

MTM

NEWSLETTER

February 2021



**“I’m glad people
didn’t give up on me.”**

Redemption is possible this Easter!
Give those experiencing hunger and
homelessness a fresh start!

MEL TROTTER
MINISTRIES

Then came Sunday . . .

This Easter, I understand the disciples of Jesus more than ever; you probably do, too.

Friday, the day Jesus was crucified, was a dark day. Their entire world collapsed around them. Things they had known or believed just days before were no longer true. Think about Palm Sunday and how the crowds welcomed Jesus. Suddenly, he was hanging on a cross. How quickly life changed!

You and I have experienced those same feelings through the pandemic. Life as we knew it quickly changed. What we believed as normal suddenly wasn't. Just like with the disciples, devastating changes brought fear, uncertainty and anxiety.

By Saturday, the disciples were in mourning. Reality hit that things were indeed different. They struggled to know how to move forward and get on with their lives. Hopelessness, confusion, depression set in. They heard varying messages and didn't know who or what to trust.

As the tragic impact of the pandemic continues, maybe you are wondering who and what you can trust. But the Easter story gives us all hope.

Resurrection Sunday brought redemption! God made a way to overcome our shame and guilt. Because of what Jesus Christ did on Friday and then on Sunday, there is new life, new hope and new possibilities!

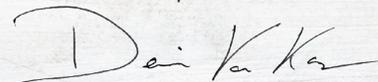
Because Christ has RISEN, we can be RESTORED! At Mel Trotter, we see the redeeming hope of Resurrection Sunday at work daily. Your continued support of Mel Trotter reveals the hope of Easter Sunday to those who are living in the darkness of Friday and the despair of Saturday. From a warm meal to a night of rest to life-changing resources, you are extending the hand of Christ to people in need.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 2021 can be a year of redemption! Read through the enclosed articles to see how God is using the resources

you provide to give new life to those experiencing hunger and homelessness in greater Grand Rapids. You'll see the power of a fresh start through Saulo's story. Learn what a spark of hope can do when you read Tecca's story.

Thank you for giving our struggling neighbors a glimpse of the Easter story in action.
Redemption and new life are ahead! Sunday is coming!

Grace and peace,



Dennis Van Kampen
President/CEO
Mel Trotter Ministries



Make a bigger impact this year than ever before!

Put your concern for those experiencing hunger and homelessness into action every single month as a Friend of Mel Trotter. When you commit to monthly support as a recurring donor, your dollars go even further to reach those in need in greater Grand Rapids.

Here's a quick glimpse of how you can increase your impact to reach those in need:

- \$25 a month provides 12 hearty meals.
- \$50 a month provides 3 hours of life-changing advocacy and ministry.
- \$100 a month provides 1 full day of meals, advocacy and ministry.

Become a friend to help us plan ahead for the services we can offer and how many people we can impact. Your ongoing support will make a big difference for those who are in great need.

For more information, go to meltrotter.org/friend.



“I’m glad people didn’t give up on me.”

You are putting the redeeming message of Easter into action through your support of Mel Trotter.

Saulo Montalvo believes in second chances.

Sent to prison at age 16 for his role in the murder of a store clerk, his life could have been over. But Saulo got a second chance.

His redemption began with his father visiting him month after month. After reflection and study, little by little, his heart changed with God’s help.

“Before, I was a mess, very selfish and with little regard for others. Being in prison and having to spend all that time in introspection and writing to figure out the whys helped me heal, change and view people in a different light,” he says.

While in prison, Saulo enrolled in Calvin University’s Prison Initiative program, studied social work and participated in the Prison Fellowship program. He also became certified in restorative justice mediation. Then, after 23 years, Saulo was released from prison for a second chance at life.

Each person is worth everything that is invested in them.

As part of his transformation, Saulo reconciled with the family of the man who was killed. He promised them that he would make a difference for others.

Today, a redeemed Saulo serves as Mel Trotter’s first

shift supervisor and day center activity coordinator.

“As I help and serve the guests at Mel Trotter, in some way I’m making up for what I did and keeping that promise to the family of the man who was killed. There is not enough I can do to make up for what I did, but I know I’m called to help people.”

At Mel Trotter, Saulo is part of the team that includes partners like you who help others get a second chance at life. “I’m trying to incorporate more activities to help get all age groups more physically active, as well as educational activities such as writing resumes, doing



interviews, and other self-help classes,” says Saulo, who has been with MTM about a year. Guests play Wii bowling, and he continues to find a variety of ways to keep them active.

“This is a relatively new thing at Mel Trotter, and it can be hard to get guests on board. With the Wii game, though, more guests want to get involved and are breaking out of their shells,” he said. “Activity serves as a distraction from life’s struggles.”

“People know they are cared about and loved here at Mel Trotter. Each person is worth everything that is invested in them,” he says. “I’m sad when a person is given up on because they are difficult. I’m glad people didn’t give up on me.”

The hope of Easter is forgiveness, grace and redemption for people just like Saulo. At Mel Trotter, your generosity gives those experiencing hunger and homelessness in greater Grand Rapids a fresh start and the hope of transformation. Together, we want to help end homelessness by empowering those who walk through our doors to live with dignity and purpose. In addition to our programs and efforts to help people overcome substance abuse and poor choices, we want to equip people for gainful employment. **Your generosity is putting the hope of Easter into action every day!**

Guest Update

Tecca's Journey to Independence

"Homelessness can happen to anyone."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last month, you may have seen an introduction to Tecca in our letter. We are pleased to report that she continues to succeed and live independently. In case you missed it, here is her complete story.

Never. Never in a million years did Tecca believe she would be homeless.

Tecca traveled across the state to Grand Rapids to find work because the economy was so bad in her hometown. She found a job and worked hard to build a life of independence. But it all came crashing down around her one icy winter day.

"I slipped, fell and broke my hip," Tecca explains.

Her injury required four months of intensive rehabilitation in a nursing center. While she was working her way back to health, Tecca was evicted!

"While I recovered, a friend went by my house and found an eviction notice on the door," she recalls. "My church got together and saved all my belongings and put them in storage. But I had nowhere to go."

Growing numbers of people like Tecca in greater Grand Rapids who have never been at risk before are experiencing homelessness. Because of your continued support, Mel Trotter continues to be here for hurting people like Tecca.



Your generosity makes this possible. Thank you!

"I found out about Mel Trotter, but my pride kept me in my car for two days before coming through the door. I thought it was rock bottom, the worst place to be. But excruciating pain and hunger finally forced me to ask for help," she admits.

When Tecca arrived at Mel Trotter, everything changed for her, thanks to friends like you.

"The very first day, I was given so much grace. I was amazed," Tecca says.

Tecca got the food she needed, found a warm place to rest and so much more. Once her basic needs were met, Tecca found resources that would help her get back on her feet—physically, emotionally and financially.

"When I came to Mel Trotter, I was using a walker. I still couldn't fully walk," she says. "But it was through love and support that I was able to walk again. Then, I wanted to take computer courses, life skills, everything they had to offer! That gave me a sense of self-worth, it gave me drive," she explains.

Today, Tecca has a full-time job and her own place. She learned personal and job skills from her time at Mel Trotter that she continues to use today. The support of friends like you gave Tecca a fresh start.

"I was healed here at Mel Trotter." - Tecca





New Life, New Hope

Easter brings the hope of renewing our souls as we begin to notice the earth bursting forth with life all around us. Perhaps you can recall sweet childhood recollections of excitedly hunting for colorful eggs hidden in the backyard, or even maybe exclaiming, “The Easter Bunny really DID come!” as you bite the ear off your chocolate bunny propped up lovingly in a woven basket complete with translucent green grass.

Or maybe you remember when Mother took you shopping for new Easter clothes—frilly pastel dresses, new white shoes and an Easter bonnet adorned with spring flowers and ribbons for the girls, and a new suit and tie (just like Dad’s) for the boys. Remember when Grandma and Grandpa came over after church and the whole family sat around the big dining room table spread with a starched white tablecloth and laden with a feast that rivaled Thanksgiving dinner?

Yes, Easter Sunday was a day of blessings and a celebration of a resurrected Savior—for some of us...

Dear Readers, take note: For many of our guests living at Mel Trotter Ministries, no such memories exist. For many, the sweetness and innocence of a loving, trusting childhood was never realized—nor could it even be imagined. Basically, for them, the Easter Bunny was hit by a bus, and the eggs weren’t delivered to their address. No one took them shopping for anything special, and the family didn’t join together for Easter festivities to celebrate a risen Savior or anything else. So, how do we, as Christ-followers,

help bridge the gap from hopelessness to the hope we profess to have in a resurrected Savior?

If we truly believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and set our faith on a firm foundation, then our lives each day should reflect the hope we have of new life.

At Mel Trotter Ministries, we are committed to serving with excellence, demonstrating the compassion of Christ to all who enter our doors, extending the hope we have for transformed, victorious living.

Every MTM employee is an ambassador for Christ, and as we build trusted, loving relationships with our MTM guests, we share our great expectations of hope and promise we have for new life found only in a risen Savior. We meet our guests right where they’re at, extending a hand, lifting them up and lifting them out, encouraging strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

The real Easter message—resurrected life. Lifted up and lifted out...not like colorful candy eggs from an Easter basket, but lifted up and out of the “grave” we were all once in. “He is not here! He is risen!”

PRAISE BE TO GOD THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST! IN HIS GREAT MERCY HE HAS GIVEN US NEW BIRTH INTO A LIVING HOPE THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD. – PETER 1:3

May our Lord and Savior bless you richly as you seek to bless others in this season of new hope.

– Chaplain Martha

“All I wanted was a shower and to be clean.” Your gifts helped provide a mobile shower unit.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, Mel Trotter Ministries now offers those who are struggling in the community an opportunity to feel something you and I take for granted—clean.

We have recently added a mobile shower unit to offer cleanliness and dignity to unsheltered individuals in our community.

One woman, upon seeing the shower unit, cried tears of joy and shouted, “All I wanted was a

shower and to be clean, now maybe I can get a job and get a house!”

Everyone is made in the image of God and worthy of dignity and respect.

Thank you for giving those experiencing homelessness in greater Grand Rapids the chance to shower.



Events and Announcements

Important ways that you could further support the Mission.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming Mel Trotter Ministries events and volunteer opportunities!

Meet the Mission Luncheons

At the Meet the Mission Luncheon, you'll learn about the faces of homelessness and how MTM works to restore the lives of the hundreds of men, women and children who experience a circumstance of hunger or homelessness at some point on their journey.

Please join us for this complimentary virtual event and learn more about how you can get involved and partner with us to change lives. Please visit meltrotter.org/luncheon for event dates and registration information.



Volunteer to help a neighbor

Join the Mel Trotter Ministries team of volunteers and help vulnerable neighbors, one life at a time, overcome homelessness. Here are some ways you can volunteer:

Outreach Team

Join the outreach team in building relationships and providing basic needs and meals to those who are unsheltered in our community. This role includes riding in the van to various encampments and locations around the city, building relationships and handing out basic needs to the individuals we encounter. Other opportunities are in helping with the Mobile Shower Unit where we provide a hot shower for those who are in need. This includes helping with set up, tear down, handing out towels and hygiene kits, as well as building relationships.

Opportunity is available to: 1-2 people per shift.

Opportunity is available: weekdays, a three hour commitment is required.

We are looking for volunteers to join our team on a consistent basis.



Donation Room

Mel Trotter has been incredibly blessed by the generosity of the community and is looking for volunteers to organize, sort and clean the donation room. This role includes moving and lifting heavy boxes, sweeping and closely looking at donations for quality.

Opportunity is available to: groups and individuals.

Opportunity is available: weekdays, a three hour commitment is required.

For more information about these opportunities, or to sign up, please visit us at meltrotter.org/volunteer.



MEL TROTTER
MINISTRIES

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meltrotter.org

Our Mission Statement

Mel Trotter Ministries exists to demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ, through rescue and restoration for anyone experiencing hunger and homelessness.



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

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