

MTM

NEWSLETTER

March 2020



 **Risen &
Restored**
ANNUAL EASTER CAMPAIGN

BECAUSE HE IS RISEN,
MISTY'S LIFE IS RESTORED.

MEL TROTTER
MINISTRIES

EASTER PROVIDES ETERNAL LIFE TOMORROW AND A FULFILLING LIFE TODAY.

My favorite Easter verse right now is John 3:17, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." At the heart of Christ's death and resurrection is God saying that He loves everyone. Period. And that He offers life through Christ.

The love and compassion of the Easter story are why Mel Trotter exists. We believe that every single person who has ever walked this earth is made in the image of a God who loves them and knit them together in their mother's womb.

Our mission is to connect people to that love without judgment or condemnation. None of us deserve

God's love, but He loves us anyway—even if we don't feel like we deserve it or even if we've done terrible things.

Because of His great love, God offers not only eternal life, but also life now. Through the cross, eternal life is available to those who would put their faith in Him. Jesus also came to show us how to live right now.

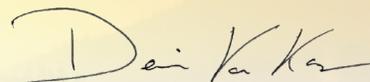
God has great plans to prosper us, and we believe that doesn't include dying under a bridge.

I know you feel the same as a friend of Mel Trotter Ministries.

Your generous gifts today will connect hurting people with God's love and redeeming power. You can put the redemption and hope of Easter into action today for your neighbors

experiencing hunger and homelessness. **Your support will not only meet their physical needs, but also give them the resources to start a new life in Christ... a fulfilling life.**

Grace and Peace,



Dennis Van Kampen
President/CEO, Mel Trotter Ministries



EXTRAORDINARY GENEROSITY!

How you came through in a BIG way for neighbors in need.

A place to sleep

Last fall, as we planned for the frigid winter conditions, we wanted to provide more beds with dignity and compassion for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. The numbers of guests were expected to go through the roof. So, we asked for your help to purchase custom wooden beds, replace old mattresses and supply new linens and pillows. And you did it!

Friends like you helped exceed our goal of \$25,000 by raising \$106,293.

In the past few months, your generosity has helped ensure those who walked through our doors could have a safe, warm night of refuge. Thank you! Also, thank you to partner Next Step of West Michigan for building the bunk beds for our women's refuge and to our friends at Standale Lumber for donating the lumber.

Your generous giving showed each guest that they are loved and valued and deserve the compassion of Christ.

An outreach vehicle to bring hope to the streets

Praise God that donors like you helped raise \$34,967 on Giving Tuesday for a new outreach van and supplies. Your generosity exceeded our goal and provided us with a reliable van to reach our neighbors who are in need.

Turkey Drop feeds families

Thanks to your generosity, our annual Turkey Drop campaign brought in 4,430 turkeys that went to families in need throughout West Michigan. You blew away our goal of 1,600! So many more families who would not otherwise have a Thanksgiving meal were able to enjoy a special meal because of you.

MISTY IS A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

Your compassion empowered this single mom to turn her life around in Christ!



Misty sat down to chat as her young son Jaycob ran around the room, playing with his toys.

Near the window of her living room grew a houseplant she received upon graduating from Mel Trotter's Step-Up Recovery program. Misty looked around her home and reflected on how far she had come.

"A lot of bad happened in my life," she remembers. "I really had nobody. Then when I was 11, my mom passed away."

Thankfully, Misty's dad took her and her siblings in. But it wasn't easy raising seven kids. "My dad worked a lot to provide, but on the weekends he would do whatever he could to spend time with the seven of us. I never remember anything bad happening to me. He's everything to me." Misty found out five years ago that he actually isn't her biological father, but he never treated her any differently, and it makes her look up to him even more.

However, Misty still made mistakes. As a young woman, Misty got involved in bad relationships which led to drug abuse.

After suffering domestic violence from her boyfriend of eight years, Misty left to escape his ongoing abusive behavior. She was hoping for a fresh start with her children. She moved in with a new boyfriend, but Misty still struggled with her addiction.

Still yearning for a fresh start, Misty moved into her dad's home and soon found out that she was going to have another baby. However, her past was still too close; the mother of two young children knew she needed to get clean. She just didn't know how.

"After I found out I was pregnant, there was no doubt in my mind that I could not go back to my old life. I had to provide. I was scared. I was pregnant and homeless. I thought, I'm going to do whatever I can for this new child who has no idea of my past. He is innocent and I can't destroy him by being messed up," Misty recalls.

"I had a drug problem and as a result of my drug problem, I lost everything," Misty explains. She desperately wanted to learn how to overcome her issues and be a better mom. That's when she found out about Mel Trotter's Step-Up Recovery program.

The program sparked a transformation in Misty's heart and life. She embraced the redeeming power of Jesus Christ in her heart. **Because of your support, Misty grew closer to God, learned the tools to overcome her addictions, got a job and even has her own place now.**

"I walked out (of Mel Trotter) a new person. God led me here. God led me to Mel Trotter to change who I am and everything. Wow, look what Mel Trotter has done in my life...all the people they have brought into my life."

Misty says she now feels free to be the mother she dreamed of being. And she's not the only one who sees the transformation.

"I'm going to do whatever I can for this new child who has no idea of my past."

- Misty

"We were at church one week and they were playing this song, Good Good Father," Misty says. "My older son looked at me and was crying. I asked what was wrong and he said, 'Mom, you are so different.' I couldn't help but cry back. I can see that he sees the changes." Because of the generous and caring support of friends like you, Misty says she has hope for the future. "I have

(continues on next page)

so many hopes," she says. "I want to remain a sober person so I can watch my kids grow up and not hurt them. Someday, I hope to pay it forward. I've been blessed in amazing ways and I hope to help someone else. Maybe I can pay it forward with a meal, a warm jacket, or the little things. Part of being at Mel Trotter is seeing those little things, and how, even small things really make it a lot brighter. If you are an addict, it is possible

to stop. Keep going and don't give up. There is hope!"

Thank you for giving to help people like Misty experience Christ's redemption and new life. Your support makes all our programs and resources possible that give those experiencing hunger, homelessness and struggles hope!



MORE TO HER STORY...

Former pastor's wife finds herself in great need.

Raised on a fruit and dairy farm in Sparta, Michigan, Mary grew up attending church with her large family. If the church doors were open, the family was there.

"I came to know the Lord at age ten and was baptized at 13," she fondly remembered.

For the past 30 years, Mary has been a pastor's wife. Together they ran a rescue mission and poured their lives into street ministry around the state of Michigan. God called Mary and her husband to a church in Flint where they started building relationships with people on the streets. In 2011, Mary's husband Tom was wounded while doing street ministry in Flint.

"My husband became wheelchair-bound. As his sole caregiver, I became overwhelmed by the weight of it all and isolation. I eventually needed a knee replacement," Mary recalls.

Mary was the full-time caretaker for her husband and also caring for her adult daughter who has special needs. The pressure grew and it took a toll on her mentally, spiritually and physically. She was overwhelmed and isolated. She also drifted from the most important relationship she had, with Jesus.

Stressed and in pain, Mary found herself relying on painkillers and alcohol instead of the Lord. She was forced to place her husband in a nursing home. "The burdens seemed too heavy," she says. "I was at a loss, overwhelmed by what seemed like a hopeless situation."

Mary entered the Step-Up Recovery program at Mel Trotter Ministries in March of 2019. As she entered the doors, she couldn't help but reflect on the fact that she was living with—and healing with—a group of people she once devoted her ministry life to.

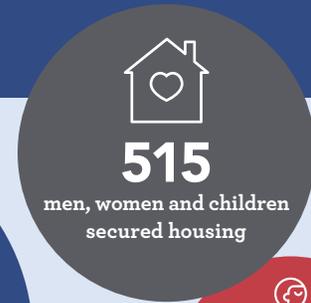
"At Mel Trotter, I renewed my faith in God. Programs and classes helped me recognize my abuse, my addictions. **God used Mel Trotter to lead me back to his wholeness, forgiveness and unconditional love.**"

Mary found her way back to the foot of the cross because of you. Your gifts not only provide hot meals and safe refuge, but you connect our neighbors in the greater Grand Rapids area to the life-changing hope of Jesus Christ.

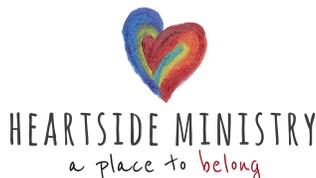
BY THE NUMBERS

How your support touches lives with every meal and night of safe refuge!

Thank you for all you do to save lives and bring people to Christ through Mel Trotter Ministries! Here's a quick glimpse of the incredible impact you are making. In the past year:



HEARTSIDE MINISTRY AND MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES ANNOUNCE MERGER



After two years of shared services, Grand Rapids homeless advocacy nonprofits Heartside Ministry and Mel Trotter Ministries have taken the next step in their partnership by formally merging. The merger of agency assets became official January 1, 2020.

"We've enjoyed a partnership with Mel Trotter Ministries for the past two years, and have realized the benefit of combining our teams and services to provide more for the people we serve," said Heartside Ministry executive director Gregory Randall. "We're attempting to show radical hospitality to the same people Mel Trotter serves and we're pursuing the same donors and volunteers, so it makes sense for us to collaborate in a formal manner."

"Both organizations have always shared the belief that demonstrating the compassion of Jesus toward anyone experiencing homelessness and extreme poverty is

what we're called to do, so we want to be the best stewards of the assets we have to fulfill that mission," said Mel Trotter Ministries President/CEO Dennis Van Kampen.

Randall and Van Kampen estimate it will take most of 2020 to sort out the best approach to combining all of the services offered by Heartside and Mel Trotter. Heartside Ministry will retain its name and current location at 54 Division Avenue South. The executives anticipate the eventual move of Heartside Ministry staff and programs to Mel Trotter's headquarters, located at 225 Commerce Avenue SW, in an effort to reduce operational expenses in maintaining two locations.

"We want to ensure continuity of services for our neighbors and guests, so we will not be making any immediate, bold changes with regard to the kinds of services we provide or how we provide them," said Randall, who intends to continue in his role as executive director of Heartside Ministry's services. "We want to take a measured approach and provide the best care we can for our neighbors."

For additional information, please visit us at meltrotter.org/heartside.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

for these upcoming Mel Trotter Ministries events and volunteer opportunities!

Meet the Mission Luncheon

Please join us on April 14 for our Meet the Mission Luncheon. Use the opportunity to network with area professionals while learning about the programs and services at Mel Trotter Ministries. Join us at this complimentary luncheon to learn more about how you can get more deeply involved and partner with us to change lives.

Make your reservation for this complimentary lunch by contacting Rhonda VanDyk at 616-588-8753. Networking begins at 11:45 a.m. with lunch and program at 12 p.m. The luncheon is at our downtown Mission at 225 Commerce Avenue Southwest, Grand Rapids, MI.

Annual Golf Outing

Plan to attend this year's Golf Outing on June 29, 2020. By golfing, you can help the vulnerable youth population overcome homelessness.

The registration fee of \$250 per golfer includes an 18-hole scramble, practice facilities, lunch, commemorative gift and chances to win prizes. This year's Golf Outing will be held at Railside Golf Club in Byron Center. We hope to see you there!

Register and learn more at meltrotter.org/golf.

Befriend Project: Your business can make a hands-on difference!

April is National Volunteer Month, and your business or organization can celebrate by joining our Befriend Project.

The Befriend Project at Mel Trotter Ministries provides opportunities for business staff or organization members to volunteer together as a group. For example, you can build relationships with Mel Trotter Ministries guests while serving a meal or assisting with prep and clean-up during mealtime.

We have many more opportunities to get your entire organization involved in our community. Go to meltrotter.org/volunteer to learn more.

RADICAL GRACE ANNUAL FOOT WASHING REVEALS SERVANT HEART OF CHRIST

At Mel Trotter's annual Foot Washing Event in October, guests saw firsthand the compassionate heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Following Christ's example in John 13:14-17, staff and volunteers washed our guests' feet as a symbol of how Mel Trotter is here to serve them. They also received new socks and shoes and were able to ask for prayer.

This incredible event brings people together with an act of humbleness and love as Jesus instructed.



225 Commerce Avenue SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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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