

Living Under
A Bridge

Sharmaine's Story...



Antoinette & Sharmaine

An old adage states you need to walk a mile in someone's shoes before you can truly understand what they are going through in life. What if that journey includes living in a tent under a bridge during the winter? Most of us wouldn't volunteer to walk ten steps in those shoes let alone a mile. But, for Sharmaine, she really didn't have much choice.

After going through a divorce, Sharmaine hit rock bottom. She began using drugs to numb the pain of being alone. It was a coping mechanism she learned as a child. "I had a rough childhood," she admits.

Even though she had a full-time job her causal drug use turned into an addiction. Her dependency on drugs robbed her of her paycheck, her self-esteem and eventually her home.

"I lived under a bridge in a tent," said Sharmaine. "Some nights, the temperature was below zero. I remember gathering up to twenty blankets to keep warm."

continued on page 3

"Thanksgiving is nothing if not the glad and reverent lifting of the heart to God in honor and praise to His goodness." - Robert Casper Lintner

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Celebrating Thanksgiving at REFUGE OF HOPE

Call it nostalgia if you will...the happy memories of Thanksgiving pasts. Family and friends crowded around a table loaded with favorite foods that surround a golden brown turkey waiting to be carved.

For many of our dinner guests those memories have long faded or possibly never existed. For them, Thanksgiving is just another day without enough food to eat or to feed their family. One in six people and over 24% of children in Stark County struggle with food insecurity, or in other words, "consistent access to adequate food is limited by lack of money and other resources at times during the year."



Frank Johnson enjoys a hearty Thanksgiving meal at Refuge of Hope

So at Refuge of Hope we are planning a Thanksgiving feast. Every hungry man, woman and child is welcome to enjoy tables full of turkey, mashed potatoes and all the traditional trimmings. As in the past several years, Thanksgiving Day dinner is provided by First Christian Church in conjunction with other local churches. Faithful volunteers will serve the meals which will include delicious pies from Hartville Kitchen.

"Thanksgiving at Refuge of Hope is a real family affair," said Scott Schnyders, Shelter Director. "I have had the privilege to help serve on this special day for several years and good memories are being made for so many hurting people around our dinner tables!" Russell Milbrodt, a 96-year-old veteran, may have put Thanksgiving and every day in ROH's Meal Ministry into the proper perspective when he stated, "You will get your belly full here."

Refuge of Hope's focus is to provide meals and more to those who have so little in our community. Men, women and children in need turn to us and we turn to you. We are so thankful to you, our faithful donors, who provide the meals, shelter and hope to make every day one of thanksgiving to the poor and needy in Stark County! From all of us at Refuge of Hope, we wish you and yours a most happy and blessed Thanksgiving Day.

WORDS TO LIVE BY



"Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of thanksgiving."

— W.J. Purkiser

Winter Shelter for Homeless Women

Refuge of Hope has always focused on shelter for homeless men as there is very little or no such housing for them in Stark County. But, we're in for a bit of a change as Refuge of Hope will be housing homeless women for a four month period this winter.

Homelessness is more often associated with men but the number of homeless women in Stark County has been increasing. There are currently about 40 women on the Homeless Hotline's waiting list and finding safe, affordable housing for all of them could take many months.

While the search for housing continues, many of these women will undoubtedly find themselves out on the street with no safe place to sleep at night. This is a bad enough situation in warm weather but imagine being huddled in a doorway or alley trying to sleep on a snowy, bitter cold winter night. Many of these women will face that exact scenario.

This is why Refuge of Hope has stepped in to help. From December 1, 2015, through March 31, 2016, Refuge of Hope will supply emergency shelter for homeless women. This is the first time Refuge of Hope has ever sheltered women but, given the circumstances, it wasn't a tough decision to make. Refuge of Hope's mission is to serve God by serving people in need which is clearly the case in this situation.

Men's Shelter Director, Scott Schnyders, noted Refuge of Hope has experience using other locations to house men when our facility has been occupied over capacity. "For the past two winters, several other local organizations were kind enough to make available the space needed for an overflow men's shelter. We then provided the supervision, bedding and other items necessary to make it work. There is no reason why we can't do the same thing this year to provide for these women," he said.

A particular need right now is finding women willing to supervise. Shifts are 10 hours per night (9:00 pm to 7:00 am) with pay of \$10 per hour worked. Training will be provided and interested women should contact Scott at 330-453-1785 ext. 204. In addition, other items such as women's clothing, hygiene products, blankets, pillows, etc., will be needed.

A special thank you to Sisters of Charity Foundation for their willingness to provide funding to cover the costs associated with this shelter and to a very generous donor for purchasing 15 rollaway beds. You can find out more about the women's shelter by contacting us on our website at www.refugeofhope.org or by phone at the number listed in the above paragraph.



Please keep these women, and all the people we serve at Refuge of Hope, in your prayers daily.

Prayer Warriors

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



At Refuge of Hope, we believe in the power of prayer!

There is Power in Prayer – Let's become prayer warriors for each other and our community!!

DO YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST? Would you like to pray for others? We encourage you to visit Refuge of Hope's new website at www.refugeofhope.org and click on the PRAYER REQUEST page. You will have the option to:

- Leave a prayer request and the Refuge of Hope staff will pray for you or your loved ones
- Become a prayer warrior for others by visiting the site weekly to pray for people in need

You may have a prayer of thanksgiving, praise for answered prayer or an urgent request to bring before the Lord. The desire to pray for others may be a burden God has laid upon your heart and even though you do not know the people for whom you may be praying, always remember that our Lord knows His sheep! He will hear our prayers for each other!

Warm Winter Clothes Thanks to The Chapel in North Canton

As the temperature quickly drops in northeast Ohio, it is sad to see so many men, women and children walk through Refuge of Hope's doors chilled to the bone without coats and often in short sleeved shirts. The needs remain great right here in our community.



Volunteers from The Chapel at North Canton prepare to hand out clothing at Refuge of Hope collected during the church's month long clothing drive.

Refuge of Hope thanks The Chapel in North Canton for holding a month-long warm clothing drive. Winter clothing collected through their church has been donated to Refuge of Hope for our dinner guests and shelter residents.

Many people lack enough clothing to stay warm throughout winter and YOU can help solve that problem. Please donate gently used or new warm clothing to Refuge of Hope or contact us if you would like to host a warm clothing drive. You can experience the joy of passing out collected clothes to those in need.

A Special Thank You to East of Chicago Pizza

Everyone loves East of Chicago Saturdays at Refuge of Hope according to Dawn Bowman, Meal Ministry Director. "The third Saturday of every month, East of Chicago faithfully donates 40 large pizzas to Refuge of Hope's Meal Ministry and they are always a fun favorite for our dinner guests!"



Rose Hile, Jimmy Hile & staff members at East of Chicago Pizza

Thank you Jimmy and Rose Hile and staff for your generosity and dedication in providing meals to hungry men, women and children in our community!

Sharmaine's Story... continued

Deep inside Sharmaine knew she needed help and after that winter nightmare of living outside in the elements, she was able to overcome her addiction.

Sharmaine shares, "I knew I could come to Refuge of Hope every night at the same time for good meals. Some nights, I just needed somebody to talk to and at Refuge of Hope, they listen and share the Word of God with you. It gave me peace of mind."

The cold winter months will soon be upon us. For Sharmaine, that brings back memories of a bad time in her life, a time when she needed a helping hand up. Sleeping under a bridge is an experience she never wants to repeat. She now has a bright future and responsibility to provide for her daughter, Antoinette.

"I'm grateful to God for the people who provide funding for all the food, and even the lights, gas and water at Refuge of Hope. Everything costs money, but there are people who care about us," Sharmaine said.

When temperatures are dramatically low, homeless women like Sharmaine face the very real dangers of hypothermia, frostbite and other serious threats. This year Refuge of Hope will have the opportunity to reach out to homeless women, not just through our Meal Ministry, but through the emergency women's shelter as well.

Please pray for the many ways we can minister to these women and for God to bless them in their time of need.

Yes, I want to support people like Sharmaine & Antoinette and help Refuge of Hope provide hot, nutritious meals and safe, sober shelter to our hungry and hurting Stark County neighbors!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How you can contribute to Refuge of Hope Ministries:

\$50.00 \$150.00 \$100.00 Other: _____

Credit Card: Visa Master Card Expiration date: ____ / ____ / ____

Card Number: _____ Signature: _____

Thank you on behalf of those who benefit from the work of Refuge of Hope Ministries made possible through your generous gift. Tax deductible information will be mailed with your donation receipt.



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THANK YOU!

For your convenience, Secure on-line donations are accepted on our website www.refugeofhope.org

Giving Tuesday

ON-LINE WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF
HURTING PEOPLE THIS THANKSGIVING
SHOPPING SEASON!

BLACK FRIDAY • CYBER MONDAY GIVING TUESDAY!

Now there is a day to give back as much as you saved shopping on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Giving Tuesday has become a nationally recognized day to give back to your favorite non-profit. We are prayerful you will make a special gift to the men, women and children we serve at Refuge of Hope!

Go to www.refugeofhope.org and make a donation on Giving Tuesday, December 1, 2015. You can conveniently visit our site on your mobile device or computer and with a few clicks you will be providing meals, shelter and hope in Stark County!

**\$1.85 IS THE COST OF ONE MEAL AND MORE AT REFUGE OF HOPE!
YOU CAN HELP OVER 10 HURTING AND HUNGRY PEOPLE WITH A GIFT
OF \$20.00!**

Perhaps Bill Gates explained it best, "You may have heard of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. There is another day out there you may want to know about: Giving Tuesday. The idea is pretty straightforward. On the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, shoppers take a break from their gift-buying and donate what they can to charity."

OK, it may be just one day. But if we all come together on that day to give, the impact of our efforts will assure hungry families hot nutritious meals, homeless men and women safe, warm shelter, and we will deliver a message of hope to so many who are in need and living daily in dire circumstances.



Refuge of Hope is also registered on AmazonSmile. With a simple click while making your purchase, Refuge of Hope will receive a percent of your purchase to help provide hot meals, safe shelter and hope to hundreds of our neighbors in need!

Happy Giving!



Rescue Mission Christmas CATALOG

It is with exuberance we announce our brand new holiday gift catalog will go live on our website on Giving Tuesday, December 1, 2015!

Purchase your Christmas gifts from our **Rescue Mission Christmas Catalog** and bless those we serve! At the same time you are showing your love and giving heart to family and friends.

We are putting the finishing touches on our catalog list and checking it twice with fabulous and unique gifting products and urgently needed Christmas items this holiday season.

Make Christmas shopping easy from the comforts of home at www.refugeofhope.org.



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