



**GATEWAY**mission  
HOPE FOUND HERE.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# HOPE FOUND HERE >>>

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FOR OVER **120 YEARS**

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## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At a pivotal moment in the days leading up to the Cross, Jesus told His disciples “The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.” (Matthew 26:11). While He was setting their priorities straight, we know from the entirety of Scripture that God cares deeply about the poor and how we respond to those in need.

Jesus’ words profoundly resonated throughout 2024 as we witnessed an ever-increasing number of men, women, and children facing homelessness and food insecurity seeking help at our doors. Between a struggling economy, addiction, and mental health issues on the rise, many individuals and families living on the margins have found themselves in desperate poverty. Gateway Mission considers it a privilege to be placed here for such a time as this—to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our hurting neighbors!

Gateway Mission is the only shelter in Ottawa and Allegan counties providing shelter for the homeless. By offering meals for the hungry and transformational programs for those working through entrenched issues, we have experienced a year of both challenges and opportunities. As the number of people seeking help for longer periods of time increased, so did the opportunities to touch lives. Thanks to your generous support, we can keep our doors open every day of the year to provide timely, effective relief.



Addressing the visible, urgent needs of food and shelter is only the starting point. Equipping our guests to build a brand new life requires hard work and commitment—both from our guests and our team walking alongside them. Together they commit to identifying and overcoming root issues such as trauma, addiction, broken relationships, lack of a support network, and more.

Each individual’s story is unique; God cares about every detail, and so do we. That’s why we offer time-tested programs tailored to meet every person and family right where they are.

Whether it’s emergency shelter for the man needing to escape the cold, or a mom and her two children whose “home” is not safe, we are here to help. A woman may need assistance managing her finances and vocational training as she climbs out from under a mountain of medical debt. A young man may require Biblical counseling and help building healthy

relationships to break free from trauma and substance abuse. Our Gateway team is here to walk alongside them as they work to transform their lives.

Ultimately, we know that true life transformation and freedom comes from having a relationship with our Lord and Savior. It is His love that drives us to serve the members of our community, building them a gateway to hope and a brand new future. I know partners like you are right there with us in this mission. Whatever tomorrow holds, I’m grateful you are standing with us to be Jesus’ hands and feet.

Faithfully serving,

Jay Riemersma | Executive Director





# BUILDING A GATEWAY TO HOPE

Gateway Mission pursues a holistic approach to helping people escape poverty—both visible poverty such as lack of resources, and invisible poverty that includes lack of relationships, support networks, and "The Truth that sets you free."

We provide emergency services and long-term discipleship programs, offering help and lasting hope to those in need. This Christ-centered care helps our neighbors overcome the root issues of poverty, addiction, and homelessness so they can rebuild their lives—from the inside out.

Our desire is to help every person who walks through our doors experience lasting transformation... *From broken to beautiful. From lost to loved. From hopeless to hopeful.*

Thank you for joining us in our life-changing mission! Together, we can help the hurting discover God's love and begin to build a life of dignity and renewed purpose.



## OUR MISSION

To declare and demonstrate the love of Christ by providing housing and programs for the homeless and less fortunate.



## OUR VISION

To equip each person we serve to follow Jesus and live as a productive citizen.



## HOW WE DO IT

We foster spaces where Christ-centered, Spirit-led transformation brings lasting life change.

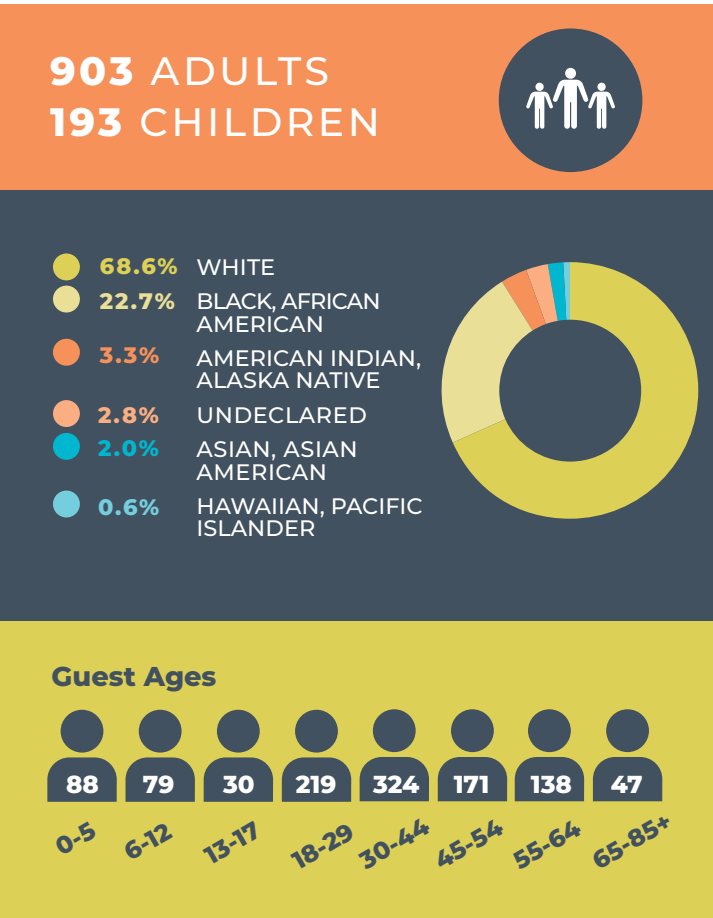
# GUEST DEMOGRAPHICS

Homelessness is never part of anyone’s plan, yet its causes—health crises, job loss, domestic abuse, addictions, and rising costs—can leave men, women, and children without a roof over their heads. Beyond these visible causes, the lack of a support network, hope, and identity can turn a difficult season into a crisis.

For over 120 years, Gateway Mission has been helping West Michigan’s most vulnerable neighbors, providing immediate relief and the tools needed for lasting transformation. Our approach addresses both visible and invisible poverty, offering practical support like meals, shelter, and financial training, while also focusing on the heart-level changes needed for lasting change through Biblical counseling, life skills classes, mentorship, and chapel services.

Gateway Mission continues to build bridges to stability through the Gateway Store, which offers job training while supporting our mission. We are also investing in a groundbreaking expansion project and collaborating with other ministries focused on transformation rather than dependency.

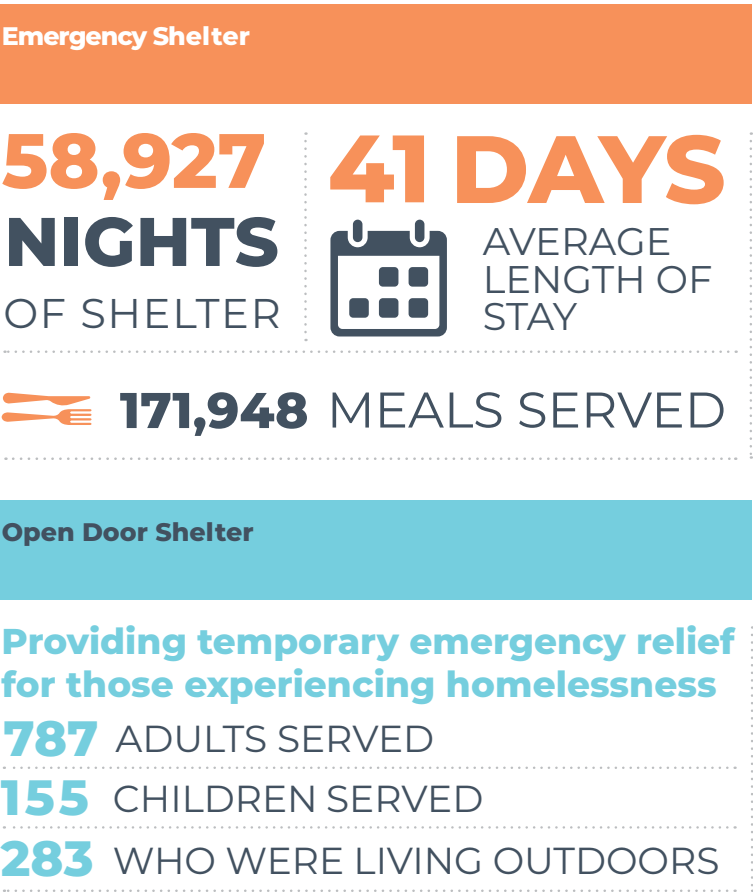
Through our work, we’re not just addressing homelessness—we’re changing lives, creating stable futures, and building stronger communities in West Michigan.



# SHELTER PROGRAMS

Open Doors 365

When individuals and families need a warm, safe place to stay, they turn to Gateway Mission. Our Men’s Center and Women & Children’s Center are open year-round to meet urgent needs and provide long-term assistance to our homeless neighbors in West Michigan.





# PATHWAY SHELTER PROGRAM

Providing ongoing support through mentorship, financial guidance, employment and housing search assistance, and spiritual support

|                             |                                 |  |                                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 324                         | 264                             | 248                                    | \$264,478                           |
| PEOPLE<br>IN THE<br>PROGRAM | MOVED TO<br>POSITIVE<br>HOUSING | WENT FROM<br>UNEMPLOYED<br>TO EMPLOYED | FINANCIAL<br>SAVINGS<br>TOWARD DEBT |



## MEET JENNA

Resource Specialist Manager

“Every single one of us on this earth needs community. We’re not going to make it on our own.”

This is a truth Jenna lives by. Her role involves connecting guests in need with available resources in our community.

“I help Gateway guests move forward by knowing the partners in our community and introducing them to each other,” said

Jenna. “We see many people come to a place where they have the support they need and don’t reenter the Open Door Shelter.”

For nearly eight years, Jenna has served in various roles at Gateway, beginning as second shift staff at the Gateway Women and Children’s Center, and eventually stepping into the role of Residential Supervisor.

Recently, Jenna served as Guest Advocate, building relationships with Gateway’s community partners who assist with housing, employment support, and other needs. “There’s no need to reinvent the wheel when those resources are already out there for them to utilize.”

Jenna adds: “Without those previous roles, I wouldn’t have been ready for this current position.”

She builds bridges and relationships with community partners. Her referrals are unique to each guest—some need housing, others may need a car. She also ensures they are connected with local churches and mentors throughout the process.

“When they have that support, then they can continue to thrive when they leave here,” said Jenna.



# GATEWAY WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S CENTER

## Childcare Program Stats

18,925  
HOURS OF  
CHILDCARE

41  
CHILDREN SERVED

4-STAR  
PROGRAM RATING



Homelessness and food insecurity are major issues in West Michigan, and it's especially heartbreaking when families are affected. Women and children are often the most vulnerable, and escaping poverty can be even more challenging for them. That's why Gateway Mission is committed to offering a safe shelter where mothers and children can stay together.

We also help address the unique challenges women face by partnering with local schools and offering safe childcare, affordable childcare. This care allows the mothers the time and focus needed to receive Biblical counseling, vocational training, and other support to rebuild their lives.



## MEET CLARA

### Childcare Director Strengthening Families Through Support and Education

"Every day, we get to love on and support and help grow children who have been less fortunate, in a situation that is not their fault," said Gateway Childcare Director Clara. "It's our joy and goal to help these kids catch up and meet their needs, as their moms turn their lives around."

Clara grew up in Jamestown and earned her master's degree in early childhood education. She leads a team of six educators and staff at Gateway Mission's Childcare Center, all dedicated to caring for mothers and children in crisis.

"When they arrive, the women are just trying to survive. A lot of teaching goes on at Gateway, so that they can get back on their feet," said Clara.

Throughout her four years at Gateway Mission, it's the resilience of the young mothers that has surprised Clara the most.

"A lot of it stems from their childhood, the experiences these women had that were so unfair and unjust," she said. "They

didn't have a choice in it. They never were taught how to be a normal, functioning adult. I share with these moms how to correctly interact with their child and how to properly care for him or her."

While Clara continually coordinates with liaisons across five local school districts, staff oversee school-age children before and after school and facilitate referrals to speech therapy and counseling as needed. "Our whole goal is to meet them where they're at," she said.

Team members say their Christian faith helps sustain them during busy days. "We begin the day with a devotional and prayer, and staff say it's typically their favorite part of the day," said Clara.

She has witnessed countless stories of lives transformed. Clara recalled one mother battling addiction and domestic abuse who arrived with two young children, both non-verbal and struggling with behavioral challenges. Gateway staff reached out and gave this mother a hand up. "Today, those kids are thriving, they're talking, and a lot of the aggressive behaviors have gone away," said Clara.

"New moms are always coming. There's always new ways that we can grow and improve to better support each of these families."



# GATEWAY FORGE PROGRAM

Forge is a 40-week residential program for men and women, designed to guide individuals out of homelessness by addressing their invisible poverty and leading them towards freedom and independence.

The program is specifically for individuals facing challenges like addiction, criminal history, or ongoing employment and housing struggles. Through trauma-informed and evidence-based classes, Biblical counseling, hands-on employment training, and certifications, Forge offers a path to lasting, Christ-centered transformation.



**18**  
STUDENTS GRADUATED



**57**  
ENTERED FORGE PROGRAM



**17,550**  
HOURS OF EDUCATIONAL TRAINING



**10,320**  
HOURS OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING



**1,404**  
HOURS OF INDIVIDUAL BIBLICAL COUNSELING

## MEET JAMES

For many years, James had been cycling in and out of area missions. Alcoholism had taken a toll on his body and soul.

When James was accepted into Gateway’s Forge Program, everything began to change for him. He followed a strict daily routine, including regular Bible classes attendance. The love and support he found in relationships propelled him forward, encouraging him to join a local church in Holland.

In that congregation, James dedicated himself to a discipleship journey and chose to publicly declare that his old life was buried. Last February, Gateway leaders and fellow Forge students celebrated as James was baptized—a powerful symbol of his transformation from death to life. Your support made that life-changing moment possible!





## GATEWAY THRIVE INTERNSHIP

Graduating from our Forge Program is a rewarding and hard-earned experience. The men and women who complete the program are radically changed from who they were when they first walked through our shelter doors. For those desiring to delve deeper into living as a disciple of Jesus Christ, our leadership team encourages them to apply for Gateway's Thrive Internship Program.

Thrive provides a safe, supportive, and structured substance-free environment in which men and women can walk out their

faith. The interns receive coaching, supervision, and accountability while building healthy relationships with our staff, other program participants, and fellowship at a local Christian church.

As Thrive interns serve around the Mission, they learn to serve others like Jesus did and are able to cultivate their God-given skills and talents while discovering His purpose for their lives.



**5**  
STUDENTS  
GRADUATED



**21**  
ENTERED  
THRIVE  
PROGRAM

## MEET BRAD

Brad, a guest who experienced transformation at Gateway last year, had spent two years evading the law. As an addict, he was unwilling to confront the legal consequences of his past behavior. But he recalls waking up sick every day and praying one cold night: "God, I don't want to live like this."

A week later, in December 2023, Brad had an encounter with the police and used his one phone call to contact Gateway Mission. A team member shared that he could apply to the Forge Program. "They said they'd hold a bed for me," Brad recalled.

Afterwards, he was released to Gateway's custody and was accepted into the Gateway Forge Program, through which he was able to heal his relational poverty and overcome addiction. "A lot of people come in here," Gateway Mission Men's Director Greg told Brad. "But I can tell you're going to thrive."

Immediately, Brad had to establish a routine: wake up at 6 a.m., make his bed, join the other interns at the bus stop, and dive into a full day of classes and work.

In preparation for his graduation from Forge, Brad applied to and was accepted into the Gateway Thrive Program, where he is currently earning a stipend and receiving job skills training. Our interns serve in every area of Gateway, from the retail floor and production area to other vital parts of our ministry.

Brad said that the love, sense of community, and spiritual focus at Gateway distinguished it from the other rehab and detox centers he had experienced.

**"I've never found anything like Gateway, because Jesus is involved, and He's the glue that holds everything together." – Brad**







## GATEWAY STORE

### A Thrift Store With a Mission

The Gateway Store helps build a stronger, healthier community here in West Michigan. The revenue generated through the Gateway Store supports the ongoing expenses of Gateway Mission. When you shop at our thrift store, you are not only benefitting from great quality items, but you are making a difference in the lives of those seeking life change through the Gateway Mission programs.



**\$2,735,225**  
TOTAL DONATION VALUE

**\$2,332,876**  
TOTAL 2024 SALES



**144,078**  
PIECES OF CLOTHING

**366,598**  
HARD GOODS

**8,803**  
PIECES OF FURNITURE



**20,633**  
DONATION DROP OFFS

**520,259**  
TOTAL ITEMS



# VOLUNTEERING

It's true that Gateway Mission is blessed to have incredible staff members who work around the clock keeping our doors open. Yet what many may not see is the network of volunteers who pour out their hearts and sacrifice their time to impact our guests in countless ways.

These selfless volunteers make a lasting impact through their time and efforts. From preparing meals to stocking shelves, collecting donations, sewing blankets, baking birthday cakes, and countless other tasks, their contributions ease the workload for our team and leave a meaningful impression on our guests.

We're deeply grateful for every person who volunteers, whether it's on a weekly, monthly, or occasional basis. Simply put, we couldn't fulfill our mission without them.



**23,580**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



**1,468**  
TOTAL VOLUNTEERS



**151**  
VOLUNTEER GROUPS



## MEET LIL

### A Mentor, Mom, and Motivated Volunteer Who's Impacted Countless Lives

"I'm the oldest of nine kids, and I was taught to work," said Lil, who began a decade ago preparing and pricing donated clothes before expanding her role to include linens and hard goods.

She found so many ways to contribute that her volunteer hours grew to five days a week. "At one point, there were about 25 different things that I did," said Lil. "I've trained up some students to cover many of those tasks. You just gotta check on 'em."

Gateway students have daily quotas to meet, with Lil holding them to high standards. Her coaching is often heard in the back: "Come on, guys, you know you can do better than that!"

Yet this mother of two also gives students space to open up. Lil recalled a young man who was briefly with Gateway and returned months later, wearing an ankle monitor. Many wouldn't be able to resist the question, but not Lil. She focused on the

daily tasks in front of them and allowed him the space to broach the subject on his own. In time, he did, saying during a shift: "I suppose you're wondering why I've got this fancy jewelry on my foot and why I'm back."

Lil replied, "Hey, that's up to you. If you want to tell me, I'll listen." He opened up about his drinking problem, about how he thought he could just have a beer or two and still be able to drive. "But, you know, that doesn't work," he said with regret. "I really screwed up. Here I am, you got me again."

"Hey, it is what it is," she said firmly, with a smile. "You've got to take care of it now." The hard-working woman skilled at production isn't interested in lectures or handouts but impact.

Lil attributes her impact to the Lord. "I try to do what God's given me the strength to do," she said. "These students need Him in their lives. When we talk, sometimes it really does them good."







## WOMEN OF HOPE GIVING CIRCLE

### Together We Can Do More

The Women of Hope Giving Circle is a Christ-centered community of women who pool their resources to multiply the impact of their time and gifts. Together, they serve the women and children of Gateway Mission, fostering hope and transformation.

At the 2023 launch, each member made three commitments:

- Give a financial gift.
- Volunteer their time.
- Deepen their understanding of homelessness.

One year later, the circle gathered for the “1st Annual Night of Celebration.” The outcome of their efforts was powerfully showcased. And the combined achievements were nothing less than inspiring! Highlights included:

- Members donated over \$37,000 to fund essential needs identified by shelter staff. These contributions supported various initiatives, including childcare items and security upgrades, enhancing the safety and well-being of everyone in the building.
- Women taught Bible studies, mentored students, and offered listening ears to hurting people.
- Teams organized special events for Gateway guests, such as a Valentine’s Day Dinner and Fall Harvest Party.
- Prayer warriors stormed the heavens on behalf of those who did not know how to pray for themselves.
- Grandmothers rocked babies.
- Encouragers sent countless cards and baked goodies to cheer our frontline staff members.

By working collectively, Women of Hope continues to create a strong support system for both staff and guests alike. We believe—and have witnessed this year—that together, we can do more to bring hope and create lasting change!

Visit [hopefoundhere.org/womenofhope](https://hopefoundhere.org/womenofhope) to find out how you can link arms with other women who are making a difference in the lives of those we serve!

## MEET KAYLEE

### Social Worker Finds Purpose in Women of Hope Giving Circle

“As a social worker, one of our core beliefs is that every person is inherently worthy of dignity and respect. And I see that being a priority at Gateway Mission—not only to provide food and shelter, but the small, special things that highlight how each person is unique and important.”

Kaylee didn’t just see those special moments; she helped make them happen. Last year, Kaylee linked up with Gateway’s Women of Hope Giving Circle.

While finishing her master’s degree in social work, Kaylee jumped right in, participating last year in a “secret Santa” Christmas outreach. Volunteers work with moms living at Gateway Mission to shop for their children, then together wrap those toys a few nights before Christmas.

Two months later, Kaylee helped Gateway volunteers host an elegant, three-course Valentine’s Day dinner, to express God’s love for the women at the shelter.



Kaylee said that the centrality of the Gospel at Gateway makes it stand out. “A lot of ministries will say they’re Christ-centered, then their work doesn’t really reflect that. At Gateway, team members view trauma through the lens of spiritual healing. Even as guests’ basic needs of food and shelter are being met, staff members are helping them go deeper to address root issues.”

“Every guest I’ve met has completely flipped the stereotypes upside down that people have of individuals experiencing homelessness,” said Kaylee. “Their stories are so complex, and how Gateway intersects with their lives is dynamic and powerful. I think volunteering has given me great empathy and understanding.”



# BRINGING HOPE TO THE STREETS

## How the H.O.P.E. Team Is Transforming Lives in Our Community

At Gateway Mission, we are committed to meeting people where they are—offering not only shelter and meals but also a pathway to lasting transformation. With homelessness rising, our newly launched H.O.P.E. Team (Homeless Outreach Partnership and Education) is bridging the gap between those in crisis and the resources that can change their lives. This dedicated team provides direct outreach to individuals living on the streets, offering personalized guidance, connections to essential services, and a message of hope. Their work is built on trust and compassion, addressing both immediate needs and long-term solutions for stability and self-sufficiency.

At the heart of the H.O.P.E. Team are three remarkable leaders: Rudy, a retired Holland Police Department detective sergeant, and Art, a former gang leader turned mentor and minister. Dave, a retired detective with the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, leads the team. Dave and Rudy's law

enforcement experiences give them a deep understanding of the challenges faced by those on the streets, while Art's personal transformation serves as living proof that change is possible. "When we meet people where they are, with compassion and understanding, transformation becomes possible," says Rudy. Art echoes this sentiment, drawing from his own journey to encourage others: "I've been in their shoes. Now, I can show them there's a way out."

Since launching, the H.O.P.E. Team has been actively engaging with individuals experiencing homelessness, collaborating with local businesses, law enforcement, and service providers to develop a holistic approach to the crisis. Their efforts have led to increased community awareness, stronger service coordination, and a reduction in vagrancy and panhandling.

The H.O.P.E. Team's work is made possible by the generosity of donors like you. Your support provides food, shelter, counseling, and job training—critical resources that help our homeless neighbors take steps toward a brighter future. Together, we can transform lives and bring hope to the streets—one person at a time.







# Building **HOPE**

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

## Investing in the Future

Gateway Mission is proud to announce the groundbreaking of a transformative expansion project that will significantly enhance our capacity to meet the growing needs of the community.

The new Men's Center will quadruple our current capacity, providing not just shelter but a safe, dignified space where unsheltered men can find refuge and new opportunities. By addressing the critical shortage of shelter in West Michigan, this project will empower more individuals to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into the community with comprehensive support.

In addition to increasing the number of beds, the new facility will feature a state-of-the-art culinary space to prepare and serve nutritious, high-quality meals for those in need. The upgraded kitchen will meet growing demand while maintaining Gateway's high standards of care and nourishment.

The expansion will also include improved program spaces, enhanced case management access, and a variety of supportive services designed to help men transition from homelessness to thriving members of the West Michigan community.



The Men's Center serves as a lifeline for men in Allegan and Ottawa counties, offering a safe, supportive environment where they can restore hope and dignity. This groundbreaking marks a pivotal step in our mission to address homelessness with long-term, sustainable solutions.

Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2025, with the Men's Center opening its doors to the community shortly thereafter.



# THE JOURNEY OF YOUR DONATION

When you financially partner with Gateway Mission, your donation goes on a journey, impacting people along the way. Guests are able to grow, take charge of their lives, and be transformed because of the support they receive at Gateway Mission that is only possible because of you. We are truly grateful for all gifts, no matter the size or type. **THANK YOU!**

## So where does your donation go?

The journey of your donation begins when it arrives at our facility.



### Gateway Store

Physical donations from clothes to couches, books to bikes, get sorted and sent to our store where customers purchase quality goods—and the revenue generated supports Gateway Mission in multiple ways.



### Emergency Shelters

For starters, your donation supports our Emergency Shelters where individuals and families receive a safe place to stay, hot meals, and support from staff members as they figure out their next steps.



### Gateway Programs

Next, your donation supports Gateway Programs. Students receive education and spiritual discipleship as well as on-the-job training at the Gateway Center.



### Capital Projects

Your donation can also be used for Capital Projects, like our Gateway Center. This campus operates a business that funds our ministry, providing coaching to our program students and serving as a connection point with our community.



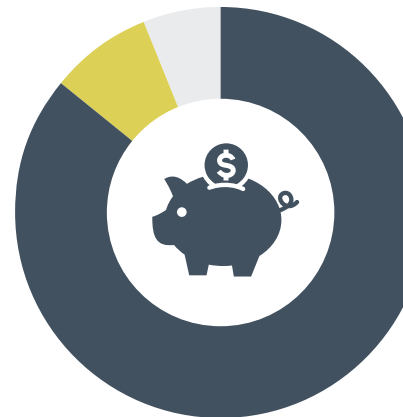
**Provide hope to transform lives, from the inside out.**

The journey of your donation does not stop when you give. It goes on to work throughout Gateway Mission to heal hearts, renew hope, and transform lives.





# 2024 FINANCIALS



## WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 24% | Individuals                              |
| 3%  | Corporate                                |
| 2%  | Churches                                 |
| 6%  | Trusts, Memorials, & Non-Recurring gifts |
| 28% | Store & Bailing                          |
| 1%  | Special Events                           |
| 2%  | Rent                                     |
| 31% | Gifts in Kind                            |
| 3%  | Other                                    |

## WHERE THE MONEY GOES

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| 86% | Programs             |
| 8%  | Management & General |
| 6%  | Fundraising          |



## MEET GREG

The Man Who Advocates for Guests Was Once One Himself

Nine years ago, Greg hit rock bottom with his alcohol and drug addiction. He was accepted into the Gateway Forge Program, intending to just “coast by.”

But it was the honesty of the men in the program that broke him. “I had lived a fake Christian life for 58 years,” said Greg. “I saw we all have problems. We all had lost families. This camaraderie of community and the Gospel showed me who Jesus really is.”

Following years of work and change, in summer 2023, Greg was named Gateway Men’s Center Director. His recent transformation journey helps him relate when a new guest sits down across from him at his desk.

“He’ll be going through his story of how he’s got here,” said Greg. “And my soul is crying because I’m screaming inside: That was me. My past is something I can never forget because I don’t want to repeat it.”

## MEET JESSICA

Finding a New Path Forward



After losing her young daughter, Jessica’s life spiraled into divorce, domestic violence, and struggles with addiction. With her son by her side, it felt like no one could help—until she found Gateway Mission.

To rebuild, Jessica joined Gateway’s Pathway program, but she found much more than financial coaching. “I wasn’t seeing successes,” she said, until a pivotal moment while doing chores. Reaching her breaking point by something as simple as stacking dishes, Jessica broke down. She opened up to a Gateway staff member, who encouraged her to “Give it to God.”

After praying, Jessica began to see things differently. Her overwhelming situation started to feel more manageable. More than anything, Jessica values the support of the Gateway team. “They really have my back,” she says. “Even when I don’t think I need it, I do.”

With the tools she gained from the Pathway Program, Jessica paid off bills, stabilized her finances, and began applying for housing. For the first time, she has savings and the option to create a new life for her and her children.

“I feel good about the choices I’m making,” Jessica shares. “I’m so grateful for Gateway.”





# GIVING HOPE FOR TRUE LIFE CHANGE



Will you help transform lives and our community today?

Gateway Mission serves as a gateway to healthier, more productive lives. It takes time. Hard work. God's love. And support . . . every day, every step of the way.

But we can't do it without the support of generous ministry partners like YOU!

Whether you choose to help through volunteering your time, becoming a Prayer Partner, donating items, partnering through your church, or making a financial gift—you will be helping our neighbors in need escape poverty for good!





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616.396.2200