

Journal

This Easter, Pat would like to say...

"THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE!"

My name is Pat, and I would like to thank Mel Trotter for saving my life. They have fed me, clothed me, have restored my relationships with my children and they have built me up spiritually. There's really nothing more I could ask for, and I want to thank all of you who support this ministry—from the bottom of my heart.

I am the ninth of ten children. My dad was an alcoholic who abused my mom. When I was 9 years old, she moved us from Mississippi to Michigan and raised us as a single parent. She had to be very strict with us to keep us all in line. I never used drugs until I grew up. It was my 30th birthday and I wanted to be my own person. First I tried cigarettes, then cocaine and finally crack. I wanted to fit in with people I thought were my friends.

I became a functioning addict. I kept on working as a Preschool Teacher just as I had for ten years, but I used drugs. When I was 40, I got married and even managed to keep my husband in the dark for years. Eventually I lost my husband, my stepchildren, and my home. Finally, ***I lost me.*** I moved in with my grown daughter who was taking care of my son because I couldn't. I didn't care. I got to the point where I was taking money from her. The only thing I was interested in was drugs.

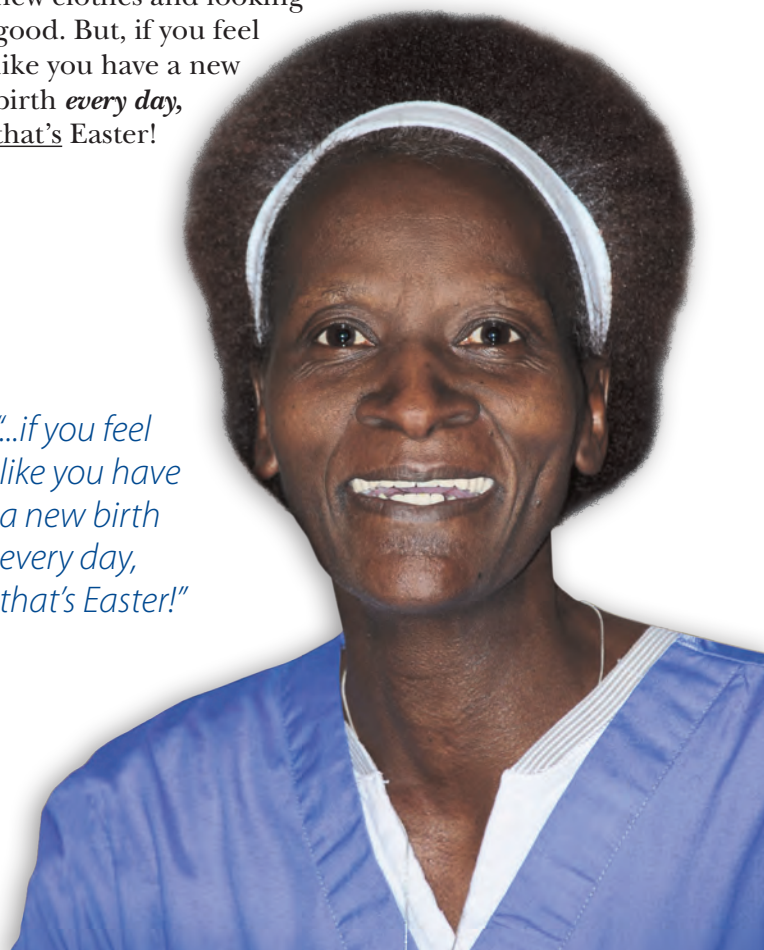
Broken but not ready

It was the day after Memorial day in 2008 when I knew I had to do something and came to Mel Trotter for the first time. To be honest, it wasn't like I ***chose*** to come. It was like ***God led me*** to Mel Trotter. I was broken, but I wasn't broken enough to want to get rid of my pride. I stayed exactly 45 days and those 45 days showed me there is something better than drugs. But I still wasn't ready. I went to church every Sunday and bought drugs on the way home. It was like I was engaged to God but I was dancing with the devil.

It was a little over a year before I came back to Mel Trotter. During that time, I went through a recovery program and stayed clean for 180 days. But I was still carrying a lot of guilt and a lot of shame. And no matter how clean I was, I knew I would use again if I didn't work through all those issues. So I came back to Mel Trotter a second time in June of 2009. I was one of the broken ones. To heal, I had to be grounded with God.

I have totally found a new life at Mel Trotter, and soon I'll be a licensed Certified Nursing Assistant. Every day I wake up singing praise to God. Each new day is like Easter to me. Most people think Easter is about buying new clothes and looking good. But, if you feel like you have a new birth ***every day***, that's Easter!

"...if you feel like you have a new birth every day, that's Easter!"



READ MORE STORIES OF HOPE ONLINE

www.meltrotter.org/storiesofhope.aspx

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Stories of God's provision through you

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40,000
Easter Meals



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Hope to
Hold On To



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A message from
Chico Daniels





We need a full pantry to provide... 40,000 MEALS THIS EASTER SEASON!







As we rejoice over the coming of spring and the hope of Easter, let's not forget that hunger hurts—no matter what the season. In these hard times, there has been an expansion of situational poverty in our community and many Grand Rapidsians need our help to be able to eat regular, nutritious meals.

This Easter season, Mel Trotter Ministries will provide over 40,000 meals and we need help from friends like you to replenish the supplies in our Food Pantry Program. Your donations of canned fruits, vegetables, beans and peanut butter would be greatly appreciated at this time. We also welcome gifts of cash for purchasing the food we need to restock our pantry shelves. May God bless you for caring.

HOPE BY THE NUMBERS

JANUARY–DECEMBER 2010

Here's how your compassion changed lives in 2010:

-  Meals served: **181,345**
-  Nights of shelter provided: **74,252**
-  Articles of clothing given: **4,688**
-  Chapel attendance: **65,547**
-  GEDs earned: **5**
-  Dental visits: **294**

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER!



- Please pray for:**
- On-time completion for the new Women's Aftercare housing
 - Holistic stability for residents in the Mission's S.A.V.E. Program and Shelter Employment opportunities for our Graduates
- Please give praise for:**
- The many donations of coats and boots for the winter that we received
 - A female resident's perfect score of 800 on her GED Reading pre-test
 - Opportunities that are enabling men to re-connect with their children after years of being absentee fathers



GIVE HURTING NEIGHBORS HOPE TO HOLD ON TO

Our 2011 Hope Tote Campaign is under way, and we need help to get ready to distribute thousands of Hope Totes to the West Michigan area's neediest men, women and children beginning this Easter.

A Hope Tote is a small plastic bag that can be filled with inexpensive, unused items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tissues and socks—basics homeless people can use to clean up and feel better. When they do, they're more likely to make other changes that can transform their lives forever!

Our Hope Tote Campaign is a meaningful way for you, your family or group to make a difference. We supply the Hope Totes; you fill and return them to Mel Trotter Ministries or to the nearest Biggby Coffee location by April 23. Soon your little bags will be in grateful hands! For more information, please call Sandy Enders at (616) 454-8249, ext. 242. Or visit us online at www.meltrotter.org/eventcalendar.aspx

Thank you!



With your help, we will distribute thousands of Hope Totes like these!



Planned Giving... FINISHING WELL NO MATTER WHAT

Grimacing with each step, a lone runner hobbled around the track. His name was John Stephen Akhwari from Tanzania—the last man to finish the marathon. The spectators rose to their feet, cheering and applauding as though Akhwari were the winner.

The next day, Akhwari fielded questions from sports journalists about his extraordinary feat. "Why," a reporter began, "after sustaining the kinds of injuries you did, would you ever get up and proceed to the finish line, when there was no way you could possibly place in the race?" John Stephen Akhwari said this: "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me 5,000 miles to finish it."

Would you like to finish well? Ask for a FREE copy of "5 Secrets of Good and Faithful Servants" by simply checking the box on the enclosed reply card or contacting Tim Swiney, Director of Development, at Mel Trotter Ministries at (616) 454-8249 ext. 268 or timswiney@meltrotter.org

THAT OLD VEHICLE IS STILL GOOD FOR SOMETHING!

Donating your used vehicles to Mel Trotter Ministries is easy to do, and is a great gift to our local community.

We accept cars, trucks and vans, whether they are operational or not. We'll even pick up your used vehicles *for free*—or you can drop them off at one of our retail stores.



They are looked over and repaired, if necessary, by state-certified mechanics, while teaching our residents a job skill. We resell the vehicle at a low price to benefit those who need transportation. All donations support the work of Mel Trotter Ministries. You'll enjoy a generous tax deduction—and the joy of knowing you're making a difference.

For more information visit www.meltrotter.org/donatevehicle.aspx



STAY CONNECTED WITH US THIS SPRING!

Visit us at any of the following sites for up-to-date information about the work you support.

-  Find us on facebook: **Mel Trotter Ministries**
-  Follow us on Twitter: **@meltrotter**

PLEASE JOIN US

- Hope Tote**
March 1, 2011–April 22, 2011
Drop off your Hope Tote bags at Mel Trotter Ministries or at your nearest Biggby Coffee location.
- Celebration Banquet—DeVos Place**
April 14, 2011
- 5/3 River Bank Run Charity Partner**
May 14, 2011
If you are running, please consider choosing Mel Trotter as your charity partner of choice.
- Golf Marathon of Hope—Railside Golf Course**
June 22, 2011

A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM CHICO

MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES

Dear Friend of Mel Trotter Ministries,

On December 2 when the first big snow fell, I knew we were facing a long winter. As I prayed that no one would perish on our streets, I was already looking forward to April!

How grateful we are at Mel Trotter Ministries that we're beginning to thaw out and spring is coming. Spring is something truly to rejoice over here. It's like no other time of the year when the flowers start budding and the birds start singing! And, of course, soon it will be Easter.

One of our clients was sharing with me that Easter is not just "a" resurrection day to him. This man said that now **every** day is like resurrection Sunday—because of the lifestyle change he has experienced at Mel Trotter. This is a man who grew up in a family of faith and went to a Christian college. But somewhere along the line, he replaced God with the bottle—and alcohol took over his life. Now, with the help he has received, he has returned to God and experienced transformation...like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon.

Butterflies are God's tiny teachers! The metamorphosis that a caterpillar undergoes as it becomes a gorgeous creature with wings is so symbolic of the sin condition. We're weighed down until Christ comes into our lives and fills us with His spirit. Then we sprout wings and soar to higher and higher heights. This is what happens to the men and women, boys and girls, who end up living at Mel Trotter Ministries for any length of time. They begin to recognize the hope that Christ offers. Hope for a better life...and victory. Once they are set free from drugs, alcohol and self-centered living, they soar. They serve! It's amazing to behold.

Your gifts and prayers are used by God to claim thousands of lives for Christ every year here at Mel Trotter Ministries. This is what we pray for. And you know, God **does** answer prayer! I am praying today that every day is resurrection day...for you.

Your friend,

Chico Daniels, President & CEO



Rev. Chico Daniels
President & CEO

"Your gifts and prayers are used by God to claim at least 2,000 lives for Christ every year..."

OUR MISSION

To demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ toward the hungry, homeless and hurting of the Grand Rapids area.

MY EASTER GIFT

HERE'S MY GIFT OF:

\$15 \$35 \$50 \$150 \$_____

Please complete this slip and return it to Mel Trotter Ministries with your generous Easter gift. Your donation is tax deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Please make your check payable to: Mel Trotter Ministries

Please send me a FREE copy of "5 Secrets of Good and Faithful Servants"

Donate online by credit card at <http://easter.meltrotter.org>

225 Commerce SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (616) 454-8249 www.meltrotter.org

MEL TROTTER
MINISTRIES