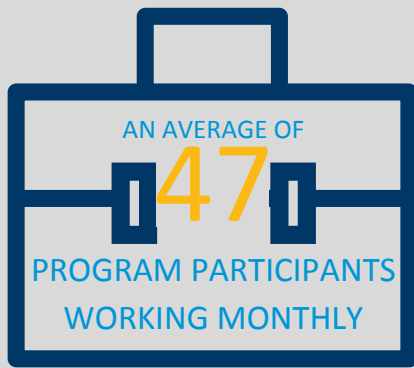
In the past few years alone, Ben got married, moved to Hollywood and had his story told through the award-winning documentary *Skid Row Marathon*. *Skid Row Marathon* follows members of the Skid Row Running Club—which was launched at The Midnight Mission by Judge Craig Mitchell in 2012—as they climb out of homelessness and recover from addiction. As the film has gained acclaim, Ben has spoken at screenings, film festivals and on various panels, sharing his experience, strength and hope across the globe from Berlin to Santa Barbara.

Ben still comes to The Midnight Mission every Monday and Thursday at 6am to run with the club and to meet with some of the men he sponsors in their 12-step program. Earlier this year, he traveled with the club again, this time to run the Jerusalem Marathon. Ben currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Skid Row Running Club.

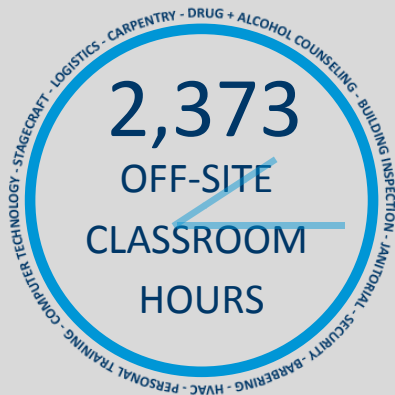
He remains active in the Skid Row community through his work with Street Symphony. As the first Composition Fellow for Street Symphony, Ben is now Co-Composer in Residence and a Teaching Artist. Ben also co-orchestrated composer Kim Planert's forthcoming album and has been commissioned for original music by numerous organizations and individuals. He's also providing sound design for an independent film and composing for a Canadian film.

Ben's life has changed in ways he never could have imagined. "The Midnight Mission saved my life. All I had to do was be willing to do things I didn't want to do, take suggestions from others and the rest of it has all fallen into place. I'm grateful and I want to make sure I never forget what it was like before I got sober. I never want to forget where I came from."





17-18 YEAR
IN
REVIEW



Grant Central Station

TMM was awarded \$35,000 from the Stranahan Foundation. This gift will assist TMM participants in accessing needed services to increase income through employment. The gift will provide education classes, career coaching, work-force development, and increased income through connections to sustainable employment. Access to the Stranahan Foundation was made available through the generosity of Enzo Ricciardelli of Sotheby's International Realty.

TMM was also granted \$50,000 from Annenberg Foundation to further our mission of offering a bridge to self-sufficiency for people experiencing homelessness. Funds will support recovery services, counseling, education, training, workforce development and continued care services designed to help people continue their on their path to sustainable self-sufficiency after they have left our programs.

Bank of America awarded TMM a \$45,000 grant in support of our basic needs program, which provides food, shelter and other essential services to homeless individuals and families. A meal at TMM is more than just food - it can be the first step toward a new life. Thanks to partners like Bank of America, we are able to provide that helping hand to more than 25,000 people in need per year.

TMM is preparing to break ground on a dog and cat run at the Courtyard OC, thanks to a \$65,000 grant from the Nationwide Foundation! There aren't many places for homeless people with pets to go, as most shelters do not have the capacity to house animals. Our new dog and cat run will allow us to reach more people in Orange County who need our services. Stay tuned for more information!

“Coming to TMM was the start of getting my children back.”

Like the majority of the women in our Crisis & Bridge program, Priscilla was seeking assistance but didn’t know where or how she would find it. She needed help reuniting with her children.

Priscilla had been living in the San Bernardino and Riverside areas when, due to unfortunate circumstances, her children were removed from her custody. When she tried to get them back, Priscilla was denied custody of her children because she was homeless. She had been struggling with addiction for some time, but losing her children made her realize just how bad it had become. Priscilla knew she had to make a serious commitment to change if she was going to survive and provide for her children.

Moving to Skid Row wasn’t something Priscilla ever imagined doing, but she heard there was a women’s program at The Midnight Mission that could help her find stability. Priscilla was desperate and needed help. So, she took a leap of faith and made her way to The Midnight.

Almost immediately, Priscilla saw something at The Midnight that “was freedom” for her. She wasn’t expecting her life to change as quickly as it did. But, when she allowed herself to get out of her comfort zone and jump into the program, she began to have hope. What started as simply wanting to stay off the streets and get a sponsor to help her address her addiction disorder, turned into committing to and following through with a plan of action.

In Priscilla’s case, that plan began with reuniting with her three children and moving into TMM’s HomeLight Family Living program. Our family living program provides the path for families in crisis to reunify, rebuild and restore their lives. She now feels like she’s not only working toward reuniting with her children, but she is also improving her personal potential.

“I want to get a job. I want to leave my mark. There is so much that I want to accomplish and now I have the tools to make it happen.” The Midnight Mission is extremely gratified that Priscilla took the leap and placed her trust in our Women’s and Family Living programs. Today, she is looking forward to a brighter future for her family.

This is the day . . . to reunite with family.



Reduce Your Tax Burden

even if you don't itemize

If you would like more information about how to make an IRA charitable rollover gift, please visit our website or call us to request a brochure by mail.

Do you own an IRA or other qualified retirement plan? Are you looking for a tax-wise strategy to make gifts to support our mission? If so, consider making an IRA charitable rollover gift.

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An IRA charitable rollover gift:

- Satisfies your annual required minimum distribution, or RMD, up to the amount of your gift
- Allows you to give from pre-tax assets and your distribution is excluded from taxable income
- Helps avoid limits on charitable deductions and prevents you from being pushed into a higher tax bracket
- Simplifies the giving process. It's easy to do—just notify your IRA custodian
- Minimizes the effect your giving has on your cash flow. The gift is from your assets, not your checkbook

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COURTYARD CORNER

As we dive deeper into the summer months, temperatures and humidity continue to rise. This can make for unbearable conditions for Los Angeles' homeless community, including those utilizing our Courtyard Services. With little access to water, now more than ever, countless men, women, and children need your help to survive these harsh conditions.

While TMM is always grateful for donations of any kind, during these scorching summer months, we'd like to make a special request. We are in need of water donations to pass out to our guests and community. Water, and all other donations, in our parking lot, at the security desk or at the back dock.

Thank you, and stay cool!

