

# CONNECT

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## MAMA PRAYED

*"It was two o'clock in the morning and the Lord woke my mom up and told her to start praying for me," Sarah remembers.*

At 86 years old, it wasn't an easy thing to do, but Mama got out of bed and came to her prayer chair next to the window in the little prayer room at the retirement center where she's lived for almost 10 years. And she did what she's done for more hours than anyone can imagine: Mama prayed for Sarah.

"At that very moment, I was on the street just down the block from my mom's building," Sarah says, "and some teenagers pulled up and asked me if I knew where they could get some drugs. 'Sure, I can hook you up,' I told them and they said for me to get in the car.

"I had no idea what would happen next. They pulled around the corner and parked, and suddenly a gun was pointed in my face. 'Please don't kill me!' I said."

Sarah was raised in church. Mama taught the kids to sing together and Daddy preached. Sarah was

her Daddy's girl and when he died something in her died, too.

She was only 17 but anger and resentment began to build up in Sarah's heart. Years later, her son passed away. "It was like reliving my father's death all over again," she says. Anger took over. "I was mad at God and I began living my life on the street, addicted to heroin and weed."

From six floors above, Sarah's mom looks out onto the street through the window as she prays. She has witnessed many things on that street ... and at times she has even watched her daughter living out a life of angry self-destruction.

But Mama kept praying.

As Sarah stared at the muzzle of the gun, a prayer escaped her lips, "My God!" Her words were few, but they joined with

*Continued on page two...*



# STILL LEARNING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

by Rev. Joe Colaizzi, executive director

**A lot has changed** at KCRM since this photo was snapped in the mid-1950s. The clients we served then were usually white and always men. Most had a problem with alcohol while others were simply “down on their luck” as they used to say.

If you look closely, you’ll see a sign above the pulpit reading “How Long Since You Wrote to Mother?” That was a major recovery strategy back then, nudging men to write a note home to Mom and reminding them of the values with which they’d been brought up. Preaching was almost exclusively how we encouraged men to give up the bottle and get back on the straight and narrow.

Today, sharing the Gospel continues to be KCRM’s priority. Our vision is that “People served by KCRM are able to live in community in balanced and interdependent lives with Christ.” But both the people we serve and the methods we use have changed as the problems our clients present become more and more complex. That means that, though we’ve learned a lot in the past 66 years, we still have a lot to learn!

The men and women we serve today are a beautiful mix of culture, ethnicity, language and background. No longer only a chapel service, meal and bed, the ministry of KCRM includes clinical counseling and case management, health services, life-skills training, educational opportunities, Bible training, resident recovery programs, support groups and vibrant worship — all in addition to the appetizing meals and safe comfortable beds we’ve always provided.

## SARAH’S STORY – *continued from cover*

the simultaneous prayer from her mom, only a few blocks away.

Suddenly, her assailants pushed her from the car and told her to walk away. She turned and two gunshots echoed into the air above her head. By the time it was over, Sarah had been hit in the face with the gun and had her money stolen, but she was alive.

“The devil is trying to kill you,” her mom said the next day.

Sarah replied, “I know, Mama.”

Not long after that life-and-death moment, Sarah recognized it was time to let go of the anger and set a new course. “I was put in jail for a month, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me,” Sarah says.

“A counselor at the jail suggested I come to KCRM, but I didn’t want to go to a shelter. I imagined it as dark and dirty, but she convinced me to visit.

“I walked in and saw the beautiful colors — there was a lime green wall, my favorite color! — and how clean it was, and I knew this place was for me! When I met the staff and the ladies, and I saw how kind and loving they were, I thought, ‘I can do this!’ Joy came over me. There is Jesus in the building! I’ve been able to deal with my anger and hurt here and get clean.”

It’s a new beginning for Sarah and opportunities are opening for her. KCRM is helping her go to school this summer to begin studies to be a social worker. “I can reach some people,” she declares, “because I’ve been through what they’ve been through.”

Mama smiles and nods. “We’ve been through! God brought us through. If you just obey God, the blessings will flow.”



KCRM guests sing a hymn together in a 1950s chapel service.

KCRM’s staff is well trained and many are certified in their areas of expertise. We strive to learn and grow ... and to continue to improve in all we do.

That’s why in this newsletter you’ll read about our **Steps to Success** program, an innovative program growing in popularity at the Men’s Center. And you’ll learn about our plans to expand our Women’s Center program to include fitness and education.

**What hasn’t changed** since 1950 is the joy and privilege of watching God bring freedom and hope to our guests and residents. We’ve learned a lot and changed a lot over the years, but one thing that never goes out of style is the power of listening, praying and loving ... one person at a time.

# THE **KCRM WOMEN'S CENTER** IS GROWING!

Since the **KCRM Women's Center** opened its doors to provide resident recovery to single homeless women, almost 100 women like Sarah have found a peaceful refuge where our compassionate mentors, counselors and case managers help empower them to overcome seemingly insurmountable barriers to success.

Now, KCRM is ready to take the next step — expanding our women's recovery program to include continuing education and a fitness program! Generous donors have already funded the equipment for both a Learning Center and Fitness Center. We've raised the money for an education coordinator, and volunteers are waiting in the wings to lead fitness classes.

The expansion will be housed on the ground floor of an empty building on the campus. Though **Christ Church Anglican** volunteers have already renovated much of the space, we must still add restrooms, a new concrete stairwell and exterior door, and a fire alarm system to comply with city codes — a cost of \$294,000!

A local foundation has issued a generous challenge to KCRM: **raise \$147,000 and we will donate the remaining \$147,000.** We're writing proposals to several private foundations, hoping to meet the challenge by September 1 and start renovating this fall! To help meet the challenge, please contact Julie Larocco, chief development officer, at [jarocco@kcrm.org](mailto:jarocco@kcrm.org) or 816-421-7643.



*Just across the patio from the Women's Center is a wonderful old building, full of potential to expand the quality care residents receive at KCRM.*

## **STEPS TOWARD SUCCESS**

During the recent recession, KCRM noticed new faces showing up at the Men's Center check-in desk — often as many as 15 a week! Homeless for the first time after being laid off and losing their homes, these men were highly motivated to find work and get off the streets as fast as possible. In response, KCRM expanded our **Steps toward Success** (STS) program,

providing reserved beds, meals and clothing for homeless men working aggressively toward independent living.

Today, though the recession is over, STS continues to provide support for homeless men who have full-time, stable jobs and are determined to get off the streets.

"We average around 20 men in STS," says Lead Case Manager Mary Blackmore. "Some struggle with addiction and know KCRM will help them stay on track. Some have been released from

jail, displaced after a family break-up, have health issues or can't afford their own place while paying child support."

KCRM provides each STS member with a reserved bed in our emergency shelter along with meals and clothing while they save for a deposit and other expenses associated with renting an apartment. Some also save for a vehicle, allowing them more flexibility in finding housing and getting to work. "Most are with us around 90 days," Mary explains, "but we work with them depending on their needs since some have evictions or credit and legal issues that take longer to sort out."

**Steps toward Success** is one more way KCRM reaches out to homeless men, empowering them to reach their full potential. To support this program or provide job leads, contact Julie Larocco at [jarocco@kcrm.org](mailto:jarocco@kcrm.org) or (816) 421-7643, ext. 141.



*Pictured here, Mary with STS member Loren. Even though he struggled through a bout of pneumonia, Loren has found work while on STS and is on his way to independent living!*

# NEWS AND NOTES

## WOMEN'S CENTER ART SHOW

There was a very special art exhibit at the Crossroads District's monthly First Fridays event. Women from the KCRM Women's Center were on hand at Beggar's Table Church to proudly show their encaustic paintings, and to their surprise and joy, people began to purchase the paintings!

The paintings are the result of weekly art therapy, overseen by local artist and KCRM volunteer Amanda Jolley. Amanda generously gives her time and supplies because, as she says, "Art allows for a nonverbal processing of trauma and experiences. Knowing this and the healing it has brought to my own life, how could I not share? Plus," she grins, "I really like to do it!"



*Through a contemplative approach, each piece is an expression of a thought or emotion explored during the Women's Center residents' art therapy at Studio Joy, facilitated by owner Amanda Jolley. Each of the paintings in this exhibit is encaustic, a medium that none of the women had experienced prior. Encaustic paint is composed of beeswax, resin and pigment and is applied in molten state to the substrate.*



## CHANGE FOR CHANGE



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May – June 2016

### Change for Change, April-May

#### A Collection for the KCRM Learning Center

Donate change to help fill our **5-gallon jug** and support KCRM's Learning Center. When you drop off your change, take a guess at the amount we'll raise when the jug is full and, if your guess comes closest, you'll win a **KCRM hoodie**! Every penny counts! Contact Paul Masao at [pmasao@kcrm.org](mailto:pmasao@kcrm.org) or (816) 421-7643, ext. 136 to get started.

### Madeline's Garden Open House, Sunday, June 5

Join us as we dedicate **Madeline's Garden**, Sunday, June 5, 2-3:30 p.m., at the KCRM Women's Center, 11th and Prospect. There is no charge, but RSVP to Julie Larocco at [jarocco@kcrm.org](mailto:jarocco@kcrm.org) or (816) 421-7643, ext. 141 by June 2. Learn more at [kcrm.org](http://kcrm.org).

### KCRM Night at Pizza Ranch, Monday, June 13

KCRM volunteers will bus tables and handle other wait-staff duties, 4:30-9 p.m., during **KCRM Night at Pizza Ranch**, 4801 N. Oak Trafficway in the Northland. Tips and 10 percent of the night's sales will go to **benefit KCRM**, so the more diners the better! To volunteer, please email [kray@kcrm.org](mailto:kray@kcrm.org) or [alomangino@kcrm.org](mailto:alomangino@kcrm.org).

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