

## **Summary of the Denver Rescue Mission's History**

In its first incarnation, the Denver Rescue Mission was a rescue home for “wayward” women ran by Rev. Joshua Gravett, pastor of Galilee Baptist Church. Opened in 1892, the shelter was located near 31<sup>st</sup> and Lawrence Streets. The Rescue Home then merged with the Florence Crittendon Mission and home for women in late 1892. Gravett and Galilee Baptist still had a vision for a men’s shelter, so they opened the Living Waters Mission at 1822 Larimer Street as a faith ministry.

Approximately 20 years later, under the leadership of Jim Goodheart, a former Living Waters Mission client, the Mission’s name was changed to the Sunshine Rescue Mission. The Mission expanded to include three buildings and two lots located on 1820 to 1824 Larimer Street. During that same time, a dormitory for transients called “Sunshine House” was opened at 1640 Market Street. By 1922, the Mission’s annual budget was approximately \$35,000 with more than 3,000 overnight accommodations provided each month.

In 1927, at the insistence of the Board of directors, the Sunshine Rescue Mission was sold to Goodheart for one dollar. In 1927, Goodheart was hospitalized for a breakdown, and in 1930 the mission was closed and sold to pay debts. Rev. Gravett and a dedicated group of volunteers reopened the Mission in rented quarters at 1120 Eighteenth Street as the Denver Rescue Mission. In 1940, the Mission purchased a one-story building for \$6,500 at 1818 Larimer Street.

In 1959, under the leadership of Rev. Truman Thompson, a new building was built behind the facility at 1818 Larimer Street. The two-story, 7,500 square-foot facility, complete with kitchen, dining room, garage and dormitory, was constructed for a total cost of \$33,000. One year later, the Mission opened its first medical and dental clinics.

In the summer of 1970, the Urban Renewal Administration paid the Mission \$76,000 for its Larimer Street facility. Before the facility was torn down, the Mission purchased its current facility at the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> (Park Avenue and Lawrence Streets) for \$120,000.

From 1967 to 1985, Rev. Leroy Bradrick guided the Mission. In 1987, Rev. Del Maxfield became Executive Director of the Mission and initiated the next phase of growth.

In 1988, the Mission acquired the former Mercy Farm in Wellington, Colorado. Renamed “Harvest Farm,” this 100-acre working farm raises food for Denver’s needy, provides a long-term transitional program for men, and provides a rural outreach for urban youth.

In December 1988, Foothill Capital Corporation of Dallas donated a building at 2544 Champa Street to the Mission, with the specific purpose of creating a long-term transitional facility for single mothers and their children. After intense renovation, Champa House was dedicated in June 1990, with accommodations for 11 families.

The Mission inaugurated its first computer-based Literacy and Education Center in 1989. Now at all three residential facilities, this award-winning education program provides men and women with opportunity to improve their academic skills and develop practical life skills.

In December 1991, Cowles Media donated a building at 3501 E. 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Denver Rescue Mission. This 37,000-square foot building, now called the Ministry Outreach Center, houses the administrative services and serves as the central warehouse for food, clothing and furniture.

In January 1998, Pros with a Purpose came under the umbrella of the Mission. Pros was founded by former Bronco Mike Horan and his wife, Kim, and minister exclusively to homeless, working families. Renamed “Family Rescue Ministry” in January of 2000.

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 Pastor Brad Meuli became President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mission. His servant heart guides his remarkable leadership with the growth and expansion of the Mission.

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, the Mission purchased a former hotel on Smith Road and named it “The Crossing”. With the purchase of this 94,000 square foot building, we significantly increased our capacity and capability to touch more lives than ever before. The Crossing serves as transitional housing for our New Life program residents, New Life Post-Graduate program residents, Family Rescue Ministry families, Families and Senior Housing Initiative individuals and transitional families. It is also living quarters for interns, visitors, and homeless men needing medical attention through our 20 respite beds. We also offer a safe place for children to learn, play and grow at The Fort. As well, we teach life skills and providing case management to families and individuals looking forward to a life of self-sufficiency.

In September 2005 renovations on Lawrence Street facility were completed. Moving the New Life program to The Crossing created additional room for homeless men seeking overnight shelter at the Lawrence Street facility. Remodeling this facility has allowed us to increase shelter capacity to 200 beds. We have also renovated the showers and bathroom to improve our service to our overnight guests. We continue to offer three hot meals a day, as well as, client and medical services within this facility.

In November 2005 Family Rescue Ministry is renamed “Family Services” in incorporate the four programs now run through this outreach. 1. Family Rescue Ministry (FRM): provides permanent housing and mentoring for homeless, working and disabled families and partners families with a mentoring teams who provide relational, spiritual, material, and social support to help them rebuild their lives. 2. Family and Senior Homeless Initiative (FSHI): a community effort initiated by Mayor Hickenlooper of Denver to end homelessness for families and seniors. This program, patterned after FRM, asks for the assistance of faith congregations and service organizations to help 1000 homeless families and seniors into housing over 10 years. 3. Transitional Families at The Crossing: provides affordable transitional housing for up to 77 homeless families, each family is matched with a case manager to guide them toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency. 4. Refugee Family Services: provides housing assistance and other services for refugee families, as well as, mentor teams which provide support in their transition to a new life in America.