



Union
Gospel
Mission

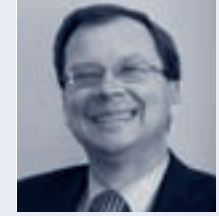
Annual Report

2008 | 09

Message from the President and Chairman of the Board of Directors



William B. Mollard
President



Robert Pasman
Chairman of the Board

The remarkable stories of lives changed and futures brightened through your partnership with Union Gospel Mission would not be possible without the concerted efforts and vital contributions of thousands of caring individuals and community-minded organizations throughout Metro Vancouver and British Columbia.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the generous donors, energetic volunteers and dedicated staff who make Union Gospel Mission a beacon of hope in the darkness of poverty, addiction and homelessness; your commitment to the poor and compassion for the hurting is nothing short of extraordinary.

Transform lives – that’s what UGM donors do each and every day. Through your support, UGM is able to reach out to the community, journey alongside those who are struggling, give practical help to the poor and instill hope in the lives of the broken.

No matter the large, and increasing, numbers of men, women and children we assist each year it remains our calling to care for the individual. UGM’s programs and services are designed to serve the whole person – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

UGM’s continuum of care – Outreach, Recovery, Education, Affordable Housing, and Children & Family Ministries – impacts lives. This year, UGM is taking a different approach to the Annual Report; we’ve turned it over to those who can offer the best accounts of how your contributions allow UGM to do good work. The stories you will read here are from the front lines and are the greatest examples of your investments in action.

UGM’s comprehensive continuum of care is unique in its breadth and in its capacity to completely transform lives. That is truly the exciting part. The challenge, however, is the demand is greater than what we can currently meet. In order to best address the rising needs of the community, over the coming year UGM will begin the largest single expansion of programs and services in our organization’s history.

A practical demonstration of this commitment to the community is now taking shape at the corner of East Hastings Street and Princess Avenue where UGM has just broken ground for a new facility to meet the growing needs of those on the Downtown Eastside. This new building will allow UGM to increase its emergency shelter to 29 more guests each night, to accommodate 26 more participants into UGM’s proven Alcohol & Drug Recovery Programs and feed 400 people at each

daily meal. UGM will also be able to provide more education, more support, more services and more of God’s love to those in need.

This is an important time to be part of the ministry of Union Gospel Mission, and as we look back with gratitude for God’s blessings this past year, we prayerfully look forward to the work God has set out for you and I this year: transforming Metro Vancouver, one life at a time.

Like any relationship, it takes both of us working diligently together to create an outcome that is beneficial for all. That is why we are inviting you to once again partner with UGM and invest in the lives of those we are called to serve. We encourage you to please take time to review your enclosed opportunity to give and consider how you can continue to be part of the driving force that is truly making a difference, because quite simply, without you, there is no UGM.

Gratefully,

William B. Mollard
President

Robert Pasman
Chairman of the Board

UNION GOSPEL MISSION | WHO WE ARE

Union Gospel Mission is an urban relief organization based on Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. With locations throughout Metro Vancouver and the city of Mission, UGM is ideally positioned to help those who need it most. The heart of UGM is to demonstrate God’s transforming love, ease the burden of the most vulnerable, rebuild the lives of the broken and offer dignity to those who feel cast aside. Through a comprehensive continuum of care – including outreach, meals, emergency shelter, alcohol & drug recovery, education, programs for children & families, and affordable housing – UGM offers help and hope while creating brighter futures for men, women, children and families in our communities.

A Volunteer's Perspective

Submitted by Kevan Gilbert, UGM volunteer and staff member

I read somewhere that the average North American needs 6 to 8 square feet of personal space in order to stay comfortable, but Wednesday morning at UGM's drop-in, there's more than 80 people crammed in this tiny room, and nobody has even 3 feet to themselves. The windows are fogged up, coffee is being spilled, and I am getting a bad case of claustrophobia.

Even though I do a full-time desk job for UGM, I spend time each week volunteering at our drop-in: serving coffee, handing out donuts, having conversations with lonely, hurting people. It's a good idea in theory, but being there, trying to squeeze through a line-up of wet rain jackets, intimate strangers, people juggling sloshing coffee cups and crumbling pastries, I was wondering if I could really do this regularly. It's not exactly cushy.

I managed to make it to the back room, bumping into people and tables and chairs and feet and feeling like a pinball, and found Kevin and Johnny, two of UGM's regular outreach workers. "How do you guys DO THIS?" I exclaimed. "It's so crowded and crazy in there, and I don't feel like I'm actually helping."

The boys were all smiles – they do this job full-time. "It's good to have you here," said Johnny, slapping me on the shoulder.

"You don't have to stay if you're uncomfortable," said Johnny. "But I know that sometimes when I'm ready to snap, that's when God has the most to teach me. The challenge is to clear your head so you're ready to listen."

"Besides," said Kevin, with a smile. "I'm preachin' in 10 minutes so you might as well stay for my part."

Knowing that God can reach into a tiny Drop-in Centre and make an impact on the people here....

I headed back into the fray, praying for clarity, and sat down next to a guy named Ken. I'd met Ken before: he's been a resident of the Downtown Eastside for 15 years. Ken uses my name in every sentence he speaks to me. "Kevan, I'd love to get out of the Downtown Eastside, but I don't know where I'd go." He took a sip of coffee. "Frankly, Kevan, I've run into enough characters I can't trust in my time and I'm tired of it," he said.

"We gotta be quiet now," said Ken, as Kevin had started into his sermon.

"I've been lied to a lot here on the Downtown Eastside," Kevin was saying. "Like, 'I'll be back with your money in 10 minutes'" – everybody laughed. Kevin comes from a background like many of our guests here.

"Sometimes people lie to you when they're holding the Word of God, too. People like me, talking to you while holding the Bible, they can lie to you, too." There was a wave of grumbled agreement.

"So I want to be clear: your life will NOT be all rosy if you get through recovery, or if you find Jesus. Don't let anybody tell you that it will be. If somebody tells you that, they're lying to you. Life is hard, even after you find Jesus."
"But you can make clearer choices," he said.
"You can make new decisions that mean you can get away from where you don't want to be."

My comment earlier to Johnny and Kevin – "I don't feel like I'm actually helping" – finds its real reply in the stories I was surrounded by, and the one I was listening to right then.

Like Kevin. Just last year, he was the guy drinking coffee, listening to the morning preacher, and now, to borrow from the cliché, look who's talking. For Kevin, that coffee was the moment that God broke through, the exact instant that the connection was allowed to happen for him. Without this place, without that Outreach Worker, without that cup of coffee, he may have just slipped away, another lost soul on the Downtown Eastside.

I think Johnny was right, when he was talking about being ready to listen when you're ready to snap.

This isn't an easy place to be sometimes, but next week I'll be back. It's Vancouver, so it will probably be raining, it will definitely be crowded, and it will be just as loud. But knowing that God can reach into a tiny Drop-in Centre and make an impact on the people here – people so many have given up on – provides me with enough encouragement to play my tiny role in the next miracle-waiting-to-happen on East Hastings Street. I hope I'll run into Ken again.

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

Outreach

Submitted by Rev. Bruce G. Curtiss, Senior Chaplain

By his own admission, Dexter was a 10-year-old in a grown man's body. Dexter had been an alcoholic for 30 years and hadn't spent a whole day sober or, as he puts it, "out of the bottle", in just as long.

One evening, the fog of drunkenness lifted, and in that moment of sobriety, the pain overtook Dexter and he was suicidal. He tells me he was a step and a half from the side of the curb waiting for the perfect time to jump in front of a bus. He was timing it, and at that very moment, Arnold and Scott (Outreach Workers from the Union Gospel Mobile Mission rescue vehicle) literally grabbed him by the back of his jacket and pulled him back.

"I don't know where they came from, because I made sure no one was around," Dexter told me, "but the bus was coming and I was getting ready to step when these guys grabbed me."

Arnold and Scott started ministering to him right there on the street. That night they brought him to UGM's emergency shelter.

He hadn't bathed in over a week; he looked ragged and his clothes were filthy, but looking past outer appearances you could see this wonderful, fragile and vulnerable man.

Soon, the Outreach team got him cleaned up, showered and shaved. We built a relationship with Dexter and encouraged him, telling him over and over: "You have value, you matter to us." There were times when he wanted to bolt, but we fought hard to encourage him to stay.

Through the Outreach team, Dexter met with our addiction intake counsellor David. He saw that Dexter wasn't physically or mentally ready for the Alcohol & Drug Recovery Program, but we knew he had nowhere else to go. We knew he couldn't get everything he needed to succeed because mentally he was a child and needed more support than UGM was equipped to give him. Still we decided we would support him as best we could while he awaited a space at an appropriate recovery facility.

A month went by; two months went by. Dexter would proudly keep us updated with another milestone in his sobriety: "30 days!" he'd say; then "60 days!" We had such great joy in rejoicing in his progress.

He was a Christian man and he was raised in a Christian home. I gave him a Bible the first day I met him. I know he carried it, but I don't think he opened it for the first month – he told me he didn't want to wreck the pages. It was just a precious thing to see the remarkable changes taking place in this child of God.

For me, Dexter's story represents what Outreach at UGM is all about: snatching people from the clutches of death and instilling hope to press on. I'm happy to say, that eventually, a space became available for Dexter at another recovery facility best suited to deal with his special needs. He was with us at UGM for just a short time, but those few months literally changed the trajectory of his life. And in knowing him, our lives were changed for the better too.

OUTREACH | CHILDREN & FAMILIES | EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT | MEALS & EMERGENCY

At UGM, Outreach is all about developing intentional relationships – going out into the community and meeting people where they are, initiating caring conversation, developing trust and meeting guests' practical needs (food, emergency shelter and clothing).



Outreach

SHELTER |

| AFFORDABLE HOUSING | RECOVERY

In doing so, Outreach creates opportunities to share God's love and offer a way out of addiction and street life through the life-transforming programs at UGM, none of which would be possible without the contributions of our valued donors.

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

Children & Families

Submitted by Katharine, a summer camp participant

I had such an amazing wonderful experience given the chance to be able to attend this camp, even though my mom was very ill suffering from breast cancer. I had such a good time at the camp!

We went swimming, wall climbing, Archy, devotions at the chapel. I loved the fact that I'm not the only one that is going through this tough time, the separation of my mom and dad. Through sharing experiences at the devotional times. I was really comforted. It helps me to think that life has to go on no matter what, and by clinging closer to God I can deal with this.

I terribly missed the camp, the staff were very pleasant and the place itself was very relaxing. We had lots of cool games, wonderful songs and campfires. I truly appreciated that

wonderful sponsor with a big heart so that my dream to have a good summer ^{would come true.}

all ☺ God bless you
Sincerely yours,

Katharine ☺

Your support allows UGM to nurture relationships with families who are struggling, offer programs that give children a safe place to do homework and play, and help mothers and fathers provide necessities such as baby formula, diapers and clothing for their children.



Children & Families

| AFFORDABLE HOUSING |

By partnering with UGM, you allow us to offer afterschool programs for children on the Downtown Eastside throughout the school year, camp sponsorships to over 750 children in need in the summer and a food hamper program for families at Christmastime.

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

Meals

Submitted by Bill Wong, Manager, New Westminster Drop-in Centre

UGM is always just one piece of a person's journey. Every day we encounter people from all sorts of backgrounds, with many different reasons for needing our meals service.

One day I received a phone call from a man named Jim. I had seen Jim around New Westminster as he had once worked in the store adjacent to the Drop-in Centre. Jim had recently suffered a serious injury, was unable to work and was struggling to make ends meet. Because of his injury, he wasn't mobile and was unable to come in for our meal service. He lived nearby, so our Outreach staff decided to bring him meals to help him through this difficult time.

This simple act – bringing a hot meal and sharing fellowship with him – helped encourage Jim when life seemed bleak. He told me that our visits and the practical help of bringing food reminded him that things would come together for him.

Eventually, he recovered and secured some work in Alberta. We had helped Jim for a time and were happy to see that he regained his strength and could now support himself.

What a pleasant surprise, some months later, when Jim called to let us know that he was doing well and wanted to give back! He was working up north now, but wanted to come down over Christmas to provide and serve a roast beef dinner to every guest at the Drop-in Centre. This was truly a blessing.

For two Christmases in a row, even with the challenge of winter travel, Jim has made it back to our Drop-in Centre – where he had once sought help – to provide a delicious meal and offer a helping hand to the next man in need of some help along life's journey.

“This simple act – bringing a hot meal and sharing fellowship with him – helped encourage Jim when life seemed bleak.”

OUTREACH | CHILDREN & FAMILIES | EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT | AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Thanks to you, a warm bed, a hearty meal and fellowship with people who care, along with the comforts of home, are offered year round to thousands through the vital lifelines provided by UGM's Emergency Shelter and Meal Programs.



Meals & Emergency Shelter

By giving guests a dignified welcome and providing support, kindness and encouragement, Outreach Workers build relationships and help guests take the next steps off the streets and into the warmth and comfort found through UGM's life-changing programs.

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

Recovery

Submitted by Rodger Heringer, Registered Clinical Counsellor, Manager, Alcohol & Drug Recovery Program

I often remember a former resident of the Alcohol & Drug Recovery Program named Paul. We didn't know it at the time, but when Paul entered the program his only reason for doing so was to stay long enough to increase his tolerance so he could go back out, use drugs, and get a better high for less money.

After Paul had been in the program for about a month, another resident challenged him to consider seeing his recovery through to the end of the program. "Why not stay for the rest of the program," he asked, "what's another couple of months?"

Paul decided to stay. He graduated from the program and stayed in touch with the Mission, helping out any way he could.

About 2½ years later, Paul died of natural causes – clean and sober – while the person who convinced him to stay died in his addiction about a year after Paul.

To me this story sums up the struggle of addiction and how it isn't just UGM staff that has an influence on the people we serve; those we serve – our guests and residents – are also part of the process.

Sometime after he had graduated from the recovery program, we received this letter from Paul, which he asked we share with anyone involved with UGM. So here are Paul's words of gratitude to the many – donors, volunteers and staff – who made his recovery possible.

I would like to thank everybody that makes this place work. All of you that make UGM an oasis in a sea of human despair.

You people have given me a second chance at life. You can compare yourselves to the doctors who save patient's lives by performing a delicate operation. You can compare yourselves to a fireman who rescues a child out of a fire. You are missionaries spreading life and good will in one of the wildest and most dangerous jungles in the world. You are my heroes. You brave people keep helping the most downtrodden every day. God is in this building. God is with you. You are the Good Samaritan.

To me you are the most needed and important people in this world at the moment. You are doing Christ's work.

Please do not stop.

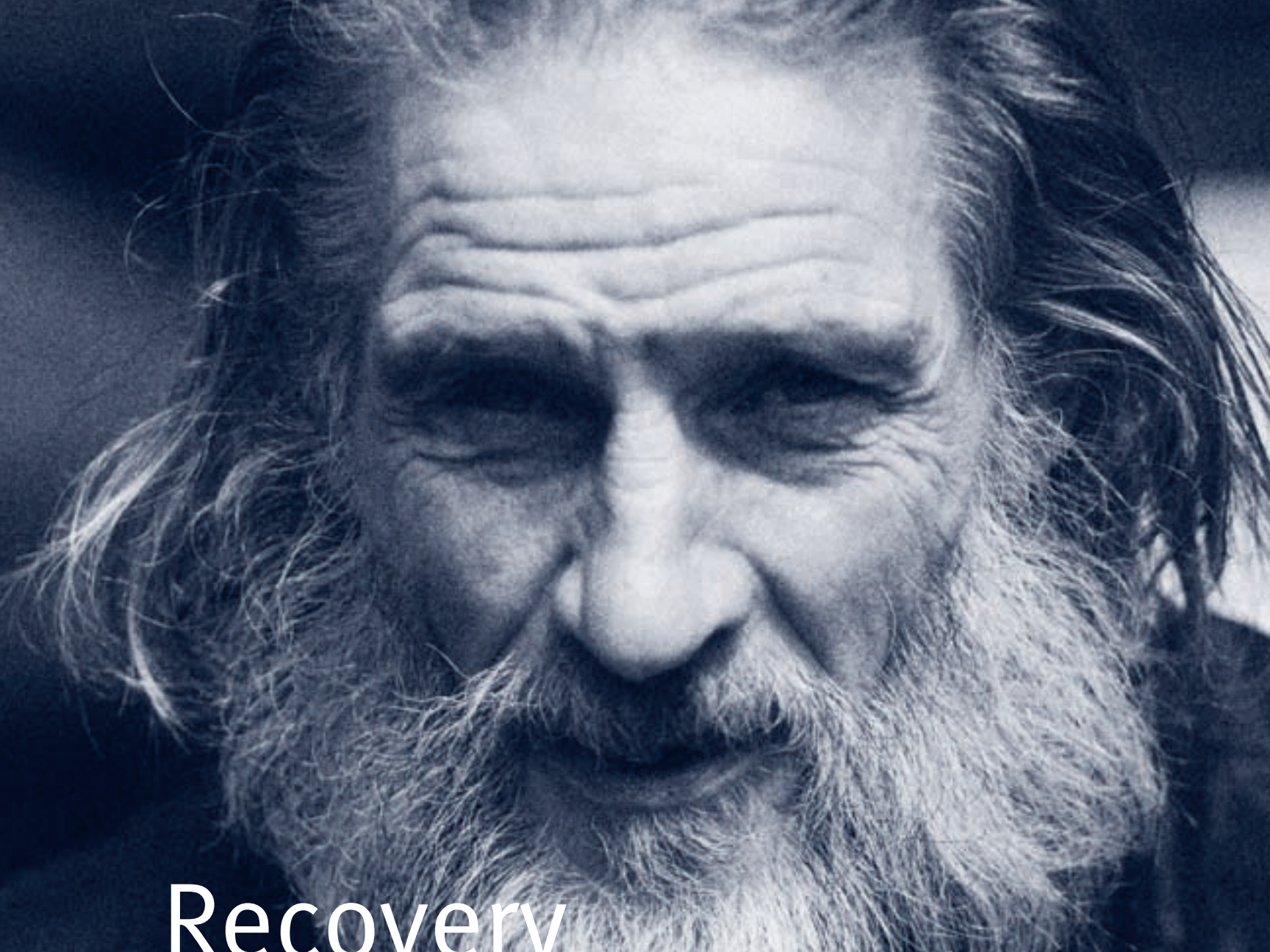
And I thank you for sharing your love with me.

Thank you.

“You are missionaries spreading life and good will in one of the wildest and most dangerous jungles in the world. You are my heroes.”

RECOVERY | CHILDREN & FAMILIES | EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT | MEALS & EMERGENCY

UGM's Alcohol & Drug Recovery Programs are effective, live-in recovery programs that offer men and women freedom from addictive lifestyles and the tools to live a clean life after graduation. UGM counsellors have developed and fine-tuned a successful six-month program that gives residents their best chance to succeed.



Recovery

SHELTER |

| AFFORDABLE HOUSING | OUTREACH

Our women's recovery program at Lydia Home focuses specifically on women's issues and offers women a safe and caring environment in which to heal. When you team up with UGM, men and women once nearly lost to addiction are able to regain their lives, their dignity, and their future.

Education & Employment

Submitted by Wendy Henderson, GED Instructor, Hope Learning Centre

Success on the Downtown Eastside is measured differently than elsewhere. In my classroom at Hope Learning Centre, I've been witness to many success stories. And though these victories may seem small by the world's standards, for the men and women with whom I work, they are nothing short of extraordinary. One fellow with such a success is named Clarence.

Clarence is a quiet First Nations fellow in his forties who has been studying at UGM for about a year and a half, working to prepare for his GED exam. Clarence seems to carry a lot of shame and brokenness with him and I can see how he constantly worries about making mistakes. When he first came to class, he kept mostly to himself and was afraid to speak up. It's been a challenge for me to gain his trust, but bit-by-bit, the Lord has allowed me to build a relationship with Clarence that has helped him to bloom in class.

I have students who are not able to write a sentence, but Clarence isn't like that; he excels in writing and spelling. He struggles terribly though with math, so much so that he would try to avoid it altogether and only focus on writing. In order to get his GED, however, he must be able to do math – it's a government exam and I can't excuse him from the math portion.

I didn't know until some months after he joined the class – because this is a difficult thing for anyone to admit to – but most days Clarence comes to class hungry. He lives in a very rough SRO (Single Room Occupancy hotel) on the Downtown Eastside where he's afraid to keep food lest he attract the rodents and other bugs that infest the building. There is a breakfast given out in the area, but in order to make it to class on time, he forgoes this breakfast.

I felt sad when I learned this, but as I got to know Clarence better, I found out that when he was growing up on the prairies, his mother, a teacher herself, served him porridge for breakfast.

So I decided to bring in instant porridge for him each day and since he's been eating this breakfast, he tells me, his mind feels clearer.

It's a joy to see that Clarence is now progressing with his math skills; in fact, he has now made it far past the first section, all the way to section nine. He still has some work to do to be able to pass the GED exam, but I'm encouraged that he's making progress. The real success here is that even he, who thinks so poorly of his ability in math, is starting to believe that maybe he can do this. A seemingly small thing, but for Clarence, this is a victory.

“The real success here is that even Clarence, is starting to believe that maybe he can do this.”

OUTREACH | CHILDREN & FAMILIES | MEALS & EMERGENCY SHELTER | RECOVERY | AFFORDABLE

You can give the gift of knowledge with UGM. The Hope Learning Centre is free of charge and open to anyone wanting to upgrade their education, or find a job through our education and employment services.



Education & Employment

HOUSING |

Here, adult students can study for their GED (Grade 12 Equivalency), gain literacy skills, take a course in financial management or access résumé-writing help. You can equip men and women to find employment and gain independence through UGM's Hope Learning Centre, an excellent resource for those finishing the Alcohol & Drug Recovery Program.

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

Affordable Housing

Submitted by Alf Greening, Manager, Housing Facilities

Through UGM's Alcohol & Drug Recovery Program, Norman finally gained freedom from his addictive lifestyle. But just as he was finishing the program, he was diagnosed with a life-altering disease. Even so, he's happier today than he's ever been. For Norman, being able to access safe, clean, abstinence-based, affordable housing at Maurice McElrea Place has allowed him to focus on what's important, like spending time with his daughter. Here's Norman's story in his own words:

The first six years of my life were hard. From ages 2-6, I was in 12 foster homes, and then at age 6, I was placed in a wonderful home with wonderful foster parents.

My addiction to drugs and alcohol started early, and at age 21, I was already in the first stages of alcoholism and drug addiction. I married at age 22 and my daughter Brianna was born soon after.

The turning point for me was when my foster parents died. Very quickly after this, my life went downhill and my addiction spiraled

out of control. As I got further into my addiction, my relationship with my daughter began to fade. Soon I was living in a filthy hotel in East Vancouver. It was infested with mice, cockroaches and bed bugs. There were women prostituting themselves in the hallways, drug use everywhere, and most nights were noisy with sounds of yelling and fighting in nearby rooms. The carpets had burn marks and the windows wouldn't open. It was the worst possible place to live.

Then I decided I needed to get help. I entered the Alcohol and Drug program at UGM where I worked hard to stay clean. During my recovery, I invited God into my life.

It was also during my time at UGM that I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. I started needing a walker to help me get around, and I wondered how I was going to do it and where I was going to live after I'd graduated from the program.

That's when a miracle happened. Just as I was graduating, I heard that

someone was moving out of the disability suite at Maurice McElrea Place (MMP). I saw this as an opportunity from God, so I went and asked about it and it worked out!

The folks here at MMP have been nothing but helpful with my needs. My relationship with my daughter has never been better. Still, to this very day, when I think of all the people that have helped me, it brings tears to my eyes. It's almost too overwhelming for me. Thank you's aren't enough.

WHAT MORE CAN A GUY SAY BUT
THANK YOU LORD AND THANK
YOU EVERY ONE AT UGM AND
MMP. YOU HAVE RESTORED
ONE BROKEN DOWN MAN.
I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO
HAPPY

THANK YOU WITH ALL MY
HEART AND LOVE
NORM

Rounding out UGM's continuum of care, affordable housing units at Maurice McElrea Place and The Orchard offer men, women and families a warm, supportive and clean place to call home.



Affordable Housing

SHELTER |

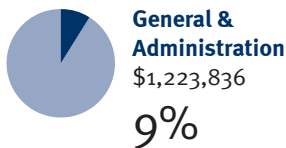
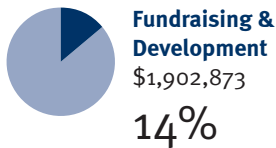
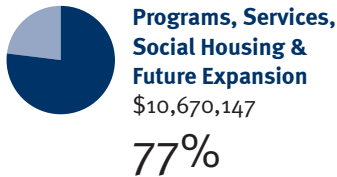
| RECOVERY |

A total of 81 suites in Maurice McElrea Place offer abstinence-based housing for men and women committed to maintaining a sober lifestyle, while The Orchard townhouse complex offers 14 subsidized and 61 low-rent units for family-oriented living.

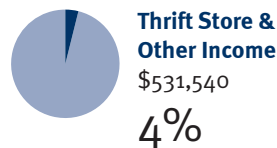
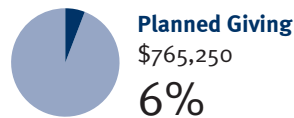
Year in Review

UNION GOSPEL MISSION & UNION GOSPEL HOUSING SOCIETIES

EXPENSES & DESIGNATED FUNDS \$13,796,856



DONATIONS & INCOME \$13,796,856



2008 CONTRIBUTIONS IN ACTION



A Cozy Sweater and a Warm Blanket

27,839 People Received Clothing and Bedding



Kids' Lives Impacted

750 Children Sent to Summer Camp



A Home Cooked Meal

240,633 Meals Served



Shelter from the Cold

13,989 Emergency Shelter Bed Nights



Lives Restored

56 Alcohol & Drug Recovery Program Graduates
Men 44 & Women 12



Getting Back on their Feet

84 Employment Services Class Graduates



A Place to Call Home

165 Affordable Housing Units

Income and Expenditures are for March 1, 2008 to February 28, 2009. Programs and services include \$1,880,536 in social housing expenses and \$946,321 for planned future expansion of programs. The above financial information is based on individual audited financial statements comprising the UGM group of entities. These audited financial statements are available by calling 604.253.3323.

THE NEED

An estimated **2,600** people are homeless in Metro Vancouver

An estimated **7,500 — 8,000** intravenous drug-users live on the Downtown Eastside

38% of Downtown Eastside residents are without a high-school diploma (double the national average)



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