

# In a Home of their Own in less than 30 Days

Crystal had a full-time job and a new dependable car, but she just did not have enough income to save for a deposit on an apartment. She needed her own apartment to escape from an abusive situation for her mental health and spiritual wellbeing. "I couldn't be in an environment with verbal abuse anymore, I made the choice to find resources to help me move on and for the safety of my children."

The resources Crystal needed were located at Mission SOLANO's Bridge to Life Center. She went through the intake process to move with her children into a Bridge to Life Center family apartment, setting goals and embracing the rules and structure.

Crystal experienced the love of our staff, having benefited from the family food bags she received from our Community Outreach Center for the past eighteen months. "They prayed with me and made me feel safe. They are willing to give you hope and peace of mind ... if you're just willing to receive it."

At the Bridge to Life Center, Crystal received everything she needed to reach her primary goal of finding a safe, clean apartment. Her three young children, ranging in age from 5 to 7 years old, played on the new playground while Crystal read books. They would look forward to the daily hot meals, provided most evenings by volunteers from the local community.

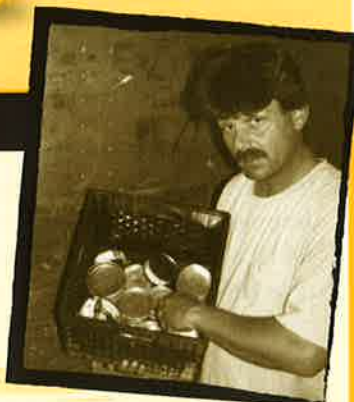
"One time the family that brought dinner stayed and talked with us. The mom, her daughter and her granddaughter fellowshiped with us and the granddaughter played with my children. That was a Sunday afternoon we will not forget – it was a great blessing."



Another highlight of Crystal's time spent living at the Bridge to Life Center: just following the rules. "All the staff were always willing to help us. All they expected from me was to follow the rules. It was easy to be stable, because I've learned to make the best of what I have."

It took only thirty days for Crystal to save enough money for an apartment deposit, and today she is in her own place with her three young children along with her pregnant 17-year-old daughter whom she welcomed back to the family in their new home.

Crystal looks back on what Mission SOLANO did for her family with joy and pride. "They blessed us with stability and consistency. We were supported with everything we needed: dinners, toiletries, flexibility with my work schedule. I knew I could make it on my own, but I needed help for three weeks. Without the Bridge to Life Center, we wouldn't have our own apartment."



Thank you! Please make your tax deductible check payable to Mission SOLANO. Mail it with this form to: P.O. Box 8, Fairfield, CA 94533. Questions? Call us at 707-580-8490 Or make a Gift online at [www.MissionSolano.org](http://www.MissionSolano.org)

## MY GIFT to help Fill the Mission Pantry

YES, I want to provide help and hope — for homeless families and individuals at Mission SOLANO – I'm enclosing:

- \$35.80 to provide 20 meals and other care for hungry hurting people.
- \$44.75 to provide 25 meals and other care for hungry hurting people.
- \$53.70 to provide 30 meals and other care for hungry hurting people.
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ (other) to help as many people as possible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

September 2010

# The Bridge



Compassion Turns Tom's Life Around

## Mission SOLANO

Mission SOLANO Newsletter

## Back from the Dead...

### Debbie's Story in Her Own Words

I grew up in Berkeley – my mother was a single parent with three kids. When I became a single mom, my income was \$535 per month with a monthly rent payment of \$435.

I stayed at Mission SOLANO off and on for five years. They would ask me to leave because I wasn't working and I was using. I relocated to Napa around the same time another Mission guest named Debra passed away. They all thought I had died.

I went to the homeless veterans' Stand Down event in Dixon last Fall. I saw Ernie and he came up to me, looking kind of funny. I told him, "you look like you've seen a ghost." Ernie said to me "I have! I'm here looking at you! I thought you were dead."

The other Debbie died with a needle in her arm. When I found out about her I was three weeks clean and I thought, "It could have been me, but I'm alive. I'm going to go back to the Mission and get some help."

I didn't know these people loved me so much. I felt really bad about the other Debra, but amidst all the mourning, I felt community and I felt loved.

*Barbara comments on Debbie's return:*  
 "It was around this time last year, we found out that Debbie had not died like we had heard and when we saw her it was a tremendous relief. She came back a new person, ready for a new life."



## Twelve Years on the Streets

Compassion Turns Tom's Life Around

Tom was on a life path many would view as successful. He was a married homeowner, able to keep jobs and win promotions. But a "lack of power" over anything in his life, especially over alcohol, drugs and bad choices, led to him losing everything.

When he came to Mission SOLANO two Septembers ago, Tom's life possessions were contained in the backpack on his shoulder.

Twelve years of homelessness were obvious on his tired face and worn out hands. His attitude and demeanor communicated the wounds and scars on his heavy heart.

"I knew Mission SOLANO had a men's residential program focused on life change. I had heard about the compassion of the staff, so I went and experienced it for myself," Tom recounts.

Something changed in Tom. He had responded to the encouragement he received from counselors and peers. "I prayed to Jesus Christ and asked 'if this is what you want for my life, I'll follow you,'" he beams. Through service work – helping in the kitchen, serving family food bags, working at our Drive Away Hunger auto donation program – Tom found the joy and peace he had been looking for his whole life.

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# Message from Ron



This coming holiday season, we expect to feed and care for more than 17,400 hungry men, women, and children. But our food pantries are dangerously low, at a time when the need is growing at alarming rates.

Our food pantry typically overflows with non-perishable food items, but currently it contains less than two weeks of family food bag supplies. Today, critical food items ... canned beans, canned meats, peanut butter, rice ... are absent from our emergency food bags for families.

Together, we can make sure nobody in our community goes hungry. Every meal you help us provide will mean a fresh start for someone who has lost their way, and lost all hope.

You can help fill our pantry, and provide meals at Mission **SOLANO'S** community food pantries. For only \$1.79, you can provide a meal and care. When you send your gift today, you'll nourish our neighbors with nutritious food and the hope and compassion of Christ!

At Mission **SOLANO**, hope begins with a meal! Often, it's their first step on a path to stability and hope. Please send the most generous gift you can right now. With each gift, you'll satisfy needs much deeper than just physical hunger.

Your partner in hope,

*Ron*

## Please Help Fill Our Pantry

The Family Food Bag list for our Fill the Pantry campaign:

- 2 boxes Kraft Macaroni & Cheese
- 2 cans of black, pinto, garbanzo or kidney beans
- 2 cans Campbell's chicken noodle soup or beef stew
- 2 boxes pasta
- 2 cans Hunt's tomato sauce
- 2 cans Libby's fruit cocktail
- 2 cans Del Monte peas, spinach or collard greens
- 2 boxes Uncle Ben's rice
- 2 boxes Hamburger Helper

(note: Milk, baby formula, baby diapers, cereal products, eggs, potatoes, fresh fruits and vegetables included in family food bag distribution when available)



CONEX IS Low on Food

We need stuff

- Vegetables
- Pasta
- Rice
- Beans
- Tomato Sauce
- Cereal
- Canned Meats
- Tuna
- Soups/Stews



## A Lesson from a 9-Year Old

I received the call late one afternoon from a friend. He told me his daughter Katie had heard me on the radio and wanted to help those who didn't have any food. The fact she wanted to help was encouraging enough, but her dad said she really wanted to bring the donation to me personally. Many of you know I will always accept donations 24/7 from anyone who would give to help us provide the much needed services Mission **SOLANO** provides.

This one was different and still brings me joy and a smile every time I think about it. As I opened the door, there was little Katie, all of about 4-feet high with a smile that would bring joy to anyone. I invited her in and she couldn't wait to give me the envelope ... anxiously waiting for me to open it. As I opened it, her smile grew and her eyes widened. I was amazed to see \$20.05!

I found out later that when her dad asked how much of her allowance she wanted to give, her response was ALL OF IT!

It wasn't just the gift that brought me joy, but the sweet letter that accompanied it. You see, Katie loves Jesus, and Katie knew that Jesus wants us to help the homeless and hungry. Her closing words said it all, "may God bless you, love Katie!" Well Katie, He has, and this time He did it through a little girl who is an example of the compassion of Christ giving all she had to help those in need!

An example for us all to give what we can. Thank you Katie for your example of your young heart living out what you believe.

and a little child will lead them all. Isaiah 11:6



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## Debbie's Story

The staff at Mission **SOLANO'S** Bridge to Life Center have encouraged me to enroll in college. I started attending college in August. I haven't had a bank account in 15 years and for five years I've lived on next to nothing - but now I have a bank account!

I look forward to working at a full-time job, having responsibilities. I just want a real life. I want to be cooking Thanksgiving dinner, watching movies with my kids, washing the car, taking care of the dog, doing what normal people do.

The Mission helped me feed my children before I became homeless and because of these programs, my life has been changed. I can see that this will work out. I've helped other people and now they believe they can do it too.

Little did I know I'd become so enmeshed in this community and that God would give me a heart for other people who need a hand up.

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## Tom's Story

"I feel complete and it's all because of my new life perspective: Today I Will Serve the Lord," he shares. "I love my work here. God has given me an opportunity to serve as a Shelter Attendant and I'm in school pursuing my license as a certified addiction specialist."

Tom has seen the increase in the community's need for our family food bags. "The food that used to last us a month, now lasts two weeks. Right now our food pantry is down to 15% of capacity and we know the closer we get to the holidays, the greater the need will be for just basic, simple foodstuffs."

With your help, we will make sure there's food for every local family in need every day. See inside for the list of items we desperately need for our family food bags.

