

# THE MISSION

let's end homelessness in LA

## "My Life is a Miracle, Too!" by Jonah

Thanks to Hope Gardens and  
generous donors like you,  
Jonah rediscovers the real  
Christmas Miracle.

### SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE!



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**"We were in California just two years when my dad left us. Suddenly, we were homeless."**

Growing up in London, England, Christmas was always special for me, with lots of gifts and time at church. But the best part was just sharing the day with my family and seeing everyone so happy.

Four years ago, God led my parents to come to America as missionaries. We were in California just two years when my dad left us. Suddenly, we were homeless.

We stayed with friends and family, and we lived in a hotel until our money ran out — then we even lived in a garage for a while. We often stayed in dangerous areas, and some people even tried to kill us. We had to get rid of almost everything we owned because we couldn't carry it around. Sometimes we didn't even have enough food.

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"MY LIFE IS A MIRACLE, TOO!"  
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Christmas in 2007 was the worst ever. We had few presents, but the worst part was seeing how sad everyone was. I felt upset and angry. We always tried to follow what God wanted us to do — why did He let us become homeless? Whenever I asked Him, He would tell me it's for a purpose and I will see it someday.

We finally came to Union Rescue Mission's Hope Gardens in 2008, and that was the best Christmas ever. We had a safe place to live, we celebrated with a turkey dinner, and Mom gave us presents she got from the Christmas Store. It was one of the happiest days of my life, because everyone was smiling and happy.



But the best part was being able to celebrate that Jesus was born to come and save the world. I think I understand Jesus better now, because he was born in a barn and was homeless just like me.

Sometimes I feel like people get so busy eating good food, singing

**"I think I understand Jesus better now, because he was born in a barn and was homeless just like me."**

Christmas carols, and passing around presents that they've lost the meaning of Christmas. Christmas isn't about presents; it's about the birth of Jesus. It was a miracle Jesus survived. His whole life was a miracle.

I know that's true, because my life is a miracle, too.

## URM'S 18TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS STORE

# In the St. Nick of Time

The holidays can be hard for families that are struggling or homeless. But for 18 years, Union Rescue Mission's Christmas Store has brought joy into their difficult lives — just when they need it most.

This year, thousands of underprivileged children at Union Rescue Mission, Hope Gardens Family Center, and other agencies throughout the greater Los Angeles area will receive brand new gifts because of the 18th annual Christmas Store.

On **December 17-18**, more than 700 moms and dads with little or no income will enjoy the dignity of being able to provide their children with gifts they select themselves (for free) and give to their children personally.

All year round, Union Rescue Mission embraces people experiencing homelessness with the compassion of Christ and offers healing and hope to help them find their way home. And just like the stories of St. Nicholas, who delivered gifts to people who were poor, the Christmas Store also helps provide hope by transforming downcast families into radiant, smiling people.

For information about donating toys to The Christmas Store this year, please contact Joe Callahan at 213-673-4862. Or, visit our web site at [www.urm.org](http://www.urm.org).



Your support helps make children's Christmas wishes come true!

**Homeless for Thanksgiving** <sup>SM</sup>

# Thank You! for Making Christmas Miracles Come True



## Notes from Andy

### When Families Face the Worst, We Love the Most

The Christmas holidays can be brutal on families that have lost everything. They've lost their home and they're living on Skid Row, surrounded by poverty, violence, and crime. While everyone else is celebrating, they're at the bottom.

This holiday season, Union Rescue Mission and Hope Gardens are serving 85 families — more families than ever before. It's an honor to bless these families at Christmas time.

One of my favorite ways of lifting their spirits is to tell them, "Wait until you get to experience the Christmas Store!" For two days, parents who aren't able to provide Christmas for their kids get to shop for all kinds of gifts, absolutely free.

We do it because we want every parent to feel like they went shopping and provided Christmas for their family. And that gives them a great deal of pride and affirms their dignity.

Christmas is when God sent His most precious son Jesus to a lost world. When we are at our worst, God loves us the most. So that's what we do at Union Rescue Mission. When precious families come to us facing the worst circumstances, that's when we love them the most.

Blessings, Andy

To read Andy's blog, please visit [revandysblog.com](http://revandysblog.com).



**Alithea**

*Project Restart participant*

### "Christmas Enough for Me"

"All I want for Christmas is to have a safe, happy Christmas in my own home, with a big, beautiful Christmas tree. I want Christmas music playing, with my kids being happy and helping me place the bulbs on the tree. That would be a dream for me, to know that this is our home. That is Christmas enough for me."

— Alithea Chism



**Dorinda, Julian and Juliesha**

*Project Restart participant*

### "I Left the Christmas Store Looking Like Santa Claus"

"Two years ago I came down to the Christmas Store with my daughter. I didn't have much money to give her any gifts. When we got here, they had snow coming down and everything, and I picked out all kinds of gifts for my daughter. I left looking like Santa Claus. That was special and a real blessing. I was really happy."

— Julian Groomes



**Robert**

*Project Restart participant*

### "My Christmas Wish is to Get a Good Paying Job"

"Christmas is my favorite holiday. I'm always the one who decorates the Christmas tree, the windows, and the yard. Last Christmas was painful, because I wasn't working and I couldn't provide for my kids. This year, my Christmas wish is to get a good paying job and a home for my kids. I haven't had a job for a while."

— Robert Carillo



## Your Kindness Makes Christmas Miracles Come to Life!

### You Can Bless Children and Their Families This Holiday Season

While most people celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with great gifts, great food, and loved ones, many men, women and children face the prospect of spending Christmas Day with no food and not even a home.

But not at Union Rescue Mission. This Christmas, more families than ever before will spend the holiday at URM and Hope Gardens Family Center. They will wake up with Christmas joy — and even miracles — thanks to generous people like you who remind those who are hurting that someone cares.

### Your gift will provide toys, meals, shelter — and Christmas miracles!

This holiday season, your generous gift of \$25, \$35, or more will help provide toys for children, special holiday meals, clothing, and shelter — and, yes, miracles, to hurting children and their families here at Union Rescue Mission.

So please send the most generous gift you can today. Thank you!

For more information or to put your gift to work even faster, go to [www.urm.org/ChristmasMiracle](http://www.urm.org/ChristmasMiracle).

## The Clock is Ticking!

When you make a gift of cash or appreciated property to Union Rescue Mission before December 31, not only will you make the New Year brighter for men and women who are homeless, but you will receive a charitable tax deduction on your 2009 tax return.

See enclosed insert for more information.

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY!**



*"THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.'"*

— Luke 2:10-11

## Our Mission

We embrace people experiencing homelessness with the compassion of Christ — giving hope and healing for a changed life — helping them find their way home.

Union  Rescue Mission®  
*The way home*

545 S. San Pedro Street,  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
1-888-77-THE WAY HOME (888-778-4392)  
[www.urm.org](http://www.urm.org)