

MTM *newsletter*

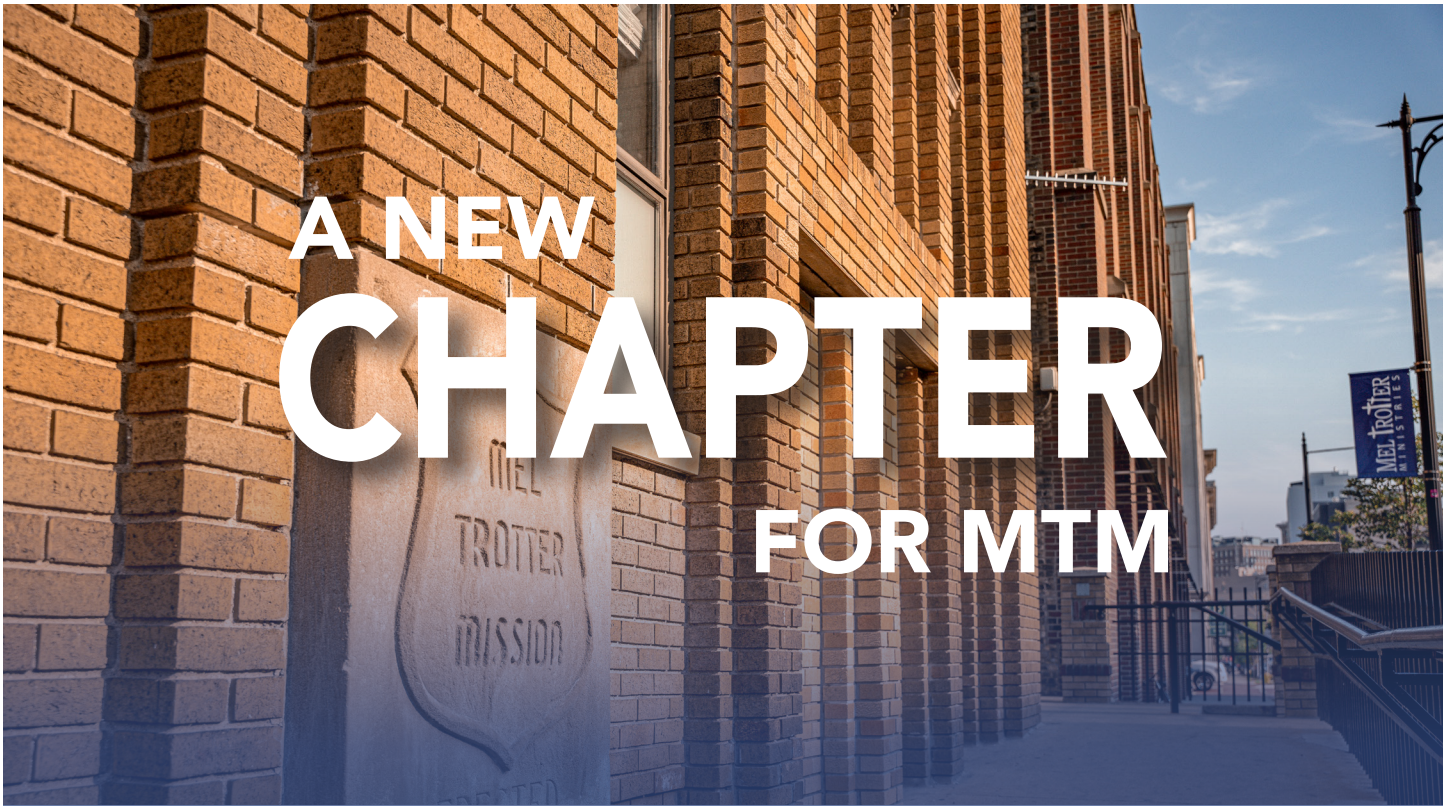


**"I was a stranger and
you welcomed me in."**

Alex's Story of Redemption

+ **Inside:** A New Chapter for
MTM, New Clearance Store, &
Next Step Campus Update

December 2023



A NEW CHAPTER FOR MTM

Everyone has a story.

For me, the chapters have varied in length, but I know God has written every one of them.

When I started at Mel Trotter Ministries in 2012 as the Vice President of Programs, what I did not know was that serving this ministry would be one of the great honors of my life. In 2015, the Board of Directors asked me to serve as the President and CEO, and I have had the great pleasure of serving in this role for nearly nine years.

My time at MTM has been a chapter filled with God's love, personal joy, kindness from so many people in our community and the fulfillment of knowing we are carrying out our mission of demonstrating the compassion of Jesus Christ to anyone experiencing hunger or homelessness in the region.

In many ways I thought I would serve this ministry for many more years, perhaps even into retirement. Yet, God has called me to leave MTM and serve as the next President and CEO of the Denver Rescue Mission in Colorado.

Please know, this was a difficult decision for me because I was not looking to leave. I believe God placed me here to be a good steward for the community and it's clear to me that He's now calling me to this new mission.

I'm grateful to the Board, our amazing staff, volunteers, and you, the generous donors in our community, who have helped us work to bring an end homelessness one life at a time. For nearly 124 years, God has richly blessed this ministry, and I know He has great things in store for MTM in the years to come.

MTM is blessed to have other long-time executives in place who will carry on its mission with dedication. Gordon Oosting, Chief Financial Officer, will serve as interim CEO while a nationwide search for my replacement is conducted. Adrienne Goodstal, Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer, has been promoted to the permanent role of President of Mel Trotter Ministries. Adrienne has been with MTM for nine years and she will deliver tremendous results for the organization.

This ministry has never been about me, nor has it been about Mel Trotter, or any





other leader in its history. This ministry is not ours. It belongs to the Lord. We are all called to shepherd and be good stewards for the season God has called us. To leave it better than we found it.

Your support has helped sustain this ministry and our vision for serving people experiencing homelessness. In recent years you've helped us grow important services, including new medical and vision clinics mental health and substance abuse recovery resources, workforce development initiatives, prevention and diversion programs, and transitional housing. And, as you know, we're now undertaking the development of Hope Village, the first tiny home community in Grand Rapids, which will provide more affordable housing for individuals and families dealing with homelessness. All of these initiatives and more will continue forward under the talented team in place at MTM.

Our capital campaigns have used these verses from Ephesians 3 as our theme.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout

all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask, think, or imagine. He does this through His power, not ours. But He does it through working in us, for His glory, not ours. This is why I know the best days are still ahead for MTM.

Since MTM’s founding nearly 124 years ago, one thing has been true: God is faithful. His faithfulness is great. God has been faithful in each chapter of my story, and for yours. He is faithful and He is good.

Thank you for your prayers, your support and for all you do to carry out the work that God has called us to do. I am grateful for you.

I leave with a heart full of love, a head full of unforgettable memories, and an unwavering appreciation for the kindness that exists in this community.

In the chapters that are yet to be written, may God bless you and the entire West Michigan community.

Grace and peace,



Dennis Van Kampen
President/CEO
Mel Trotter Ministries

SEASON OF HOPE RECAP



Thank you to everyone who attended MTM’s annual Season of Hope gala. What an inspiring evening! We are grateful for each and every one of you and your commitment to demonstrating compassion to our neighbors in need.

A special thanks to Nelly Santos who shared her testimony and heart for the work we do daily at MTM and to Ashley Ward who spoke passionately about what hope in action can look like when you have people who show up when you need them most.

A huge shout-out to our presenting sponsor, Ottawa Kent, along with all our other sponsors, and to each committee member. Such a fantastic event could not happen without your support.



Warmth

FOR THE WINTER

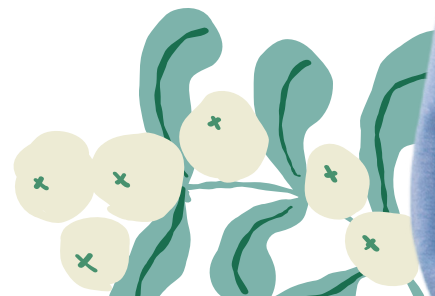
After Alex's fiancé passed away, his life spiraled out of control, and found himself incarcerated. He was released in the dead of winter and had nowhere to turn. Despite being employed in landscaping, there wasn't much work to be had in the winter months, leaving him without work or a roof over his head. As a result, Alex came to the steps of Mel Trotter Ministries. "I didn't know where to go, what to do. I had nowhere to go, coming out and having nothing", he landed at the doors of Mel Trotter Ministries. "Now I got something," Alex said.

When thinking back to the first time he walked into MTM, he said he felt scared and emotional, but from day one, he received everything he needed for a new start. **"When I first came down here, it was during the wintertime, one of the ladies came up to me and gave me a hat and said 'Here you go, please come in.' And that is what I felt... open arms here,"** Alex said.

While he was staying at MTM and working, he attended chapel, learned how to budget, received his driver's license, saved enough money to buy a car, and is working towards earning his GED so he can pursue his dreams.

While he was working, the kitchen staff packed up lunches for him to take to work, so he didn't have to worry about going hungry. Alex commented, "The sack lunches were awesome. And sometimes they'd throw in a little note... and I enjoy that because it made me feel good knowing someone is trying to make someone's day better."

After a couple months of staying at MTM, along with the help of staff, Alex got a spot in a transitional house with other individuals who were in a similar stage



of life. There he received one-on-one support from an advocate through the housing program.

When thinking back to what a difference MTM has made in his life, Alex said, “[They] got me on my feet, got me going in the right direction.”

Thanks to faithful supporters like you, Alex said, **“I’m getting all the help I can right now, and I appreciate everything...I have a place over my head. I don’t have to live in the street.”**



THANKSGIVING RECAP



On Thanksgiving Day, we held our 27th Annual Thanksgiving Community Meal at the DeVos Place for individuals and families experiencing hunger or homelessness, as well as anyone in the greater Grand Rapids community who was looking for fellowship around a Thanksgiving table.

We could not have organized such a large-scale meal without our many sponsors and hundreds of volunteers. Thank you to each and every volunteer for demonstrating the compassion of Jesus by serving at the Thanksgiving Community Meal. And a special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor, Meijer, and the Gilmore Collection for helping cook the turkeys this year. We appreciate your partnership and support!



NEW CLEARANCE STORE

Exciting news! The new MTM Thrift Clearance Store located in downtown Grand Rapids opened in October. The store, located at 1314 South Division, offers gently used clothing, furniture and other household goods to individuals and families in need of affordable items.

The Clearance Store is open Monday-Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Every purchase helps financially support programs at Mel Trotter Ministries to end homelessness in the greater Grand Rapids area. Stop in and check it out!

NEXT STEP CAMPUS

In December, we celebrated the completion of a new 15,000 sq ft manufacturing facility over at our Next Step campus, a division of Mel Trotter Ministries. This building will be occupied in partnership with several manufacturers, including Adept Furniture and Jireh Metal Products, to expand workforce development opportunities, helping our guests secure livable wage jobs in the community.

Across the street, we are in the process of renovating another building that will provide woodwork training space for adults and area high school students. The building's second floor will be home to ten workforce development apartments.

In the new year, we expect additional development at the Next Step campus. We look forward to breaking ground on Hope Village—the first tiny home community in Grand Rapids—that aims to provide affordable and dignified place for individuals and families.



SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars! Mel Trotter Ministries is excited for our third annual Art & Experience Auction on Thursday, April 18, 2024. The Art & Experience Auction has two components: an online silent auction that culminates the night of the event, and a live auction at the event.

All funds raised will benefit the Art Ministry program at MTM, which provides a safe and healing place for

individuals we serve to express themselves through art. We are now accepting donations of art pieces and experiences in the community.



ART + *experience*
AUCTION

Share a Christmas Meal & Compassionate Care

"It felt good to know that somebody cared about giving us a meal. We ate as a family, all sat down. We actually smiled a lot at dinner."

- MTM Guest

18,700

meals will be served
this Christmas Season!

Every \$2.39 helps provide traditional Christmas meals for our guests — for many, the first they've enjoyed in years.

\$25 = 10 meals

\$50 = 20 meals

\$100 = 40 meals

\$250 = 100 meals



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3 ways to give this Christmas

2x

1. Double Your Impact

Thanks to our Matching Challenge, every gift given by December 31 will go TWICE as far in helping TWICE as many neighbors.



2. Join The Community

Join The Community, our monthly giving program, to faithfully walk alongside our neighbors in need every step of the way.



3. Honor a Loved One

Want to give a Christmas gift with special meaning? Make a donation to Mel Trotter in honor or memory of a loved one.

To give this Christmas, visit meltrotter.org/christmas