OUR MISSION  To offer life changing hope through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to homeless men, women, and children through programs to deliver food, shelter, counseling and discipleship

Graduation Day!!
Several weeks ago, Blake came up to me after chapel one morning and said “I’m not feeling well.” Blake stood about two feet away as he described symptoms that these days make you want to back up from someone as they talk. He went to UMMC for testing and we quarantined him at a local motel for a few days, nervously awaiting the results.

Blake called me with the results one afternoon. I’ve never been so glad to hear the words “I don’t have Covid 19.” Blake has been an important part of our New Life Program kitchen crew for the last several months. If Blake was positive for Covid 19, that would have meant quarantine for just about everybody at Gateway Rescue Mission, yours truly included.

Blake graduated from our New Life Program recently, posing in his dapper graduation suit for the front cover of this publication. Some guys hang around awhile after graduation, but not Blake. He left on graduation day, heading back home where a job awaits his arrival.

We’ve had several men graduate from our program recently. Thomas applied to truck driving school. Laslo is helping out on our front desk as he weighs his options. Our graduations are in person, as virtual graduations don’t exactly work at Gateway Rescue Mission.

Like most organizations, we are trying to move ahead during these uncertain times. We’ve already reopened our thrift store and recently made the decision to reopen admission into our New Life Program. We continue to serve to-go sandwich bag meals, as we cannot accommodate social-distancing recommendations for sit-down meals in our kitchen for the public.

In the meantime, life goes on. We hold chapel services, make sandwiches, preach to and pray for people, encourage, do laundry, clean floors and bathrooms, and grow attached to the guys in our program. This virus did one thing. It cut out most of the game-players. Those who weren’t serious about changing their lives weeded themselves out when the coronavirus shutdown hit.

In rescue ministry, we come to love the people in our programs. They become the friendly faces you see each morning. We have the privilege of seeing lives change, sometimes slowly over the months while they are with us. We get to know them personally. Unfortunately, those mornings inevitably come when you hear the news that someone you had high hopes for left unexpectedly the evening before.

I’ve literally known hundreds of men over the years who have gone through our New Life Program. Some become distant memories. Others elicit fond memories. We live for those chance encounters at a store where one of “our guys” now works and greets us with a smile and hearty hello. I can’t guarantee how everyone turns out. However, I can guarantee that each one who spent some time with us heard a message of hope in Jesus Christ.

We’ve practiced the elbow bump at Gateway to replace the handshake in recent weeks. However, when I took Blake’s picture and realized that moment might be my last time to see him, I broke a couple of rules. I thought for a moment, put my phone in my pocket, shook his hand, and hugged his neck. Blake smiled and said “it’s okay Mr. Rex, I don’t have coronavirus.”

I don’t know what the future holds, but I do know this. God loves those who come to Gateway Rescue Mission with their load of problems. God also loves you in the middle of whatever you’re going through. Thank you for your support of our ministry and know that with your help, God is still changing lives at Gateway Rescue Mission.

Rex Baker
Executive Director
Gateway Rescue Mission
Ministry to those who come to Gateway Rescue Mission for a meal is challenging during these times. We continue to serve sandwich to-go bags to the general public at lunch. Sandwiches are actually more expensive for us to serve than hot meals. This is because a significant amount of the food for hot meals is donated. When we kicked our sandwich operation into high gear due to Covid 19, our food costs increased because we had to purchase lots of sandwich supplies.

We make sure each sandwich bag is packed with calories. If somebody gets a sandwich bag, we know they will not go hungry that day. We also do it in such a manner to offer a high degree of safety during this pandemic. However, we are seeking ways to return things to normal in a thoughtful manner. Our kitchen is small and our pre-Covid method worked great for feeding a maximum number of people a hot meal in a short period of time.

With the rest of the state beginning to open back up, we will be prayerfully considering how to do the same at Gateway Rescue Mission. God has graciously sustained us during these challenging times so that we are still able to feed hungry people and offer hope to those seeking life change through our New Life Program.

Allow us a moment of personal reflection. Many of you have given sacrificially to support our ministry during this time. This has not gone unnoticed. When God prompted your heart, you responded. During these difficult times in our nation, it’s good to know that God still has people who listen to His voice and respond when He calls.
To paraphrase Forrest Gump, “and just like that, spring was over!” That means summer has arrived in Mississippi. And with summer in Mississippi comes heat and sweating. That means we’ll be handing out lots of bottled water in the coming months.

For one thing, we’ll be graduating up from the small water bottles that worked well to wash down a sandwich in March to the larger bottles with extra H2O to help someone stay hydrated. Dehydration is a serious threat on the streets during the summer. We’ll do our best to make sure that the people who need a cool drink of water in Jesus’ name get one.

God has kept the lights on at Gateway Rescue Mission for more than 70 years. We’ve survived hurricanes (Katrina in 2005), near economic collapse (2008), and now He’s keeping us going through a pandemic.

Even in difficult times, life goes on. We pray that you will find a way to have a bit of fun and relaxation this summer. Jesus cautioned against worry. Instead, He told us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”

Gateway Needs

- Bottled water. With summer at hand, bottled water is one our most pressing needs. Due to Covid 19 limitations, we are not allowed to order bottled water in bulk as normal. Any help in providing bottled water to thirsty people will be greatly appreciated.

- Sandwich condiments and small-sized snacks. We’re still serving cookies, nabs, chips, etc. on a daily basis. We continue to use lots of individual mayonnaise and mustard packets.

- Sanitary hand wipes. We give these to the people who come to us for their own sanitation use. Same goes for small bottles of hand sanitizer.

- Personal hygiene supplies.

- New underwear and socks of all sizes.