From the PRESIDENT’S DESK:

“Role in Society”

Gospel Rescue Missions provide unique opportunities for individuals to combine their energy, talents, resources, and values for positive life change and community improvement. They are obligated to understand their role as entities that represent Christ, while engaging and inspiring individuals and communities for public benefit. While temporarily meeting people’s basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter, gospel rescue missions keep it a priority to encourage people to begin or deepen their relationship with Jesus, who offers transformation and hope. Missions offer aid to clients and guests without condition of a relationship with Christ, but instead wrap all assistance in Christ’s love, compassion, and grace.

According to an assessment by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, nearly 600,000 people are homeless on a given night in the United States. At a minimum, 25% were seriously mentally ill, and 45% had some form of mental illness. By comparison, those statistics for homeless people are over 5 times the rate of all U.S. adults. Affective disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and substance abuse disorders are among the most common types of mental illness in the homeless population.

The connection between homelessness and mental illness is a complicated, two-way relationship. An individual’s mental illness may lead to cognitive and behavioral problems that make it difficult to earn a stable income or to carry out daily activities in ways that encourage stable housing. However, studies have shown that individuals with mental illnesses often find themselves homeless primarily as the result of poverty and a lack of low-income housing. The combination of mental illness and homelessness also can lead to other factors such as increased levels of alcohol and drug abuse and violent victimization that reinforce the connection between health and homelessness.

Studies show that homelessness can be a traumatic event that influences a person’s symptoms of mental illness. Having ever been homeless, and the time spent homeless, can be related to higher levels of psychiatric distress and higher levels of alcohol or drug abuse. Also, in general, homelessness among people with mental illness can lead to more encounters with police and the courts. Homeless adults with mental illness who experienced abuse or neglect in childhood are more likely to be arrested for a crime or be the victim of crime. Programs that provide long-term stable housing for people with mental illnesses can help to improve mental health outcomes. A study concluded that services that deliver cognitive and social skill training, particularly in developing and maintaining relationships would be useful in helping people with mental illnesses and homelessness regain housing.

At the Panama City Rescue Mission and the Bethel Village Women and Children’s Shelter, we’re tracking Outcomes in the area of Relationships. A relationship with Jesus Christ is transformational, and sharing the good news of the gospel in a daily Chapel Service provides comfort to those in need of hope and a better life. Since 1973, the Panama City Rescue Mission has been committed to Christ-centered rescue, recovery, and restoration in an effort to break the destructive cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Thank you and God Bless,

Stephen Fett
President/CEO

Please feel free to contact Stephen Fett at (850) 381-2976 or sfett@pcrmission.org with any questions.