

Rescue Portland

March 2011



Putting Recovery to Work

GRADs Give Recovery New Meaning

A few years ago, Erin was completely broken. She had been clean and sober for a while, but her soul was mortally wounded. She still thought like an addict, felt like an addict, and lived like an addict. She knew that any small stress in her life would tip her towards relapse. "I didn't know how to live normally. I was scared I would go backward, but I didn't know how to move forward."

A decade earlier, Erin was struggling to support her three children. When life got too difficult, she relapsed on methamphetamine. She lost her job, her apartment, and her two older sons when their father took them away...

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Taking Graduates One Step Further



I'm excited to share the stories of Erin and Larry with you this month. Not only are these two inspiring portraits of transformed lives, but they are people I consider colleagues at the Mission.

Erin and Larry are part of our GRAD Ministry. GRADs are New Life Recovery Ministry graduates who stay with the Mission for an additional year. They focus on developing life skills through class participation and life coaching, they strengthen work skills through service in our ministry, and they advance their recovery through small group sessions and counseling. In their year with us, I've seen Erin and Larry grow and develop in wonderful ways, thanks to your support.

You see, while in recovery, these two focused on their addictions, their trauma, their coping habits, their newfound hope. As GRADs, they began to look outward. Instead of focusing on themselves—which is absolutely essential in recovery—they have matured in such a way that they can look at others and offer something good. What an inspiration it is to see these two do that every day!

God revealed their incredible competency and ability after their challenging time in recovery. Because of that, they are completely different people than they were before. Today, Larry stops himself from saying something that isn't uplifting. Erin's eyes flicker to life when she talks about her future career plans. Their willingness to live their lives with and in front of us at the Mission is nothing but inspiration to the rest of the volunteers and staff here. Their lives have been recovered, and it's evident in everything they do.

Friends, your generous gifts make the GRAD Ministry possible. Your support has already helped give 16 men and women valuable work experience and immeasurable confidence in their skills and abilities. What's more, future GRADs will look to Larry and Erin's lives as a reminder of the incredible love of Christ that has the power to transform lives through grace.

Please read through these two stories with great anticipation—you'll see a beloved son and daughter who have found their way back home.

Rejoicing with you,

Eric Bauer, Executive Director



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Mission Needs

We need socks! Socks wear out quickly and are a constant need for men and women on the streets.

We also need:

- Life Recovery Bibles (NLT)
- Hooded sweatshirts
- Sleeping bags
- Backpacks
- Deodorant (spray or solid)
- Disposable razors
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Travel-size toiletries
- New undergarments
- Men's jeans
- Twin blankets
- Yard equipment: mowers, weed-eaters, leaf blowers
- Digital video recorders for our Learning Centers

Your donations of practical items make relationships possible! Please bring donations to the Burnside Shelter at **111 W. Burnside, Portland**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Short-term street parking is usually available at our front door.

GRAD Ministry: Growth • Recognition • Application • Determination

Now in its second year, Portland Rescue Mission's GRAD Ministry is a year-long job training program for graduates of New Life Recovery Ministry. GRADs work at a Ministry site and gain valuable experience while they are stretched vocationally, spiritually and relationally. To get involved with our GRAD Ministry, you can pray, volunteer as a mentor, offer internships at your place of employment, or give financial support. Contact Tom Lister at TomL@PDXMission.org or 503-906-7670 for info.

Putting Recovery to Work CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

After that, Erin had to make ends meet for her and her daughter, Kyla. Erin would “hustle, steal, rob, whatever I had to do.” That lifestyle barely paid the bills, and it molded Kyla into a fearful, insecure child. After years of this perpetual brokenness, Erin and Kyla moved to a shelter—and just in time.

Just after they arrived, Erin was shocked to learn that she was pregnant—seven months pregnant. Because she’d been on drugs for years, her body didn’t show any normal signs. Eight pounds and 11 miraculous ounces later, healthy baby Nevaeh was born. This child had been spared from the effects of Erin’s drug use.

shadows of her siblings, escaping her abusive step-father, and believing God was scary and legalistic.

“I just assumed I was going to hell. I walked in that identity to the best of my ability.”

Erin’s childhood years had shaped her entire life. From the very beginning, she’d counted herself as second place, and she didn’t know that she was a loved and cherished child of God. Drugs eased that pain. At Shepherd’s Door, with trusting counselors and lots of prayer, Erin painfully confronted those memories.



Erin’s growth in New Life Recovery Ministry helped her succeed in her job training at the Shepherd’s Door Children’s Center, where she works alongside her daughters.

But the story doesn’t end there. After Erin graduated from New Life Recovery Ministry in March 2010, she began serving as a Children’s Center Assistant GRAD, working with infants, toddlers and pre-K children at Shepherd’s Door. She’s helped with billing and staffing, and she continues to see her daughters grow in this nurturing environment every day.

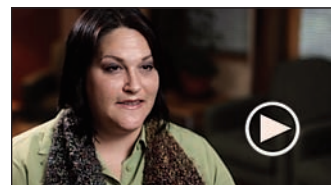
The work has stretched her in completely new ways. “When I was a resident, I had to focus on myself. Now I get to serve others.” Staff and volunteers see Erin’s progress every day at Shepherd’s Door, and she constantly reminds them of God’s grace and redemption.

That’s when Erin showed up at Shepherd’s Door, our women and children’s ministry center, and made an earnest plea. She admitted she didn’t deserve assistance from anyone—she could never earn back the time she’d lost in addiction. But Erin had a baby and a 9-year-old who needed her. She wanted to live. And she needed more than sobriety. She came to us looking for hope.

That first day, Erin walked down the hall at Shepherd’s Door to a room with two beds and a crib, and she knew she was home. Kyla says, “My mom started to change and people here were being nice to us.” Kyla witnessed Erin’s healing from years of childhood trauma and abuse, and she got her own childhood back. Through diligent counseling, Erin was able to talk about growing up in the

Erin hopes to start work soon in case management for teens with addictions. She has an apartment for her family where, as Kyla puts it, “Mommy cooks really good.” Aside from feeding her family, Erin cherishes her daughters’ childhoods and seeks the Lord’s direction for their lives.

The brand-new Erin, confident Kyla and energetic Nevaeh are a strong little family. They rely on God as they lean on one another, and they look forward to the promises He fulfills, each and every day.



▶ Your support helps moms like Erin find healing. Hear more of her story online at www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Erin

Growing Beyond Graduation

On Larry's tenth birthday, he had his first taste of alcohol. He was immediately hooked—not just because he thought drinking was cool, but because he felt something he'd never experienced before. "I wasn't poor, ugly, skinny, second-class white trash. I was the opposite."

Alcohol freed Larry from his difficult childhood. He was part of a big family with little money. He and his siblings worked the land on their grandfather's farm year-round. Larry had a birth defect which made him a frail child. He and the other middle kids—all from their mother's second of three marriages—often felt alienated by their other siblings and learned to stick up for themselves.

So even as a kid, life for Larry was pretty tough. That first drink offered him a break. "At 10 years old, to feel inadequate and find something that makes you feel better is very dangerous." Over the next 30 years, Larry chased that feeling from state to state, job to job. He begged, borrowed, stole and became a prostitute. He used almost anything to get high—cheap beer, mouthwash, cough syrup, cooking fuel and shoe polish.

Three years ago, sick with bronchitis and shaking from meds, Larry came to Portland Rescue Mission on a cold, wet night in February. After drying off and getting a warm meal, he was ready to face his addiction. In New Life Recovery Ministry, he got help with the childhood trauma that had driven him to addiction and a life of confusion.

For 30 years, Larry thought alcohol made him a better version of himself. At the Mission, he began to understand why alcohol didn't make life better—it just numbed him to its pain. For the first time, he felt safe enough to live in sobriety and address his past. Through God's grace, he realized that he didn't have to avoid his past at all. "All things are passed away," Larry reflects. "I am a new man in Christ."

Soon after Larry graduated from New Life Recovery Ministry, he learned about an opportunity to take his recovery a step further. He applied to be a GRAD



Larry is earning his Commercial Driver's License as a GRAD at the Mission's warehouse.

at the Mission's warehouse and began working 40 hours a week, developing valuable job skills driving trucks, taking inventory and being accountable.

But for Larry, the GRAD job training isn't just work. It's an opportunity for growth.

"Having dealt with my own issues, I was able to interact with others in a Christ-like manner. If I hadn't gone through recovery, I couldn't have done that."

Whether instructing 10 groups of volunteers in a week or meeting donors for the first time, Larry's time in recovery gave him the confidence and sensitivity to do his job well.

In his three years at the Mission, Larry has discovered who God created him to be from the very beginning. He doesn't define himself by what he is not. He doesn't seek comfort in things that only bring temporary relief. Today, Larry lives his life boldly and confidently, trusting God to bring all things to completion, one step at a time.

 Your gift gives people like Larry a new life. Go online to see how. www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Larry

GIVE SOMETHING MORE

One meal led Larry to total life recovery! Your gift of a meal today will offer that same hope to others.