

*Three former UGM residents  
share what they really needed  
in their darkest hours.*

“What I  
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# “What I **really** needed...”

**We know people need love.** People need a safe community, connections to housing, medical care, and jobs. They need to know they're not alone, they're safe, and there is hope for their futures.

But how do we help people lost in addiction or sleeping under bridges know there is a place where they can find these resources? We do not simply want to communicate that UGM exists, but that each individual in need is worthy of finding help, hope, love, and a new life.

In these articles, three former UGM residents share what they really needed in their darkest hours, what it took to bring them in, and what they'd say to someone living rough today.

## **Eric, formerly homeless addict**

I truly was lost in my addiction. I didn't understand that phrase before—lost in addiction—but that's exactly what it is... you get lost. Your lens gets distorted.

Back then, if someone had told me I needed to get help, I would have said, “Who do you think you are?” I did not think that people could understand what I was going through. My life was really just a beautiful mess.

Hope. All I wanted was to find a taste of hope—hope that it wouldn't always be like this. But I was looking for it in the numbness of drugs and alcohol—looking so hard for hope but only finding emptiness. I needed better coping skills, and I needed people to push me in the right direction. But I wouldn't let people in.

I remember coming out of the fog, waking up in a tattoo shop, afraid I had alcohol poisoning. I finally had the thought that nothing was going to change unless I did something different. I came to the Mission at a low point. **I didn't think I was worth their help, but I knew I needed it.**

I learned that what I needed more than anything was people. You can't have a full and meaningful life without being open with the people around you. At UGM, I discovered value and worth for myself and for others. I learned how to love myself again. I learned that I can be forgiven. I learned to love people and be loved.

**If I could speak to someone lost in addiction, I'd say:** Don't give up on yourself. It isn't easy, but God has us growing through the challenges. Have patience. More than anything, I'd say let people in. You can't do life without them.

## **Elizabeth, former addict**

I want people to know how close they are to a breakthrough.

If I were to describe myself today, I'd say I'm a child of God, a successful businesswoman, a wife, and a mom. But just four years ago, I'd have told you I was nothing but a failure—a repeat felon, unavailable to my kids, completely hopeless. I never imagined I'd be where I am today.

**Even in your darkest hour, at rock bottom, you're never more than a couple decisions away from finding hope,** from experiencing God pulling you out of the pit. He can do it, and He wants to. And there are people out there who want to help.

You can't receive help until you start believing you're worth it. For a long time, I couldn't even accept the hope other people had for me. I'd tried to get sober, and it hadn't worked. I was too far gone. When I was sober, the pain of everything and the new reality I had created would

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– ERIC



chase me right back into addiction. I didn't want to feel the heartbreak of being separated from my kids. I didn't want to face all the things I'd done while I was using.

I didn't believe in myself, and I didn't believe anyone had any good intentions for me. I only came to UGM because I'd been arrested again, and my husband insisted. At the orientation, I remember thinking, "I'm sure God has plans for everyone else, but He doesn't have plans for me."

The process of change was nothing like I expected. I'd never changed from the inside before. Looking back, **what I really needed was Jesus**. I needed to see how much He loves me and how His love is what gives me my worth. I needed people in my life who mirrored that and mirrored His unconditional love. That's what changed my life.

**What I'd say to someone in my position back then, is:** You have nothing to lose at this point. Why not just give it a try? Let God lead the way, and see how much your life can change.

## Jennifer, formerly homeless

Before UGM, I was all over the place. I was alone. I was hibernating. I wasn't living. If someone had told me I needed to get help, I would have said, "I know." I knew I needed help, but I didn't know where to go. My heart wasn't open to love. There was a blockage. Even now, thinking back, it's like stepping into a cloud and I can't see clearly. I couldn't see clearly through all of the trauma.

I was terrified—terrified that I was sleeping by the river. It was winter. I prayed a lot. I really loved praying out loud. I'd pretend I was in the shower, I'd close my eyes and let the thoughts and words flow. I could escape the pain for a little while. And I'd go outside my tent and look for any little sign that God was there. I'd say, "Lord, do you see me?" Sometimes I'd see a bird, and it would fill me with hope. But often, it was nothing. I felt so alone.

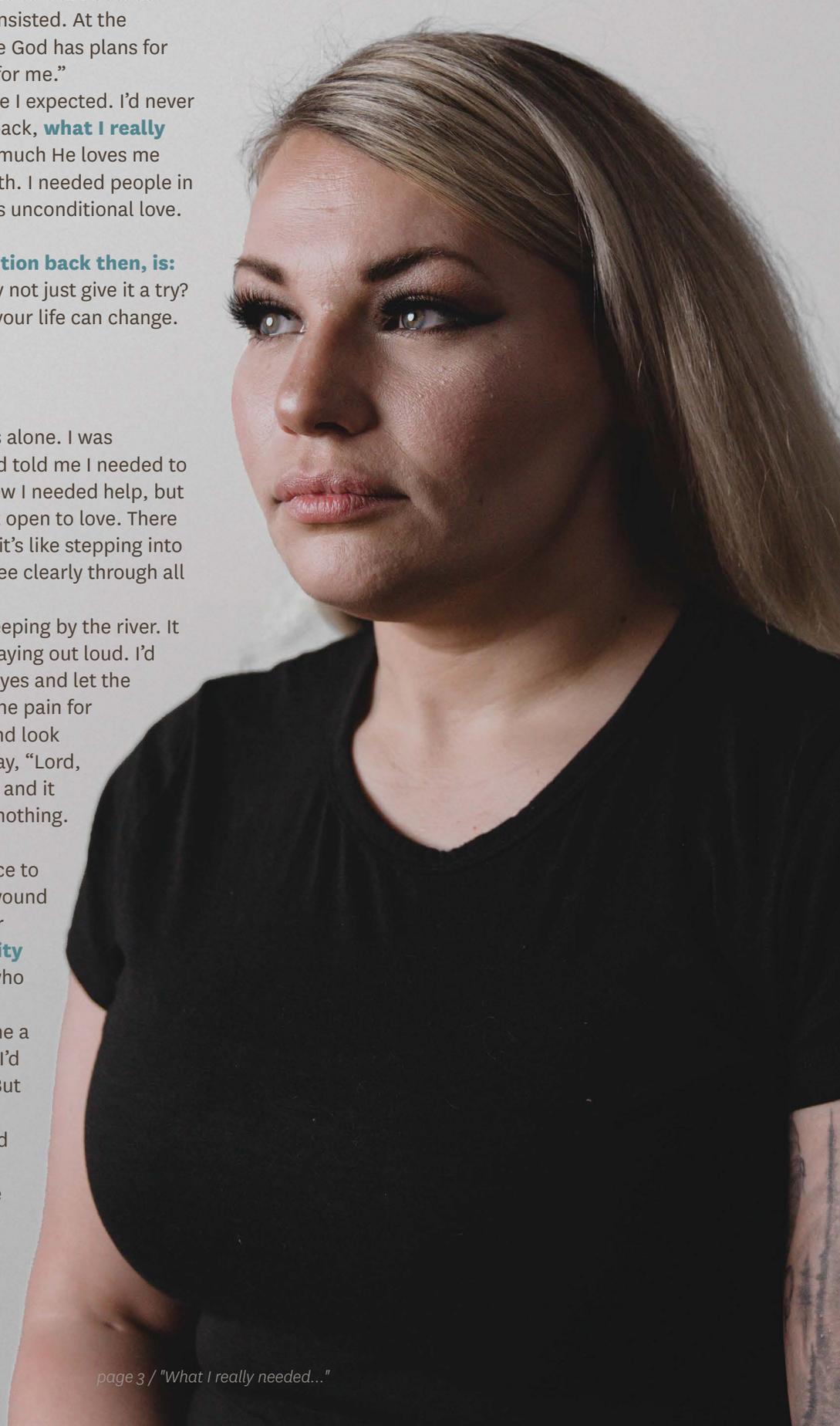
All I wanted was to be safe, a soft place to land. My addiction wasn't my problem. I wound up quitting it in a matter of days and never looked back. **My problem was my inability to receive love**. I kept getting with men who would beat me.

COVID saved my life. I'd come and gone a lot to the UGM Crisis Shelter, but in 2020, I'd made it to Recovery at Anna Ogden Hall. But I was a runner. I never committed to long-term help. But COVID closed our doors and we hunkered down together. I would not have stayed in program if it weren't for the shutdown. By the time we were released, I'd opened my eyes and my heart to love.

At UGM, I learned that God didn't abandon me. The sisters I have now clarified that for me. I am in love with

**"You're never more than a couple decisions away from finding hope."**

– ELIZABETH



Jesus Christ—absolutely. I thought I was going to be so lonely all my life. **I am so not alone.**

**What I'd say to someone on the streets today, is:**

Can I give you a hug and a bus pass? Some clothes? And I'd ask what their situation is. **People need to know they're not alone.**

The army of community members who support UGM are making a way for those who are lost, lonely, and afraid to find hope and healing. Thank you for providing a pathway out of homelessness. ●

## “People do care.”

*See how your commitment to providing resources at the Mission is proclaiming hope across the Inland Northwest.*



Scan here for video messages from our guests.



**Phil Altmeyer**  
Executive Director

## Louder Than Words

THE ARTICLES IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE ALL ABOUT WORDS—words that changed the course of people's lives, words they want to speak into the lives of those who are suffering, words that open our eyes to the experiences of homelessness and addiction. Words are necessary.

With words, God spoke the universe into existence. With words, He has revealed His heart in Scripture. In many ways, the gift of language connects us to the Lord and to one another. Still, for humankind, words only go so far. You and I cannot create universes. We cannot change hearts. There isn't a perfect sentence that will compel any person living in homelessness to seek the help he or she needs. We cannot force change. Nor do we want to.

Scripture says there is something that speaks louder than words: our actions. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another...by this shall all men know

you are my disciples,” (John 13:34-35) and “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven,” (Matthew 5:16). What is more impactful than our offer of help? What says, “Real change is possible” louder than words? A redeemed life. A relational life. A life lived in the open where God's love and power are on display.

This is the story of Eric, Elizabeth, and Jennifer who've chosen to share their testimonies in these articles and in the TV and radio spots airing across our region. They are glorifying God publicly through their testimonies and demonstrating God's power to seek and save the lost. This is what you're doing when you partner with us, providing a place for people to come and experience the love of Christ through staff, volunteers, and residents. And this is how you make a difference when you connect with men and women living on our streets with no hope or battling addiction. Learning their names, memorizing their faces, seeking to be someone they'll remember and ultimately trust.

I confess, I have not always led well in this area. By nature, I am more of a “fixer” than a good listener, but as is true with all of us, God is not done with me. I am learning the value of listening to hear instead of listening to respond. I am learning that, often, the most compelling love we can offer is a love that says, “You matter, you're worthy of my time, tell me about yourself.”

Friends, let us be a people through whom the light of Jesus shines. In small ways and in large ways, in rare opportunities and in those that occur daily, I pray our actions speak louder than our words. We are not going to convince all who need help to come to the Mission, but we can be conduits for the compelling love of Christ, and there is no limit to what He can do with that. ●



## Providing Peace in Crisis

### A Volunteer Feature

UGM RECEIVED A REMARKABLE GIFT WHEN NURSE Practitioner Lorna Schumann joined the Medical Clinics as a volunteer.

Having always been interested in helping people in times of crisis, Lorna pursued an education in nursing right out of high school. She started her 60-year career in a major burn center in Sacramento. After receiving her master's as a clinical nurse specialist, Lorna and her husband moved to Idaho. For the next 33 years, she worked at Washington State University where she launched the nurse practitioner program. Today, she functions as chairwoman of the certification board for the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

At the age where many would choose retirement, Lorna is nowhere near done helping people find peace in their turmoil. In 2015, she discovered UGM's Medical Clinics. "I wanted to be a part of the Christian environment. If you're working in a big group, you don't see changed lives. You just treat 'em and street 'em. Here, you get to help them find change."

Today, Lorna gives between one and three days of her week to guests at UGM's Shelters. She has served at all four Shelter Clinics but has settled mostly at the Crisis Shelter. "We start seeing patients at 11:00 and work until 4:00. We see as many as 18 people in a shift. Many of them have terrible stories of what has happened to them. We talk through their stories, let them tell us what's going on in their lives."

**"We talk through their stories, let them tell us what's going on in their lives."**

Lorna says the women come with all sorts of medical issues. "We have a podiatrist who volunteers, we have physical therapy, we have orthopedics, cardiology. Women are able to get the appointments they need."

Without medical volunteers, UGM Clinics would not be able to meet all the needs of our guests. Volunteers sacrifice their time, share the burdens of our guests, and create calm in the middle of their storms. Lorna's gift of medical expertise has positively impacted hundreds of women in some of the darkest days of their lives. "It's worth it," she says. "It's a real blessing to see the women change and grow. Even if you just have 3-4 hours a month, it's worth it." ●

**Share your expertise. Become a UGM Volunteer.**

[www.uniongospelmission.org/volunteer](http://www.uniongospelmission.org/volunteer)



October 3 - November 30

## Stock UGM's kitchens this fall!

Help us prepare for winter by setting up a donations barrel.



Scan here for information.



Or visit: [uniongospelmission.org/events](http://uniongospelmission.org/events)

# #WORLD HOMELESS DAY

in partnership with 

Join us on Monday, 10/10 at 10:00, to spread the message that there are people who care.

Connect with men and women on the street.  
Provide resources. Pray.

Stay in the loop here: [uniongospelmission.org/events](http://uniongospelmission.org/events)



## Share Christ this Christmas

You can be the hands and feet of Jesus to the lonely, lost and hurting.

Visit [www.uniongospelmission.org/holidays](http://www.uniongospelmission.org/holidays) for a complete list of ways to get involved this holiday season.

serve meals • bring gifts • help decorate  
create warming bags • and more



## Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, Sep. 13** - Volunteer Orientation, Coeur d'Alene, 6:00 p.m.; Men's Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, Sep. 27** - Volunteer Orientation, Coeur d'Alene, 10:30 a.m.; Crisis Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

**Monday, Oct. 10** - **World Homeless Day**, downtown Spokane, 10:00 a.m.

**Tuesday, Oct. 11** - Volunteer Orientation, Coeur d'Alene, 6:00 p.m.; Men's Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, Oct. 25** - Volunteer Orientation, Coeur d'Alene, 10:30 a.m.; Anna Ogden Hall, 6:00 p.m.

**Monday, Oct. 3** - **UGM Fall Food Drive begins!**

**Tuesday, Nov. 8** - Volunteer Orientation, Coeur d'Alene, 6:00 p.m.; Men's Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

To register for a volunteer orientation, call our offices:  
**SPOKANE** 509.535.8510 **COEUR D'ALENE** 208.665.4673



## Mission News

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