

CONNECT



Darkness to LIGHT



SOMETIMES THE DARKNESS can be so dark that it feels like it will just swallow up everything, like a black hole of despair.

For Kevin, it was a suppressed memory from his youth that began to pull him into that dark place ... a memory of abuse at the hands of a trusted authority figure.

"It was one of the catalysts that made me want to hide," he recalls. "Then the pressure to talk about it and relive it was too much stress for me, and I escaped by drinking."

This emotional trauma was the beginning of a series of hard knocks — some self-inflicted — and Kevin responded by drinking more and more. "Then my wife told me she wanted a divorce, and I REALLY started to drink. I got to the place I was drinking a half gallon of gin every other day.

"She left me, moved away, and I laid on the couch and collected unemployment and drank until I fell asleep or passed out," he admits. "I'd leave the house to buy food and alcohol. Sometimes I wouldn't remember how I got home, and I'd check my truck to see if there were any new dents.

"My kids and grandkids began to stay away because they never knew what to expect from me anymore.

"Then one night about 4 a.m., I sent my youngest son a text and told him I had to set the phone on the floor because I was too drunk to see what I was typing."

BUT THEN, THE LIGHT can begin to shine unexpectedly, piercing the darkest place.

A few hours after that text, Kevin's son arrived at his house. "Dad," he said, "you need help. If you want, I have a place for you to go."

After his son left, Kevin knew he had hit bottom. "I got off the couch and got on my knees. I prayed, 'I don't know what to do, but I don't want to be like this anymore. Please help me, Lord!'"

His son had been coming to Kansas City Rescue Mission with his church to volunteer and wanted Kevin to come here for help. And soon, that's exactly what Kevin did.

As he walked up the ramp to KCRM's door for the first time, Kevin decided he would trust God's plan. He immersed himself in the Mission's recovery program and through classes, counseling and intensive Bible study, the Light broke through.

Today, instead of being on a couch, Kevin is on the National Honor Society as he studies in an accelerated certification program. He's very involved in a local church that has become, he says, his family.

"Every time I go to church, I make it my goal to meet someone new and let them know they matter," he says.

"Since I came to KCRM, I have hope for my future and I want others to know they can have hope, too."



The *Light*
shines in the
darkness,
and the
darkness
can never
extinguish it.

John 1:5, NLT

A KCRM Christmas

Help Make this Christmas Meaningful

Years ago, a homeless man traveling by boxcar on Christmas Eve looked out at the Christmas lights as the train passed through a small town and remembered his own family Christmases as a child. The memories motivated him to jump off the train in the next town and locate a rescue mission like KCRM where he could clean up and make a call to his mother.

At KCRM, we recognize we cannot replace the families of the homeless men and women who stay with us. But we can offer them a taste of home through a carefully prepared holiday meal, gifts chosen with love and the message of Christ's birth.

This is your chance, too, to bring some homespun memories to a homeless man or woman. After reading about the opportunities in this section, contact Volunteer Coordinator Kristen Ray at kray@kcrm.org or 816-421-7643 to discuss how you'd like to get involved.



Merry Christmas

Rev. Joe Colaizzi, pictured here with his wife, Marilyn, wrote an original poem this Christmas as a gift of gratitude to all those who help support KCRM.

Just Thinkin'

Imagine there's no Christmas! No Christ to give us hope!
No trees or gifts beneath them, just 'self' within our scope
No lights or decorations ... or carols we can sing
No Santa in his sleigh that night, no bells for him to ring

Imagine there's no Christmas, just darkness all around
No sparkle in the children's eyes, no Santa coming down
No Baby in the manger scene, or future hopes in Him
No Savior to forgive us for each and every sin

Imagine there's no Christmas, or something to believe
Like – after this there's more to life than ever we'll conceive
No flash of hope within our hearts or Godly peace to keep
Our fears at bay, our hopes alive, while in our beds we sleep

Imagine there's no Christmas ... I can't!



Gifts for Guests and Residents

Take note: Gifts given over and above our Christmas needs will be used throughout the year. Please bring your donations by December 15.

Women's Center gift packages

- Bathrobe
- Slippers
- **Jesus Calling** devotional
- \$25 Wal-mart gift card
- Personalized tote bag

Men's Center shelter guest gift packages

- Backpack
- Rain poncho
- Composition notebook and pen
- Hoodie
- \$5 McDonalds card
- New Testament
- Ski gloves (water resistant) and hat
- Thermal socks and underwear
- Pocket planner
- Antiperspirant

Men's Center C-COR resident gift packages

- **Experiencing God** devotional or
- **My Utmost for His Highest** devotional
- Zip-up hoodie
- \$25 Wal-mart gift card
- Bound journal and pen
- Reading glasses

Gifts that Give Year-round

These are gifts that will remain KCRM property so they can be enjoyed by all of our homeless guests and residents! Contact Julie Larocco, 816-421-7643 or jlarocco@kcrm.org to learn more.

Women's Center:

- 20 Microsoft Surface Tablets (for classwork)
- Christian DVDs and CDs in blue-ray
- Water bottles
- Cash gifts for purchase of new dishes
- MP3 players (residents will check out and return)
- Gift cards for MP3 downloads

Men's Center

- New or used winter coats
- New packaged underwear and socks
- Large jugs of Lysol and hand sanitizer
- Cash gifts for purchase of new dishes



Men's Center clients line up each Christmas Eve to be blessed with gifts both practical and fun.

A Message from Jessica

WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, my probation officer invited me to enter a poetry contest. I wrote this poem and it took second place in Washington, D.C.! Now I want to share it with the people who support Kansas City Rescue Mission.

Trapped in a world filled with hate
Nowhere to go, nowhere to escape.
But it seems to me the more I try
To run or try to escape I get held back
Like a leaf under a rake
Or a gate.

So I tilt my head up to the sky
Waiting to see if God will reply.
Soon tears drip from my eyes
Then I soon realize
I'm not trapped in a world filled with hate.
It's just all the bad things I need to escape!



TODAY, I AM 23 and a resident this Christmas at the KCRM Women's Center, where I'm learning to overcome my addiction to meth and learning how to love myself. I want to return to my family in Tennessee and be dependent on myself and God. Thanks for giving me that chance!

—Jessica

Overheard...

- **In a letter from a former KCRM Men's Center client who now has a great job and apartment of his own:** Thank you for everyone's kindness, guidance, prayers and support in my quest to end my homelessness and get back on my feet. KCRM has been instrumental in so many ways. Through this relationship, I found a church that means the world to me. D.P.
- **On our Facebook page during our TP Tower Challenge Rally:** Bethlehem Lutheran has brought in 1,632 rolls and is building up and up and ... Who can top this!?
- **During a call to KCRM's 2014 Thanksgiving dinner hotline:** Can I order my turkey dinner today? I get one every year ... somebody there is a GOOD cook. Thank you so much!
- **From a donor's note:** Two weeks ago a total stranger paid for my purchase at QuikTrip. It wasn't much, and I certainly didn't need his money but the gesture and selfless nature of his actions has had a substantial effect on me. I don't want that act of kindness to stop with me so my check is enclosed to help you.

The **CONNECT** newsletter is a publication of KCRM

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TP Tower Challenge 2014

Our winners were flush with pride!

KCRM'S FIRST ANNUAL TP CHALLENGE RALLY was a hit during our *First Fridays Works in Progress Art Show*, October 3. With help from at least a dozen participants, KCRM came within a 1,000 rolls of raising its goal of 12,500 rolls of toilet paper — a value of around \$6,000!

Our thanks to the participating artists, TP contestants, musicians and volunteers for making this a memorable event! For more information about our 2015 competition and art show, contact Julie Larocco at 816-421-7643 or jlarocco@kcrm.org.

Great Moments in TP Tower History!



Left: Prairie Baptist Church youth were determined to win Highest TP Tower!

Top right: Most TP Collected trophy is presented to First Church of the Nazarene by Rev. Joe Colaizzi!

Lower right: Most Creative TP Sculpture went to the women of First Baptist Church of Odessa.



Before You Know It!

2014 IS ALMOST A MEMORY. Don't miss your chance to make a tax-deductible year-end gift to KCRM that will help the poor and homeless. Questions? Contact Julie Larocco at 816-421-7643 or jlarocco@kcrm.org.

