

CONNECT

"THE **STRENGTH** OF MY LIFE"

"I WAS STANDING BEHIND THIS BIG GUY, waiting to check out with the cashier and I caught a glimpse of a tattoo on his forearm quoting Psalm 27:1," Rob remembers, "and God said to me, 'Why don't you ask him what that means to him?'"

For Rob Stewart (*pictured left*), what began as a quick family trip to Lawrence, Kansas, to visit his elderly grandmother, suddenly turned into an unexpected encounter when he stood in line behind Eric at a convenience store. "He was so big, and he didn't seem in a very good mood, so I decided that couldn't have been God I heard," Rob says. But as Eric walked out of the store, Rob knew he had to obey God's voice.

Eric recalls, "I wasn't in a good place [in life]. I had called in sick to work that day but then, out of the blue, something told me to go to the store and cash in this \$3 Scratchers ticket I'd had for a week. I thought maybe I'd get a beer, but instead I just cashed it in and left. I was walking across the parking lot to go back home when I heard this guy call out behind me, 'Hey! God wants me to ask you something.'

"I turned to see this man approach me," Eric continues. "He said, 'God wants me to ask you about that tattoo. Are you living that scripture out?' I dropped my head and felt the tears in my eyes. I had to say, 'No, I'm not.'"

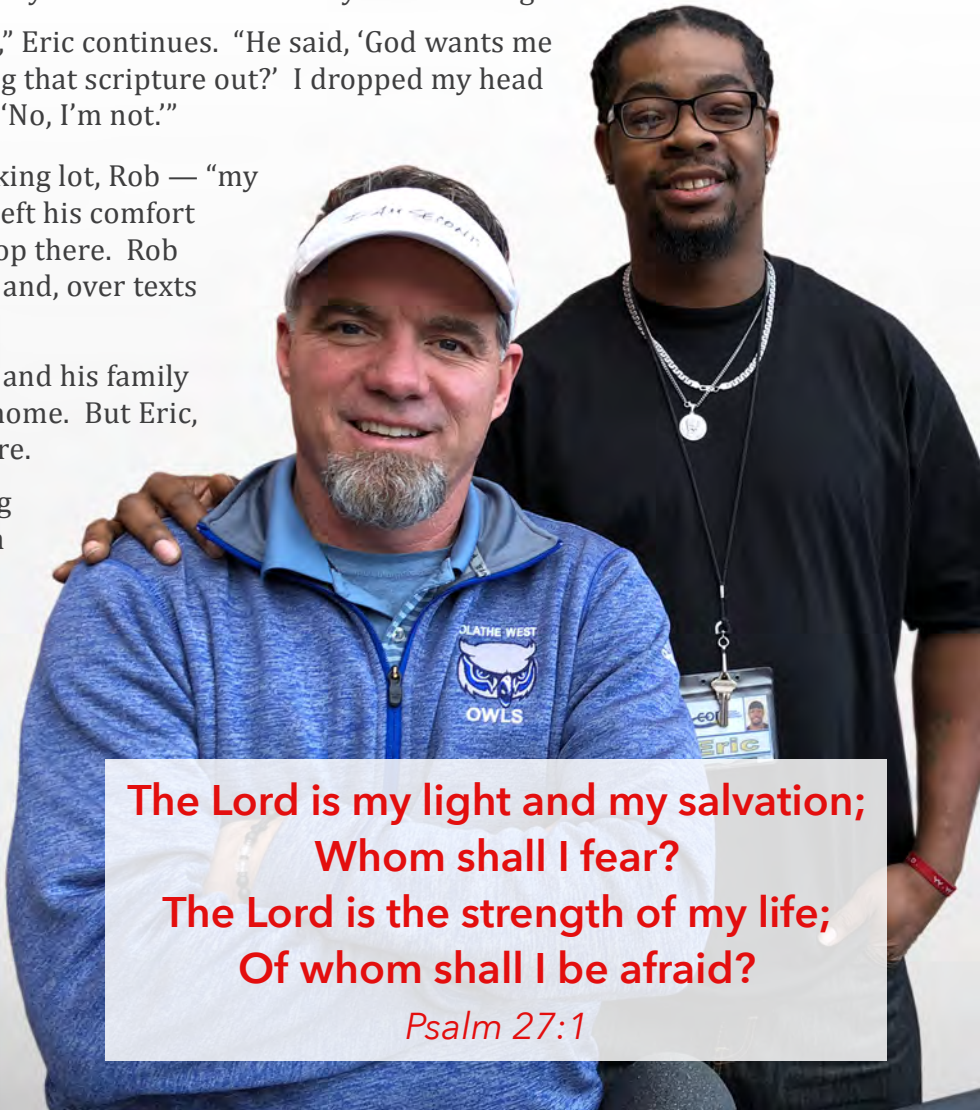
THAT DAY, in a convenience store parking lot, Rob — "my perfect stranger" Eric likes to call him — left his comfort zone and prayed for Eric. But he didn't stop there. Rob asked if he could stay in contact with Eric and, over texts and occasional calls, a friendship formed.

As time passed, Eric began to join Rob and his family for church and was often a guest in their home. But Eric, who struggled with addiction, needed more.

After more than two years of a growing friendship, Rob brought Eric to KCRM — a place Rob and his family often volunteer — and five months into KCRM's recovery program, Eric is thriving.

Eric, tall in stature and bigger in heart, can often be found in the library at the Men's Center, with two backpacks bulging with books, journals and his ever-present Bible.

He's a work in progress, but today Eric can finally answer Rob's parking lot question: "Yes, I'm living it out. God is my light and the strength of my life!"



**The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?**

Psalm 27:1



COLD SNAP LEAVES BEDS FILLED AND SHELVES EMPTY

KCRM's Men's Center emergency dorm is sanitized and ready for the next crowd of weary men seeking warm, clean shelter for the night.

THE CHILLING TEMPERATURES in December and January tested the strength of KCRM's Men's Center staff as they provided warm, safe shelter for over-capacity crowds night after night! "We put mats on the floors of the chapel and hallways," says Shelter Manager Larry Hansen. "Staff members working double shifts slept at the Mission overnight so they could be available whenever needed."

Was it worth it? Our homeless guests were deeply grateful to escape from the dangerously cold weather. "Staying out there isn't a good option," says Al (*pictured right*), who spent three years on the streets before joining KCRM's resident recovery program. "You could die out there."

We are grateful, too! "When local news stations told Kansas Citians about the crowds and our need for things like blankets, food, soap and shampoo, people really came through," says Julie Larocco, KCRM's development officer. "Many gave cash so we could meet the most desperate needs immediately. Day after day, folks dropped off or shipped donations — it was wonderful to see the response!"

Now KCRM needs your help as we restock our shelves *and* our general fund. "Because KCRM housed and fed substantially more homeless men than usual for several weeks, we depleted our general fund paying more than 100 hours in additional labor costs to keep the shelter running," notes Executive Director Joe Colaizzi.

TO HELP REPLENISH our general fund, please make a gift in the envelope provided or visit kcrm.org and choose "KCRM RECOVERY." Or bring items from our lists here to 1520 Cherry Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64108. Thank you and God bless you.

ITEMS WE NEED MOST

FOOD SERVICE

- Hamburger and chicken
- Sliced bread
- Oatmeal, grits
- Eggs, milk
- Canned vegetables

MEDICAL CLINIC

- Pain relievers such as Aleve, Tylenol, Ibuprofen
- Cough drops
- Cough medicine in pill or capsule form
- Face masks

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

- Jeans, gently used or new
- Underwear, new only
- Water resistant gloves
- Twin blankets, twin sheets

Thank YOU for making it possible for KCRM to provide safe, clean and WARM emergency shelter for homeless men in Kansas City. **You are the best!**



SERVEHOPE SPIKETACULAR!

NOVEMBER 18, 2017, 18 TEAMS gathered at Volleyball Beach to raise money to purchase new institutional-grade beds for KCRM at the first annual **ServeHope Spiketacular** volleyball tournament.

Spearheaded by the Whitaker-Franano family (*pictured*), the event raised more than \$7,000 its first year — enough to purchase 14 beds — **with the help of these supporters:**



FlowForward
MEDICAL



METACTIVE
MEDICAL

BCI Berkowitz, Cook,
GD Gondring & Driskell, LLC

Ron and Donna Domsch

Bill Whitaker

Martha Comment

Russell Stover Candies

Price Chopper of Brookside

Hoopla Studio

Houlihan's

Bristol Seafood Grill

J Gilbert's Wood Fired Steaks and Seafood

Mary Morris M2 Jewelry

Fidel's Cigar Shop

Central State Beverage Company

Chick-Fil-A

Hy-Vee of Lee's Summit

To learn more about the inaugural event, and how to register for the August 25, 2018 **ServeHope Spiketacular** tournament, go to kcrm.org/servehope!



OPERATION CHRISTMAS SHOWER POWER

SCOTT AND SUMMER

Taylor (*pictured right*) raffled gifts at their Christmas party to raise money for KCRM's constant need for travel-size soap. "The party was amazing," says Summer. "We raised \$500!" That's enough to buy 5,555 travel-size bars of soap!

To learn more about **Operation Shower Power**, contact KCRM's development team at 816-421-7643.



Staying out in that cold is not an option, says Al.



Joe Colaizzi prays for a KCRM recovery program graduate this past December.

A KCRM **WARNING LABEL**

— Rev. Joe Colaizzi, Executive Director

ONE THING I'VE LEARNED in my journey with Jesus is there are no coincidences. It was no accident that Rob (*page 1*) ended up in line behind Eric that day. God knew Eric needed someone like Rob in his life, and God knew Rob needed someone like Eric.

“Eric has become like a son to me,” Rob relates. “Volunteering at KCRM helped soften my heart to see him that day with his head down, as a father, son and brother who was broken and in pain.”

Getting involved at KCRM should come with a warning: ***This experience can change you!*** You won't see people in need quite the same once you've begun to see some of them as friends. And you won't see yourself quite the same when you realize just how much you can change someone's world for good.

If you love the status quo in your world, you might want to avoid filling out a volunteer application at **kcrm.org**. But if you're ready for an adventure in joy and compassion, we've got just the place for you!

WHY I SUPPORT **KCRM'S WOMEN'S CENTER**

LINDA PETERSON AND HER HUSBAND CRAIG

demonstrate their love and concern for the homeless in Kansas City through generosity and service. Since it opened in 2013, Linda has been an avid volunteer at our Women's Center. Here, she shares why it is so important to her.

“My introduction to the KCRM Women's Center began when my church, Christ Church Anglican, added it as a mission partner. Church members Jo and Forrest Cunningham were recruiting volunteers and providing items needed for two bedrooms the church was sponsoring.

“As I learned more about the purpose of the Women's Center, I loved that God was at the center of everything they were doing. I was also impressed with the results KCRM had achieved in its men's recovery program.

“The week the Women's Center opened, I took a tour and saw the rooms furnished by our church. I met its staff and a few of its first clients. After talking with some of the women, it occurred to me that women are women no matter how different our circumstances. We all have much in common.

“I love to cook, so I began taking lunch or dinner to the center a few times a month, then recruited friends at church to help provide meals and hold Bible studies. My church has generously supported



Linda Peterson shares at a benefit for the Women's Center

the Women's Center in many ways, providing outings, and special needs like the garden fountain, remodeling and holiday gifts.

“There have been many changes at the Women's Center over the years, but the one constant is the women. I enjoy each of them and I love seeing God at work as they gain confidence and strength.”



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