

CONNECT

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“I’m Just **Thankful!**”

“I’m **nobody special,**” Gerald insists, “but I know what God has done for me. I want to tell you about my job.”

His smile is so big that it squints his eyes and opens his heart. “I had just been on my new job a few days when they said, ‘Gerald, we’re gonna have to let you go.’” Gerald loved his new job as a janitor for the Jackson County Medical Examiner’s office and was looking forward to proving his value to them. But if they couldn’t use him, Gerald was determined not to complain, but to be thankful and kind.

“I said, ‘I appreciate the opportunity you gave me, and it’s been a pleasure meeting you.’”

Then he went home and prayed, “God, I could have really used that job.”

His smile widens even more, now. “Guess what?” he says, “Four days later they called and asked me to come back to work! ‘Praise the Lord!’ I said. I work as hard as I can every day. This is the best job I’ve ever had!”

A graduate of KCRM’s Christian Community of Recovery, Gerald now works at two facilities for the county. “They told me I was doing such a good job they wanted me to take on another building! They’ve given me my own office! Can you believe it? The chief medical examiner bakes me cookies sometimes. She gives me a hug and tells me I’m part of their family now.

“Look at my car! See that tag hanging there? My car is an official car for the medical examiner’s office, and I own it!”

Gerald leans forward to emphasize his next words. “God has done this, but I also owe it all to KCRM. They took me in and showed me that I could live clean and sober. I was sad and

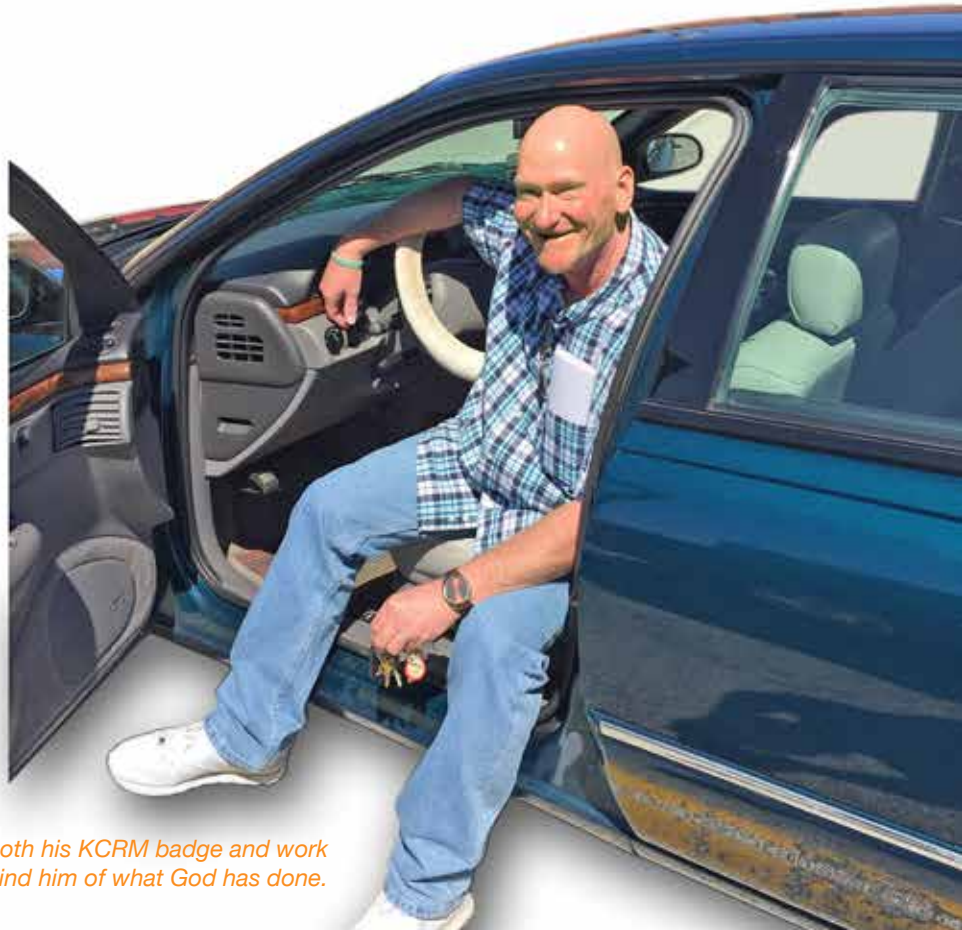
alone, but the people here believed in me and gave me the tools to live clean and to start over.

“I had nothing when I came to KCRM,” he recalls, “but today I have my own apartment, my own car, I have two jobs and some money in my pocket so I can buy somebody a hamburger if they are hungry.

“There is a sign on the door of the Mission,” Gerald continues. “It says **There is Hope for All Who Enter Here.** And it’s true! I was in bondage to crack cocaine until I came here but, like my favorite Bible verse says in Jeremiah 29, now I have a future and a hope!”

Gerald is happy, blessed and full of gratitude. “Martin Luther King, Jr. said, ‘If you’re a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper you can be. And all the angels in heaven will say you were the best street sweeper there was.’ Well, I’m a janitor, and I love it! The job doesn’t shame the man, the man shames the job.”

Gerald’s eyes are suddenly rimmed with tears. “I’m just thankful.”



Gerald keeps his car spotless and keeps both his KCRM badge and work tag hanging from the mirror to remind him of what God has done.

Share Your Gratitude with Your *Neighbors* in Need

9-Day Celebration of Thanks



NOVEMBER 20 AND 21, KCRM and its volunteers will team up with local churches to assemble and deliver 200 food boxes to struggling families living in poverty. Each box contains the ingredients for an abundant Thanksgiving dinner with plenty of leftovers.

Then, Thanksgiving morning, KCRM volunteers will deliver 500 piping-hot Thanksgiving dinners to the homes of elderly, disabled and often isolated individuals who would otherwise go without. With each box and meal, we'll include handmade cards that share a message about the love of God.

NOVEMBER 21-29, nine churches and other groups will provide special dinners at the KCRM Men's Center during our nine-day *Celebration of Thanks!* Then on Thanksgiving Day, KCRM is planning to serve a traditional Thanksgiving feast at lunch and dinner. Can you help provide food for our Thanksgiving Day meals and help fill our pantry shelves for the winter months ahead?

Operation Family Feast



Be a KCRM Thanksgiving Partner!

Contact Volunteer Coordinator Kristen Ray at (816) 421-7643 or kray@kcrm.org for information about the opportunities below. Call soon — these positions fill very fast!

- Adopt-a-Box! Provide one or more of 200 food boxes for *Operation Family Feast*. Call for a list of food items or sponsor one or more boxes for \$51.
- Thanksgiving morning, help deliver meals to hundreds of low-income homes around Kansas City. (Call for special requirements and availability.)
- Create handmade Thanksgiving cards with your little ones. We'll include them in each box and meal we deliver. We need 500 altogether! Call Kristen for a digital card to print and decorate.



Our Thanksgiving Food List

Your donations of the following foods will help fill 200 boxes and provide food for struggling families this Thanksgiving season. Bring items to **1520 Cherry Street, KCMO**. Make sure to note your donation is for "Thanksgiving." **Thank you!**

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 200 | Turkeys and/or hams | 200 | Large canned yams or sweet potatoes |
| 200 | Stove Top-type stuffing mix | 200 | 1-lb. brown sugar |
| 200 | Boxed instant potatoes | 200 | 1-lb. butter or margarine in tubs |
| 200 | Packaged gravy mix | 200 | Sets picnic salt and pepper |
| 200 | 15-ounce canned corn | 200 | Pumpkin pies |
| 200 | 15-ounce canned green beans | | |
| 200 | 15-ounce canned fruit | | |
| 200 | 15-ounce canned cranberry sauce | | |

Other Thanksgiving needs for KCRM's kitchens

- 80 Turkeys and/or hams
- 50 #10 cans corn
- 50 #10 cans green beans
- 50 #10 cans sweet potatoes
- 60 Lb. russet potatoes
- 50 Lb. butter
- 100 Packages brown and serve rolls
- 75 Pumpkin or fruit pies



Gratitude Gives Back — by Rev. Joe Colaizzi

Daniel and Doug were waiting to talk to me after the Friday morning class I teach at the KCRM Men's Center: "Joe, we're going on a mission trip!" I was pleased but surprised. A mission trip is a huge investment. "Where are you going?" I asked.

The idea of men — recently homeless and floundering in the cycle of addiction — going on a trip to offer mercy and help to others in need is exciting! After Hurricane Katrina I took a group of our Men's Center residents to New Orleans to help with clean up; it was a powerful and healing time for all of us.

Daniel's and Doug's response left me smiling but speechless. "We're going up to Omaha to serve at a homeless shelter!" And then it got even better. It turns out that several men living at our Men's Center had taken up a collection to pay for Daniel and Doug to have this ministry opportunity. Isn't that wonderful?

Gratitude — real gratitude — gives back. I think that's why the Thanksgiving season is such a meaningful time to so many of the people who support KCRM. Thankful hearts just want to pass it on. As Jesus said, "Freely you have received; freely give."





Good Night, Sleep Tight

KCRM has been in a battle with bugs since our founding in 1950! Thankfully, we've won every battle so far. Because we use only antimicrobial mattresses and pillows, we avoid the problem of bedbugs right from the start! Now we need your help to rebuild our supply of antimicrobial pillows — a project that's NOT in our budget for this year!

Would you consider donating a good night's sleep to one or more of our weary homeless guests? Each antimicrobial pillow costs \$10; our goal is to raise \$1,250 for 125 pillows! If you can help, please add a note on the response slip included with your newsletter or give online at kcrm.org and designate "pillows" in the box marked "other." Thanks!

Lydia's Market: A Day of Shopping to Benefit KCRM and ITW Ministries

KCRM board member Eileen Epps-Hamilton founded In The Word Ministries to help "Equip Women to Live Victoriously." Thursday, October 8, 5-8 p.m., ITW Ministries will host Lydia's Market at Painted Hills Golf Club, 7101 Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, Kansas, to benefit KCRM and ITW Ministries. The event features 10-plus "Lydia" entrepreneurs, displaying and selling their wares, including the KCRM Women's Center residents! **And just think: It's right before Christmas!** Tickets are \$25 and are very limited; visit itwministries.org and use the contact form to order tickets or to learn more.



How do you want to end 2015?

Each year at tax time, many KCRM friends sit with their tax preparers nervously wondering how much money they are about to hand over to Uncle Sam. I am one of them! A few Aprils ago, as I grumpily wrote out a check, it hit me: I could have given this money to KCRM instead of the government!

If you feel the way I do, now's the time to think about making a tax-deductible, year-end gift that blesses the homeless men and women who come to KCRM for relief, hope and transformation. I welcome you to contact me at jlarocco@kcrm.org or (816) 421-7643 to talk about KCRM projects and activities you might like to fund **BEFORE** December 31, 2015!



Julie Larocco, development officer

The **CONNECT** newsletter is a publication of **KCRM**
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Because You Gave

From July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, you provided thousands of meals and nights of shelter along with loving care to homeless men and women in Kansas City. You are part of something big!

Meals served.....	82,208
Nights of shelter	32,964
Average stay	23 days
Veterans housed	121
Articles of clothing	13,692
Health clinic visits.....	1,830
Case management visits	3,115
Chaplaincy counseling visits	1,978
Recovery residents.....	98
Recovery graduates	25