

Mission News

JUNE 2023

A pathway out of homelessness
uniongospelmission.org

Helen, UGM alumna
10 years sober from alcohol

**“I thought there was
no hope for me.”**

THE PATH TO

Lifelong Recovery

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Lifelong Recovery

When UGM Spokane expanded to Coeur d'Alene in 2012, there were no other long-term recovery programs available for women and children in North Idaho. We saw a need to serve single women and women with children who were caught in cycles of homelessness, abuse, and addiction. We recognized that, for those engaged in self-destructive patterns, it takes more than food and shelter to find lifelong freedom; it takes healing from underlying wounds, new life skills, a safe community, and new friends who will not pull you back into old behaviors.

Over the last eleven years, Rose, Jo, Helen, and many others have chosen the path to lifelong recovery at the Center for Women and Children in Coeur d'Alene.

3 YEARS CLEAN

ROSE

June 2020. Rose's youngest son purchased her a plane ticket to Spokane and encouraged her to go to the UGM Center for Women and Children. Up to this point, her life had been defined by loss, loneliness, and self-hatred. Having grown up with an absent father, when her husband became abusive to her and their three children, she stayed with him. "I wanted my kids to have their dad—even though he wasn't good to them." After the kids were grown, he passed away, followed by her mom, her brother, and then her only daughter. "It got worse after that. It was meth all day long. I didn't want to feel the loss." And then she lost her home.

In UGM LIFE Recovery, Rose was surrounded by people who loved her. Here, the Lord helped her identify the old wounds of loneliness and grief, and they began to heal. As she healed, she found she no longer wanted to numb

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her emotions. "I have a good life," she told us. "Everybody here loves me. I don't even think about drugs anymore." In June 2022, she completed Recovery and moved into an apartment of her own. Since she's retired, living on a fixed income, Rose keeps busy through volunteer service

and helping a friend from program with her childcare needs. She also launched Rose's Sewing Class, an elective class that she teaches every Monday night to incoming program participants.

In March this year, she faced an enormous challenge on her journey to lifelong recovery: she allowed some guests to move into her apartment and they immediately started smoking fentanyl and meth. Desperate not to relapse, she called her friends at UGM. Following their advice, she exited her guests and moved back in at the Center for a few weeks of free counseling and community support. "It felt like coming home."

In May, she received her three-year sobriety coin surrounded by friends who she now considers family.



5 YEARS CLEAN

JO

March 2018. Jo collapsed on a sidewalk along Sprague Ave., cold, tired, alone, and sick. She'd been living on the streets for two years and smoking heroin to hide from the memories of a hurtful past. Growing up, she'd been relentlessly bullied, and more recently, she'd endured a traumatizing assault. "I no longer felt worthy of anybody's time or attention." But that night in 2018, she came face to face with the reality that life on the streets was killing her. She came to UGM but didn't know we offered more than food and shelter.

At the UGM Crisis Shelter, Jo received hope for a new life. In a chapel service, she sensed an overwhelming reassurance from the Lord that this was where she belonged. Soon, she entered UGM Women's LIFE Recovery and transferred to the Center in Coeur d'Alene.

Through counseling, trauma therapy, and lots of practice within a loving community, Jo proved to herself that her past experiences did not define her.

Healing those wounds helped her gain freedom from addiction. "I was using drugs when I felt attacked or when I didn't feel worthy, but now I'm learning to spot those moments, identify them, and grab the gospel. God's Word says I am beautifully and wonderfully made."

In 2021, Jo completed Recovery and moved into UGM's supportive housing adjacent to

"God's Word says I am beautifully and wonderfully made."



10 YEARS SOBER

HELEN

Summer 2013. Helen put on an oversized coat, walked through the entrance of a Coeur d'Alene area supermarket, and headed for the liquor department. For several months, she'd been living on the streets, stealing vodka, and drinking from the moment she woke up to the moment she blacked out. "During that time, I lost my dignity. I thought there was no hope for me."

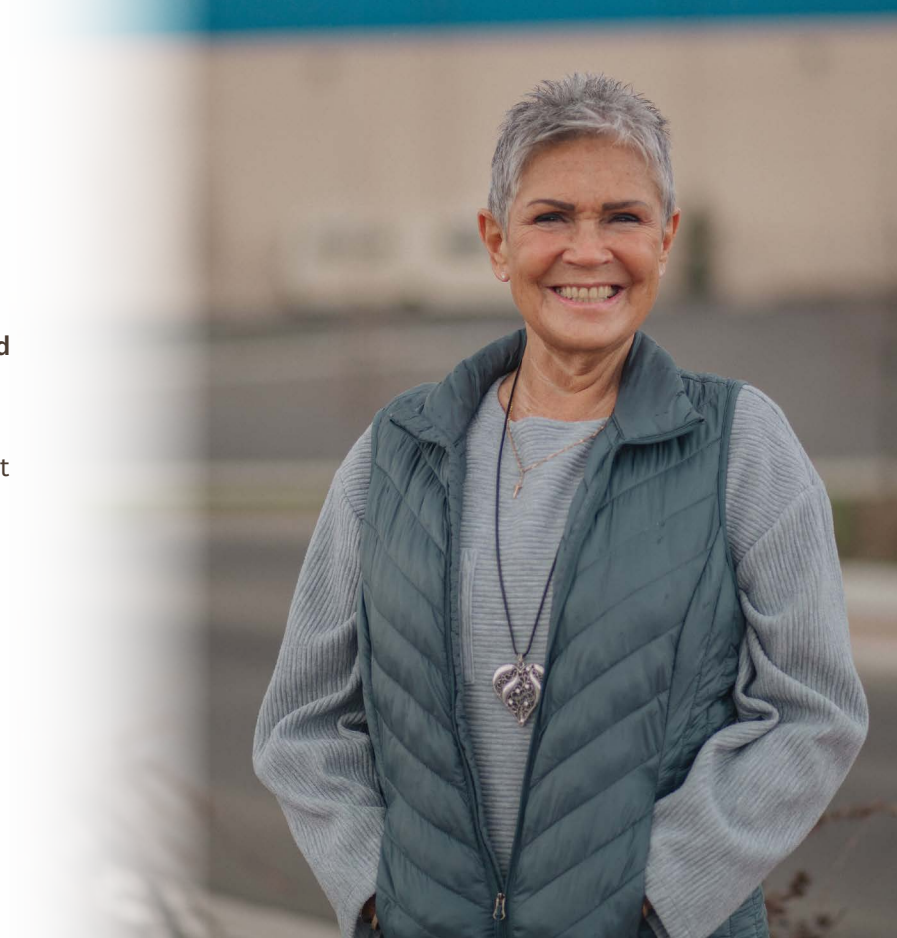
Helen's troubles started within her marriage. "I hadn't realized the background of my ex-husband. He was an alcoholic, he was into drugs. I'd never seen that." When her now ex became physically abusive, she discovered that vodka numbed the pain. Eventually, she went to jail for driving under the influence. When she got out, she chose not to return to her husband. For months, she wandered the streets.

It was her friend Kathy who insisted she get help. Helen went to the Center for Women and Children. "It took me some time to get out of my addiction. You can't snap out of it in 24 hours. But I was determined to get this negativity out of my system." Her sobriety journey was largely a journey of healing from trauma. "It took me years to get over that. I still have memories..."

Helen finished program in 2015. She went back to college, and today, she's a

the Center. She was offered a full-time job at the place that hosted her business practicum, and in March this year, she received her five-year sobriety coin surrounded by close friends.

We asked her what made ongoing recovery possible for her, especially after finishing program: "The hardest part for me was filling my free time with healthy, godly activities. My support team has been essential in that. Now I work full time, attend Aftercare, and when I'm needed, I fill in as a Resident Assistant at the Center."



Certified Medical Assistant. This year, she reached a huge milestone: ten years of sobriety.

We asked her what has made long-term recovery possible: "Keeping myself in God's word, keeping myself in my journal, and if I had any issues, I would just call my mentor and she would guide me or she would come over and

"During that time, I lost my dignity. I thought there was no hope for me."

sit with me. Also, continuing to share my testimony... people would ask me to coffee. These people all became friends of mine. I don't have any of my old friends. I surrounded myself."

People are hurt in relationships; therefore, people heal in relationships. At UGM, we don't just treat the symptoms, we provide whole-person healing within a safe, loving community. Our prayer for every individual who comes through our programs is that they would continue to surround themselves with friends who care about their wellbeing. This healing community includes you, our partners who pave a pathway to recovery through ongoing support.



Phil Altmeyer
Executive Director

A New Course for Life

"Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life." (Proverbs 4:13)

IT'S HARD TO THINK LONG TERM. IN TODAY'S CULTURE OF instant gratification, creating a long-term plan—whether that be toward financial investments, retiring debt free, or investing spiritually in the next generation—is like swimming upstream. It takes wisdom, hard work, and sacrifice. For Caryl and myself, we were challenged early on with owning our own home before retirement. If we hadn't made a plan and committed to it long-term, it would never have happened.

This principle holds true on the journey to recovery. It's easy to say you'll quit drinking or using, but without a solid plan, the chances of long-term success are slim. This is evidenced in short-term treatment programs that focus on the symptoms of addiction rather than healing the underlying causes. Nearly anyone can control their behavior for a set time, but unless there is healing at the heart level, old behaviors will resurface. For many, that means relapse.

What you're doing when you partner with Union Gospel Mission is giving people the vision, tools, and resources necessary to create a long-term plan for themselves and their children. That's our goal, and that's what I see happening every day. Through faith-based guidance, wise instruction, and the opportunity to practice new behaviors within a safe, healing community, our residents are able to set a new course...for life.

The Mission is more than emergency food and shelter. We're addressing issues of the soul, issues of the heart, and offering hope for a new life. As you read the stories in this newsletter, I want you to see how your partnership is an investment in the future. The healing that the Lord is working in hearts and minds every day will have a life-long impact on our guests, their children, and their children's children. ●



Holistic Recovery Includes Quality Healthcare

A UGM partner feature

FIONNUALA BROWN AND HER HUSBAND ARE BOTH experienced medical professionals who've committed to serving the Inland Northwest community in a variety of ways. In addition to enjoying a full-time career as a clinical assistant professor at Washington State University and serving regularly at a public health clinic, Fionnuala volunteers at the UGM Medical Clinic at Anna Ogden Hall once a week.

and dignity is being restored. Fionnuala says, "We're here because we want things to get better for them. It's building that trust, and being able to spend time with them, and meeting not just their medical needs, but also it's, 'I know you had a bad week. Do you want to talk about it?' It's holistic. You're here, and you're all in; these are your people and you're attached to them. You love them and they love you."

"Every week, my eyes open more and more to the struggles these women have had. When I try to express that to my students who are learning to be advanced practice providers, I can't even convey the situations that they've gone through."

**"We're here because
we want things to get better
for them."**

Fionnuala and many other staff and volunteers at the clinic are licensed to provide basic medical exams, prescription medications, health and fitness advice and protocols, as well as referrals to specialists as needed. As an added benefit, many area specialists choose to volunteer once a month, providing their services free of charge to our guests.

For the men and women staying at UGM, having in-house medical clinics means more than free medical care; it means receiving quality healthcare within the same safe, healing environment where trust is being established

"Many of them, I meet in Phase 1, and then seeing them complete the program more than a year later, and seeing them add to society, and watching them grow.

I think that's what my husband and I love about this program. It's structured, there's high standards, but you can see that it works. And I have grown with them, professionally and personally, spiritually. I've probably gained more from them than they have from me."

If there's one thing we hear more than anything else from our 2,000+ volunteers across the ministry, that's what it is: serving others is a blessing that comes back, every time. ●

Find new ways to get involved here >>

uniongospelmission.org/volunteer





LIFE RECOVERY Commencement 2023

Tuesday, June 27, 6:30 p.m.

Valley Assembly Church
15618 E Broadway Ave., Spokane Valley, WA

Hear the stories of the men and women who've finished UGM's 18-month Recovery program and cheer them on as they take their next steps.

www.uniongospelmission.org/commencement



Coming in 2024! Union Gospel Mission, LC Valley

We've seen change take place in hearts and lives across Spokane and Kootenai Counties, and now we're expanding to the Lewis Clark Valley. *Join us in bringing a beacon of hope to this underserved community.*

Sign up for monthly updates
or invest in the project >>

uniongospelmission.org/lcvalley



Your used vehicle has more value than you know.

When you donate a vehicle to UGM Motors, our team of ASE-certified technicians will give it focused attention. Then, proceeds will fund life-changing shelter and recovery services at Union Gospel Mission.

www.ugmmotors.org



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, June 13 - Volunteer orientation,
Coeur d'Alene, 5:30 p.m.; Men's Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, June 27 - UGM LIFE Recovery
Commencement, Valley Assembly Church, 6:30 p.m.**

Tuesday, July 11 - Volunteer orientation,
Coeur d'Alene, 5:30 p.m.; Men's Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 25 - Volunteer orientation,
Coeur d'Alene, 10:30 a.m.; Crisis Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 8 - Volunteer orientation,
Coeur d'Alene, 5:30 p.m.; Men's Shelter, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 22 - Volunteer orientation,
Coeur d'Alene, 10:30 a.m.; Anna Ogden Hall, 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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