



UNION GOSPEL MISSION

LIFECHANGE LETTER

Feeding the hungry, restoring the addict and loving our neighbor since 1927.

AUGUST 2020

Operation Overcoat Changes Lives

Every year we look forward to Operation Overcoat. For over 20 years we have gathered up to 1,000 neighbors in need for a block party outside the downtown Mission to give out winter clothes and provide a day of fun and respite for our neighbors in need. With new restrictions and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to get creative and reinvent Operation Overcoat. It will look different this year, but our commitment to coming alongside those in need remains the same.

This year UGM will be partnering with local churches to move our efforts from one big downtown event to several smaller functions

throughout the Portland Metro area. Starting the last Saturday in September, UGM, along with our church partners, will be hosting several mini functions that will deliver backpacks with shoes, coats, pants and other vital supplies to help our neighbors in need navigate winter. Through this effort we are anticipating being able to reach even more people than past events.

Please partner with us to spread the love of Jesus and make this our best Operation Overcoat ever.



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Operation Overcoat: Ways You Can Help

1. **Organize a donation drive at your church, workplace or school.** Our most needed items include pants, new undergarments, sleeping bags, boots and coats. Drop your items off at Union Gospel Mission at 3 NW Third Avenue by August 28th.
2. **Support Operation Overcoat financially.** It costs about \$23.53 to serve each person through Operation Overcoat. Consider a special financial gift for Operation Overcoat. You can give online at ugmportland.org.

Your Gift of \$23.53 provides an Operation Overcoat guest with goods and services that would cost them over \$200 in a retail environment.



Operation Overcoat helps build the relationships needed to bring people closer to a decision to move off the streets into a life of sobriety and abundance through Jesus Christ.

Tim's Story: Not a Typical Addict

Tim tried drinking at the age of 12, by 21 he was experimenting with meth. Then his best friend gave him an ultimatum, "If you don't stop, I can't be your friend anymore," so Tim stopped. From there, Tim got married, had a good job, was blessed with a couple of kids, and was living a good life. Six years into the marriage they got a divorce, but Tim retained his job and a good relationship with his children.

Casually, Tim started experimenting with meth with a friend. After 20 years of being clean, meth quickly sucked Tim back in. Eventually, using meth became Tim's obsession. After several bouts of homelessness, Tim found himself living in his van during the winter snow. With no future in sight Tim contemplated suicide by cop. He decided it was time to get some help.

Now, after four months at UGM Tim can see a future for himself. He's working in the mission kitchen and building a new life for himself. "It's not

like any place I have ever been before, everyone really cares for you and supports you," says Tim. His parents observed religious holidays and even occasionally attended church, but it was more a social obligation. Now Tim is finding comfort in UGM's Christian foundation. "It's not easy, I've been struggling some, but it's worth it," explains Tim. "I enjoy going to church...I'm learning a lot."

"Tim doesn't look like your typical addict, but here at UGM we get men from every walk of life." says Lori, UGM's food service Director. "Through the time in LifeChange they become stable, develop a relationship with Christ, and learn how to be contributors again."

"I'm looking forward to building my life, being sober and reconnecting with my kids," exclaims Tim. "UGM is more than just a recovery program, everyone here really cares."



"I enjoy going to church...I'm learning a lot."

Heart of Hope

During these challenging times we have seen our amazing donors step up and support us. If you support our work and would like to be a part of the Union Gospel Mission's monthly support team, please prayerfully consider becoming a Heart of Hope partner.

Why join Heart of Hope?

- **Reliable Income:** Monthly giving helps provide stable support to vital Mission programs like meals, clothing, and addiction recovery. The Mission can more effectively plan with support the Mission can count on.
- **Reduced Administrative Costs:** Heart of Hope members receive reduced mailings, with just occasional newsletters and one annual receipt each January, saving the Mission anywhere from 30% - 75% in mailing costs, this means more money goes straight to the ministry.








- **It's Convenient:** With the automated Heart of Hope program, you don't have to hassle with checks, envelopes and stamps. Your gift comes automatically to the Mission each month.

By being a Heart of Hope Monthly Partner, you are taking a stand against poverty, addiction, and homelessness, joining what God is doing among our most vulnerable neighbors.

Monthly giving can be set up by calling 503-274-4483 or visiting ugmportland.org/heart-of-hope

Heart of
Hope 
Partner

UGM BY THE NUMBERS: OCTOBER 2019-JUNE 2020

			
TOTAL MEALS 209,332	SEARCH+RESCUE KITS 21,218	EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES 1,069	VOLUNTEER HOURS 8,060
			
	CHAPEL ATTENDANCE/DINNERS 16,190	SACK LUNCHES 6,680	HOT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH 77,182

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

AUGUST 2020

BILLBOARD

A Message from Union Gospel Mission
Director Bill Russell



COVID-19 update

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged Union Gospel Mission in many ways. First, we had to take action to keep our LifeChange residents and staff healthy and safe from infection. This meant limiting access and installing hand cleaning stations in our downtown location. Food services to the public had to change to exclusively outside distribution so that we could maintain social distancing. Search + Rescue has increased their sanitation procedures, and are wearing face masks. LifeChange for Women and Their Children has had to limit visitors and implement extra sanitation procedures. Our staff have been mostly working from home and volunteer options are severely limited. Additionally, all fundraising and service-based events are being reimagined. Every aspect of the mission has been adapted to increase safety, and we pledge to continue this effort until our city has recovered.

Pressing Into Change

I've had to learn to smile and be friendly through a mask. I've had to adapt to conversations at a physical distance of 6 feet. I've had to change my behavior and adopt a rigid practice of not touching my face until I have thoroughly washed my hands. COVID-19 has forced changes.

At this point in history we need to embrace **change**. At the same time, we must realize that which will never change.

The pandemic has forced us to change and stay at home more. Yet God's call to "associate with people of low position" (Romans 12:16) and to feed the hungry (Romans 12:20) hasn't changed. So, we figure out a way to mitigate the risk of outreach with the call of God, and we mask up and do it safely.

We want **change** ... change that obeys the biblical call to honor or respect every human and therefore change that guarantees every citizen equal protection under the law and equal value in our hearts.

We want **change** ... change that values every person's health and prioritizes safety over profits or habit. We want to see the pandemic end.

At UGM, we know who Jesus is and we are committed to following him. We haven't lost hope. And we love those who you've enabled us to love – the abused, addicted and homeless. Thank you for the privilege. We are not backing off, we are pressing in!

Bill Russell
Executive Director



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