

# Rescue Portland

July 2011



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## In Search of an Answer

Michael's Question  
Led Him to True Recovery

Michael showed up at Portland Rescue Mission a year ago. He'd relapsed on an alcohol binge after nearly four years of sobriety. When he got to our doors, he'd traveled 2,000 miles, slept in a bus and on the streets, and lost connection with his family, all to find the answer to one burning question.

So when he got to the Mission—tired, hungry and helpless—he asked, “Why do I keep drinking?” A common question, but from an uncommon addict.

*CONTINUES INSIDE*

# Recovery Begins with a Choice



It's finally summer in Portland! The sun is sticking around, the rain is taking a break and the people of the city are experiencing the outdoors like in no other time of year.

But summer brings new challenges to the Mission. With more people on the streets, drug use increases. On the hottest days, the sun can be as oppressive as winter's cold. And our friends on the street still face the difficult task of survival, whatever it takes.

At the Mission this summer, we offer compassionate care—toiletries and clothes, referrals to other agencies, our 12- to 18-month New Life Recovery Ministry—to help men and women survive and recover. We daily share God's love and encourage life transformation, but ultimately, the choice of recovery is up to them.

We can have all the resources in the world, but a homeless woman must choose to take advantage of them. We may employ the best drug and alcohol counselors available, but a hurting man must willfully engage in that process. We will faithfully guide our guests toward those positive choices, but the decision to change falls on the individual.

Michael made a choice last spring to get on a bus and move to Portland, with hardly a dime in his pocket. Cecilia made a choice to live in a place where a language barrier created daunting obstacles. For each of these residents and many others like them, tough choices led to total life recovery. It's brave, hopeful choices like theirs that we pray for each day at the Mission. And we know that it's the love of God and grace of Christ that leads to these choices.

Thank you for your prayers and support for Portland Rescue Mission this summer. You help bring more than sunshine to hundreds of hurting people in Portland. You offer them hope and new life!

Serving with you,

Eric Bauer, Executive Director



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## Mission Needs

Undergarments are a year-round need, and this summer is no exception! Thanks so much for your donations!

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.

## Car Sales and Donations, Now on the West Side!



Your car donation to Portland Rescue Mission helps provide meals and shelter to hundreds of hurting and homeless men, women and children. Enjoy a tax deduction, and help someone in need! And now that we're in Beaverton, we've expanded our inventory for re-sale, so you've got double the reason to visit us. Come by today! [www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Car](http://www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Car)

**West Side:** 8555 SW Canyon Road • Beaverton, OR 97225 • 503-345-9811 • Tues.–Fri. 9:30–6:00, Sat. 9:00–5:00

**East Side:** 8301 NE Halsey Street • Portland, OR 97220 • 503-906-7673 • Mon.–Fri. 9:30–6:00, Sat. 9:00–5:00

# In Search of an Answer

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

Decades ago, Michael worked as a psychiatric technician in a locked mental facility in California. He cared for severely hurting people with demanding needs. For years, he experienced immense stress. Alcohol eased the tension and made the daily grind more bearable.

Years later, Michael turned to alcohol to cope with anxiety when he took care of his father, sick with cancer. After his father died, Michael moved in to take care of his mother. They shared happy memories together. “The big outing for us was grocery shopping.” He laughs, “I’d push her in her wheelchair, and she’d push the cart. We were like a train, and it’d take us three hours to go through the store.”

Michael and his mother eventually moved to Texas to be closer to his sister. As his mother’s health deteriorated, Michael fell deeper into his addiction. He drank alone each night just to make it to the next day.

When Michael’s mother passed away, he was devastated. He had no purpose in life and was completely alone. “I had been a care-giver for so long, but I didn’t have anyone left to care for.” Over the next few years, he was in and out of sobriety, but trauma always pushed him back to his addiction.

When he lost his job last year, Michael relapsed again. “I went out and got drunk, and I thought to myself, ‘What are you doing?’” This time, he made the desperate choice to come to Portland, close to his birthplace. He had that one crucial question, and his life depended on the answer.

If half the battle to find an answer is in asking the right question, then Michael was well on his way toward recovery when he came to our doors. He asked *why* he drank, not just *how* to stop drinking. He knew his addiction had deep roots, so he started digging them up.

When Michael entered the Mission’s New Life Recovery Ministry, he learned that everything of value in his life had been based on his ability to care for others. He’d tended psychiatric patients, his sick father and his dying mother. Others had affirmed his abilities, and Michael truly found joy in easing people’s pain. His nurturing nature was a gift from God, but he had believed that gift was the sole source of his value as a person.

Once his care-giver identity was taken away, Michael had nothing left to offer. He felt alone, useless and



**A nurturer at heart, Michael tends plants at Next Step. “I love watching them grow and seeing what they’ll do next.”**

horribly afraid. Alcohol, his closest companion, erased those negative feelings. It numbed him to reality.

After one year in recovery, Michael discovered truths that point him to his real identity.

**“I used to believe that people would only like me if I took care of them,” he reflects. “Now I know that my true worth is as a child of God. My brothers here tell me that I am worth knowing. I feel welcome here. I feel loved.”**

Michael took a step back from solving other people’s problems. He faced the daunting reality that he wasn’t responsible for everyone else’s happiness. He made room for recovery staff, volunteers and other residents to reach out to him in love and understanding. And he found healing. “I let Jesus in my life again. I had to surrender what was mine and let Him take over. I don’t live alone anymore—Jesus lives in me.”



Scan with RedLaser app or other QR code reader.

 Michael discovered more truths in recovery. Hear more online at [www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Michael](http://www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Michael)

# Speaking for Herself

## Cecilia Asked for Help in a Time of Great Need

On a cold, rainy morning, Cecilia moved into Shepherd's Door, the women and children's ministry center of Portland Rescue Mission. She was relieved—she'd spent too many nights in anguish, praying for God to help her. She had worried about a place to live and how she would provide for her 9-year-old daughter, Adriana. By coming to the Mission, she'd gotten everything she'd hoped for. Total life recovery was within her grasp.

But on that first day, alone in her room, Cecilia was terrified. She could barely speak English, which only added to her fear and isolation. Cecilia immigrated to America more than 10 years ago. For that entire decade, she never lived in one place for more than a year's time. She lived at her mom's house, had an apartment with a friend, and even owned a trailer that she parked in a friend's backyard. "In the trailer, there were six of us and a dog. It was so crowded—we used a bed for our dinner table."

Then trauma struck—trauma that was worse than the toll of moving so frequently. While living at her uncle's house, Cecilia was shocked to discover that he had abused Adriana. Wounded and desperate to protect her child, she left. She couldn't keep a job or afford rent, so she couch-hopped, always just a step away from losing Adriana and living on the streets. She found shelter for a while with her sister's family, but the house was filled with alcohol, drugs and violence. Cecilia had to escape.

Despite the immense language barrier, Cecilia courageously called Shepherd's Door for help. In the warm and welcoming environment of New Life Recovery Ministry, she began to open up.

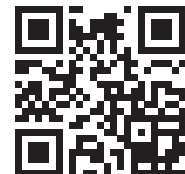
**"The first time I tried to speak English, I felt really insecure and I thought, 'I can't do that.' But when God works inside you, you can do it. God's helped me through every step."**

Cecilia faced obstacles of shame and insecurity from her past—her unrealistic pursuit of an ideal marriage, her negative thoughts about her abilities, and her unhealthy dependence on harmful relationships. As she confronted these issues, moving through trauma toward hope, she became more comfortable communicating with others. "Once I learned to trust God first, I could trust other people, too."



*Cecilia's improved English skills helped her earn a GRAD position in the Shepherd's Door kitchen, where she'll receive job-training for a full year.*

What gives Cecilia her strength today? "Supe que me amavas," she smiles. "It's a song that means, 'I have known that you love me.'" Cecilia has a deep understanding that God has been by her side, guiding her steps her entire life. Even in her struggles, even when she stepped out in utter desperation to find help, He has loved her. He brought her to a place of healing, and He continues to guide her toward hope for the future.



Scan with  
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▶ Cecilia's future is brighter than ever before. Watch it all unfold at [www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Cecilia](http://www.PortlandRescueMission.org/Cecilia)

**GIVE SOMETHING MORE**

Women and children are the fastest growing segment of homelessness. Your support provides a refuge of safety and healing for women like Cecilia. Thank you!