



"A New Beginning" has long been something of a mantra for Northlands Rescue Mission. It is sought by each person who walks through our doors - the chance for something better. As we exit one of the most challenging years in recent memory, this feels especially fitting. People are yearning to escape COVID, to return to work, and to visit loved ones without fear. The need in our community is great, however, and there is much work to be done.

Last year, we distributed more food than ever before. Demand for our services increased in nearly every area. Yet, we are blessed. We have the opportunity to give those hurting a chance for something better. For our homeless clients, we can provide shelter and guidance. For community members in need, we can provide food. We are equipped and ready to serve God by serving others. With our experience, our faith, and your support, we can make a big difference in 2021!

Stephen is no stranger to new beginnings. His dad was in the service, meaning his family moved around a lot when he was younger. Originally from Hawaii, Stephen has lived in Korea, Australia, and the Marshall Islands, among other places. For most of his adult life, he lived in New Mexico, where he worked as a bar manager and a surveyor.

He recalls doing a river study along the Rio Grande one year. "It was hard, hard work, but it was very enjoyable," Stephen says. "You got to go places people don't get to go. We found ancient pottery, we saw mountain lions and bears..."

Things weren't always good for Stephen, though. He had PTSD from his own time in the service, and it was affecting him greatly. Financial difficulties piled on top, and he found himself homeless in New Mexico last year.

"I didn't accept it for decades, that I had [PTSD]," says Stephen. When he finally came to terms with his condition, he had a very difficult time finding support in New Mexico. That's when he decided to travel to Grand Forks. He had some family in Grand Forks (it was his father's hometown), and he liked how kind people are in the Midwest.

There was one issue with Stephen's plan: he had no vehicle, and the buses weren't running. He decided his only option was to hitchhike. The trip took ten days, and it wasn't easy. "This was in the middle of COVID, in the middle of the Denver riots...it was tornado season," he says. Stephen would hitchhike during the day. At night, he would sleep in a tent on the side of the road. "Hopefully it was dry, but sometimes it wasn't," he says. He recalls one night where his tent was ripped apart by a severe windstorm.

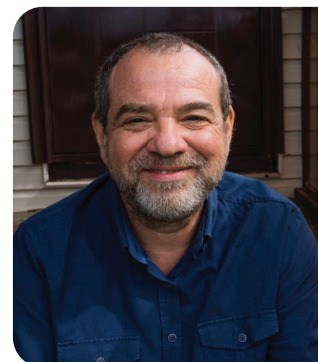
While looking for a ride, Stephen held up a sign that read "Veteran going North." He credits that sign as the reason people stopped to pick him up. "That was eye-opening," says Stephen. "I had regained some faith in humanity by the end of the trip."

When Stephen arrived in Grand Forks, he went to the Northeast Human Services Center. He was treated there for about a month before coming to Northlands Rescue Mission. Stephen had never been in a shelter before and didn't know what to expect. Almost immediately, however, he found success. Stephen was well liked by clients and staff. He was respectful, appreciative, and hard-working. He continued working with professionals at Northeast, and it wasn't long before he moved into his own apartment.

With a home of his own and a support system in place, Stephen began to feel like he was back in control of his life. In fact, he was eventually hired to work in the Mission's front office, a position where he excels today.

We asked Stephen what made him want to work at the Mission. "I wanted to give back," he told us. "People at the Mission had been so kind and generous to me. I wanted to help them help others and hopefully make it easier for the people staying here."

On behalf of the clients, Stephen wants to thank the Mission's donors. "Thank you for giving us a chance to go out and do something better than what we were doing. If we're at the shelter, we're in one of the worst situations of our lives. By giving us the chance, the help that we need, it allows us to make better people of ourselves. And that makes the people around us better."



As a Mission supporter, you provided Stephen with the resources he needed to turn things around. Now, that is being paid forward to others who are at a difficult point in their lives. Thank you for giving Stephen, and many others, their new beginning.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." - Isaiah 43:18-19

It's Turkey Time:

Serving the largest meal of the year amidst a pandemic

Each year around mid-November, we start getting excited. It's almost time to serve the Thanksgiving Community Dinner, our largest meal of the year! Food donations begin rolling in and volunteers sign up to help prepare and serve a delicious meal with all the classics: turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, corn, and pie. In 2019, hundreds of people gathered at St. Paul's Episcopal Church for this free meal and some good conversation.

We knew 2020 would have to be different. COVID prevented any sort of community gathering, but the need for a home-cooked meal on Thanksgiving was greater than ever. Since we could not have a sit-down meal, each meal would need to be delivered. Anyone who wanted a meal could call to reserve one. On Thanksgiving Day, a volunteer driver would bring a delicious, hot meal to their doorstep. We knew we'd have a lot of deliveries on our hands. What we couldn't guess is that we would end up serving more than twice as many meals as a normal year!

When all was said and done, more than 700 hot meals were delivered on Thanksgiving. Thank you so much to everyone who donated frozen turkeys and other food and to our delivery drivers who stepped up to make sure the whole community was fed!

Texas Roadhouse generously cooked all the turkeys for the Thanksgiving meal. This tradition started back in the 1990s with former Blue Moose manager Ryan Berg. Ryan cooked the Thanksgiving turkeys for about twenty years, before his former employee and current Texas Roadhouse manager Jacob Guthmiller decided to continue the tradition.



More than 100 loaves of bread were chopped up to make stuffing!

About a week before Thanksgiving, Jacob gathers volunteers (usually other Texas Roadhouse employees). Then, the turkeys are cooked over the course of two or three nights. Sixteen turkeys can fit into the ovens at once, and it takes about five hours to cook one round.

We asked Jacob what inspired him to help out in this way. "It's just that time of year," he told us. "It's something Ryan was passionate about, and it seemed like the right thing to keep doing it. I have the equipment and the time, so how couldn't I help?"

Thank you to Texas Roadhouse, Jacob Guthmiller and his staff for helping us again this year!



Jacob (left) in front of the cooked turkey!

Thank You, Grantors!

The vast majority of the Mission's funding comes from generous individuals like yourself. However, grants are also an important source of funding for us. Throughout the year, we apply for grants to help with maintenance and renovation projects, general operations, and to purchase important items such as laptops. We'd like to recognize the organizations who have supported the Mission in this way. Thank you for helping us help others!



Funds for housing assistance



Funds for intensive case management & client housing



Funds for a new snowblower and additional needs



A brand new snowblower for the Mission!



Funds to support the Mobile Food Pantry



Funds for elevator repair and new laptops



Funds to assist women with food, shelter & housing



Operational funds to provide shelter

Community Kindness



Winter Warmth:

Grand Forks Subaru delivered 80 cozy blankets to the Mission as part of the “Subaru Love Promise” program. Some of these blankets were set aside for our family clients; others were included in food boxes and given to community members in need. The blankets came at the perfect time as cold winter weather sets in!



Care Package(s):

An anonymous donor sent us hundreds of brand new items from Amazon! The packages included things like coffee makers, brooms & dustpans, silverware, dishes, and more. These items are sent with clients as they move into their own apartments. To the donor who is giving our clients a “head start” – thank you!



Scheeling Generous:

Employees from Scheels stopped by with an entire truckload of food for the Backpack Program! Sysco and US Foods also added some items to the stockpile. We received fruit cups, noodles, cereal, and more...enough to feed hundreds of children! More families than ever are relying on this program, so thank you for keeping our backpacks filled!

Follow us on social media to see similar stories and updates posted each week!

Christmas Blessings



Not even a pandemic could stop Christmas from coming! As part of our “Bags of Blessings” program, clients received a bag full of brand new presents, including boots, water bottles, backpacks, and more! We saw a lot of gratitude and a few tears from clients...they were touched to know that folks cared enough to give them their own Christmas!

After the gift-giving, we enjoyed cookies, caramels, and cakes, courtesy of High Plains Ministry. This was followed by a Christmas movie night with popcorn from River Cinema!

We would like to send a special thank you to Lithia Toyota of Grand Forks for their Bags of Blessings sponsorship and to MaryAnn Laxen for her continued dedication organizing and assembling gifts!



LITHIA TOYOTA OF
GRAND FORKS



2020 STATS



392 clients stayed at Northlands Rescue Mission for **11,350 nights of shelter**.



211 clients obtained **permanent housing** this year. The **average length of stay** for a client was **29 days**, down from 31 days in 2019 and 36 days in 2018.



Approximately **51,000 total meals** were served to clients and community members. **Nearly 23,000 bags of food** were distributed to local students through the **Backpack Program**.



The **Mobile Food Pantry** served families at **22 different locations**. Approximately **2800 total food boxes** were distributed in 2020, a **70% increase** from the previous year.

A Virtual Mission of Hope!



A bit of creativity was in order for our latest Mission of Hope event. What is typically an in-person banquet & auction became a free livestream program and online auction. Thank you to the more than 450 participants who bid on auction packages or tuned in on November 12th to hear about the Mission's work!



Our program included a virtual tour of the Mission, testimonials from former clients, a look back at the Mission's history, and much more! We were honored to welcome former UND football player Hunter Pinke as our guest speaker. Hunter shared his powerful story of survival and faith following a skiing accident which left him paralyzed from the chest down.

We are so grateful to everyone who made this unique event a success. The experience has us excited about new potential ways to connect with our supporters. In the meantime, we will continue serving the homeless and hungry, no matter the circumstances!

If you would like to watch the Mission of Hope program or Hunter's speech for free, please visit www.northlandsrescuemission.org/hope



Phyllis Clark poses next to the bicycle she won from the auction!



GIVING HEARTS DAY

Join us on February 11th, 2021

Giving Hearts Day is a 24-hour online giving event for hundreds of charities in North Dakota and Minnesota. Your donation on **February 11th** will shelter Mission clients and feed local children through the Backpack Program!

It's been hard for Mom and Dad lately. Sometimes, they have to choose between buying food, paying bills, or getting me the school supplies I need. That's why I love getting food through the Backpack Program! Will you fill my backpack on Giving Hearts Day?



With a match, just \$20 will feed a child and fifteen of her friends for a weekend!

To donate, visit givingheartsday.org and search for **Northlands Rescue Mission**. Or, go to northlandsrescuemission.org/heart to be taken directly to our giving page. Donations made now will automatically be scheduled for Giving Hearts Day, and at least \$4000 in donations will be matched by generous friends of the Mission!



We are seeking additional match donors for Giving Hearts Day. If you are interested in matching donations or would like more information, please call us at 701-772-6600 ext. 200 or email sue@jointhemission.org.

The Backpack Program is supported in part by a grant from the City of Grand Forks through the Community Foundation of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Region.

Community Foundation
GRAND FORKS, EAST GRAND FORKS & REGION

Phone: 701-772-6600

Address: 420 Division Ave. Grand Forks, ND 58201

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