



OPEN DOOR MISSION

Your Generosity At Work!

N • E • W • S

From Africa to Houston and back: How your generosity helped set Eric free

In a few short years, Eric has come a long, long way: from East Africa to Texas—and from homelessness and addiction to joyful service in God’s kingdom.

Eric was born into a prosperous family in Uganda, where his father was a pilot. Although his father’s family practiced witchcraft, Eric’s mother encouraged him and his sisters to attend church. Eric loved church and Sunday school, and was often the first one there on Sunday morning.

A family divided by alcohol and abuse

Sadly, his father eventually succumbed to alcoholism and became abusive. When Eric was nine years old, his mother left home because she could no longer stand the

“This place helped me find Christ. I want to thank all those who have given... and encourage them to keep on giving treasures that cannot rust.”

—Eric

emotional and physical abuse. Although she returned for occasional visits, Eric missed the togetherness they had once shared.

At twelve, Eric started hanging out with the wrong friends. Desperately wanting to be “cool,” Eric says, “I pushed it too hard...I sought companionship outside the family. That really strayed me away from going to church.” Before long, he was drinking on a regular basis and smoking marijuana and cigarettes. Although he was often drunk or high, he managed to finish high school and complete some college work in Uganda. Then he came to the U.S., where he lived with an older sister and attended Texas Southern University in Houston.

But “I brought my same little dirty lifestyle from home over here,” he recalls. “I wanted to be cool. I didn’t know I was falling into big, big trouble.”

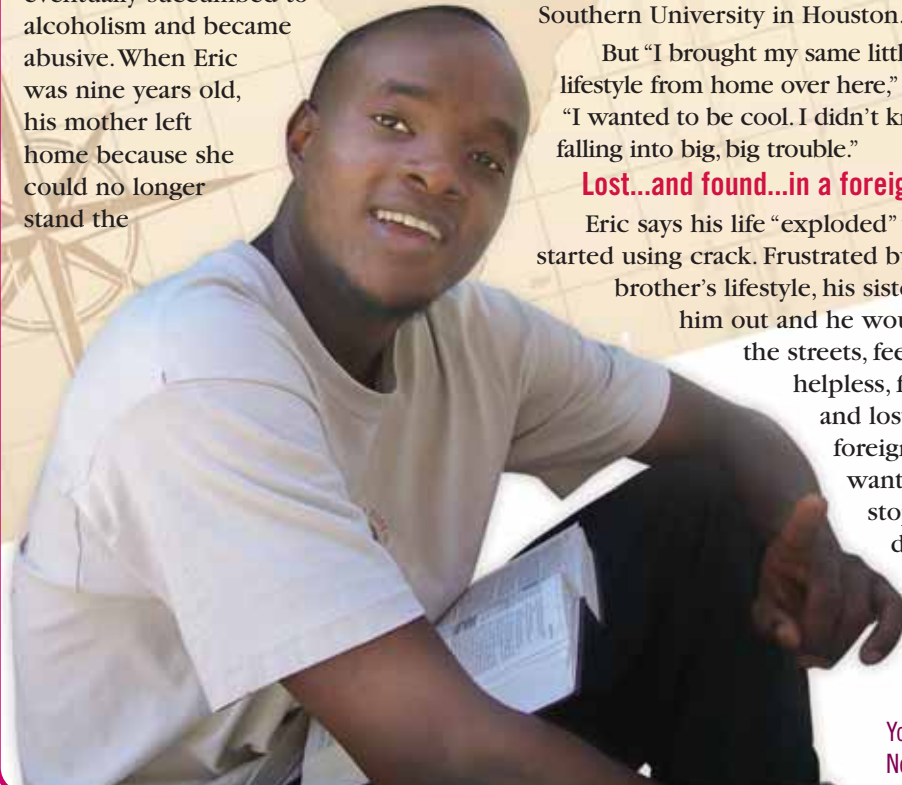
Lost...and found...in a foreign land

Eric says his life “exploded” when he started using crack. Frustrated by her brother’s lifestyle, his sister turned him out and he wound up on the streets, feeling helpless, friendless and lost in a foreign land. He wanted to stop taking drugs, but

couldn’t do it on his own. “That’s when I remembered that Jesus is the answer for all these things.”

Finally, Eric came to Open Door Mission, where he recommitted his life to Christ, and worked hard to overcome his addictions. Now, free from the pull of cocaine, he’s decided to return to Africa as a missionary. “Alcohol is really a plague back in Africa,” he says. “I want to help so that alcohol does not prevail, and also win souls for Christ.”

Eric is just one of many hurting people who were once lost but now have found a new life through your generous support of Open Door Mission. “This place helped me find Christ,” he says. “I want to thank all those who have given to this wonderful work, and encourage them to keep on giving treasures that cannot rust.”



GOOD NEWS *inside...*



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Easter is coming!4

Your support helped Eric overcome his addiction to crack cocaine. Now he plans to return to his native Uganda to share God’s love.



MY VIEW

A Message from Rick Hill

Someone once said, "You can accomplish more in one hour with God than in one lifetime without Him." It wouldn't surprise me at all if this person was involved in rescue ministry! At Open Door Mission, we see this principle at work every day as we minister to the men who come to us off the streets. Although they may know about God, they've lived their lives without Him. (They've also lived to regret it!) Staggering under the burdens of alcoholism, drug addiction, or a heavy heap of hard knocks, they're drifting along without plans or purpose. They've lost all hope. But when they hit rock bottom, just one hour in our Chapel can ignite a spark of hope that can blaze them into action.

What do they find in our Chapel that they've missed out there, trying to make it on their own on the streets? Pure and simple, yet powerful enough to change things forever...these men find the awesome love of God. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that God's love finds them. And as they receive that love and begin to walk with Him, they also find that they "...can do everything through him..." (Philippians 4:13). That's when we get to have the thrill of witnessing a transformation! I wish you could be here to see God's love at work in the lives you are touching through your support. May you be blessed to know that your gifts and prayers are truly making a difference.

Richard H. Hill, Jr. Executive Director

An artist reborn:

How your gifts and prayers helped Ray recover his life—and his art

Ray ought to be a well-known artist—he's that good. His abstract drawings and paintings are equal to any you'll see in galleries throughout the Houston area. Yet for years, Ray didn't draw at all. An addiction to alcohol had stolen his artistic talent. His thirst for booze also left him homeless, hungry, and feeling like a burden to his wife and family. "I started feeling unloved and uncared for," he says.

Ray began drinking as a teenager. He drank more and more as the years went by, but it wasn't until he reached his late 30's that he realized the situation was out of control. "Alcohol had taken over my life," he remembers.



Abstract art from Ray's pen

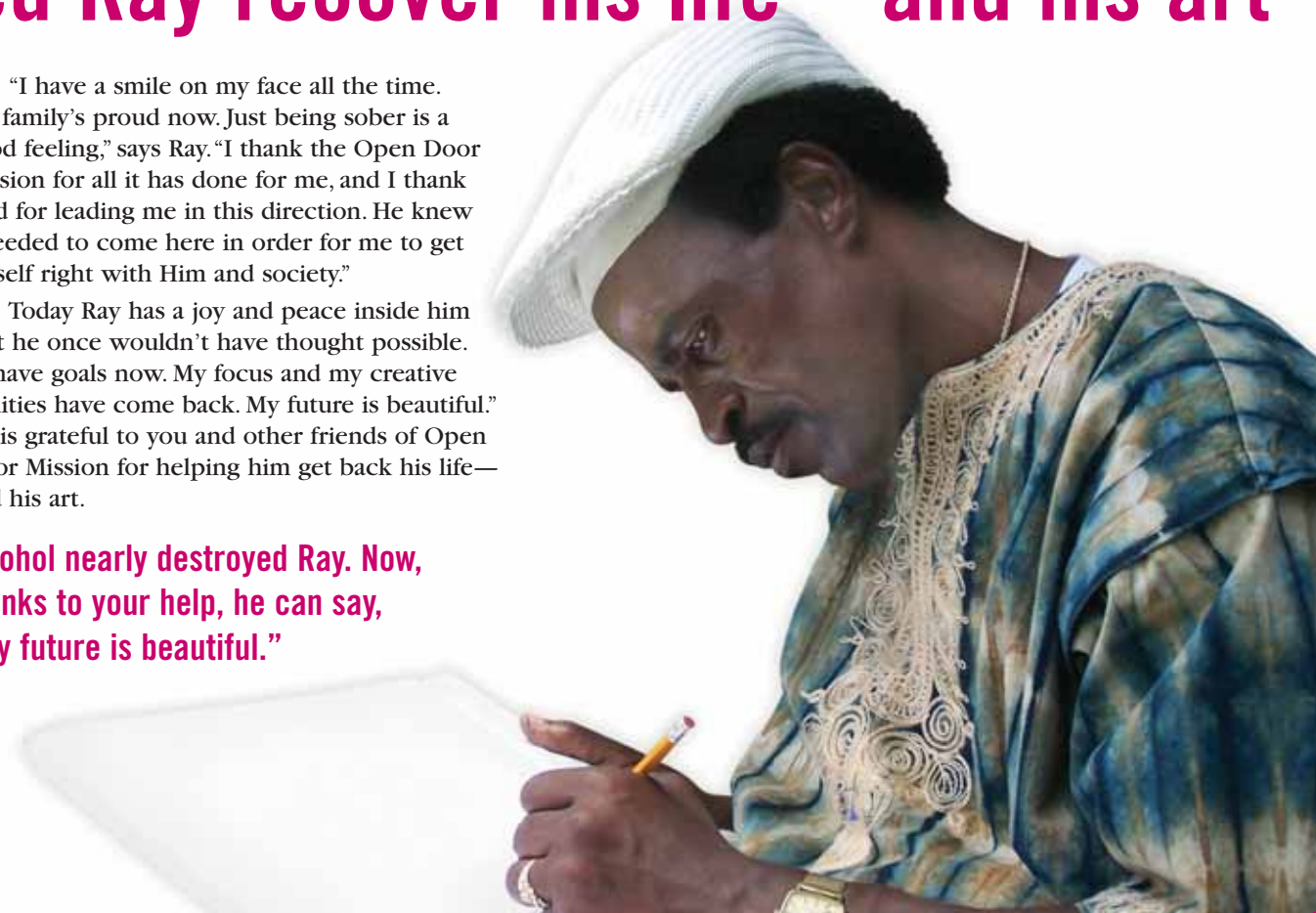
Hungry...in more ways than one

It was hunger that drew Ray to Open Door Mission, and we were here to provide some very good food. But Ray's hunger went deeper—to his heart and his soul. And he quickly made the decision to stay and get the help he needed to free himself from alcohol. In the process, he found the love and support he craved and desperately needed to get his life back together. He reconnected with his family, and discovered that his purpose in life is to serve. He also rediscovered his God-given talent as an artist, and started drawing again.

"I have a smile on my face all the time. My family's proud now. Just being sober is a good feeling," says Ray. "I thank the Open Door Mission for all it has done for me, and I thank God for leading me in this direction. He knew I needed to come here in order for me to get myself right with Him and society."

Today Ray has a joy and peace inside him that he once wouldn't have thought possible. "I have goals now. My focus and my creative abilities have come back. My future is beautiful." He is grateful to you and other friends of Open Door Mission for helping him get back his life—and his art.

Alcohol nearly destroyed Ray. Now, thanks to your help, he can say, "My future is beautiful."



"...because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions..."

—Ephesians 2:4-5, NIV

Through the Open Door: Graduates move on!

Please join us in congratulating graduates Simon and Alfred.

With your help, God has opened doors for these men, and they are moving forward as He leads them.

Your prayers during this exciting time of transition are appreciated!



Simon came all the way from England to Texas to go through Open Door Mission's long-term program. "God and the Mission have made me a happy person for the first time in 25 years!" he says. "The friends and comradeship here are amazing." After a trip home to West Yorkshire, Simon plans to return for an internship position at the Mission.



At age 13, Alfred started down a path that eventually led to the penitentiary (eight stints). When he finally came to Open Door Mission, he found the power of God's Word and began to apply it to his life. Today Alfred is working as a carpenter, building cabinets. And as an accomplished artist (a talent he discovered behind bars), he has a bright future with options ahead of him. "Thanks for all the help and support," he says. "If I wouldn't have come to the Mission, I would be in the penitentiary for life."

Share this good news with a friend. When you are done reading this newsletter, please pass it on.

Open Door Mission invites you to be part of our annual...

Holy Week Chapel Service and Luncheon

Thursday, April 5, 2007

Our Chapel service will include worship and foot-washing of our homeless guests, followed by an Easter feast and fellowship in our dining room.

Don't miss this meaningful way to celebrate Easter! For more information on how to get involved or to make a reservation, please call Lindsey VandeZande at 713 921-7520, extension 214.



FEASTING



FELLOWSHIP



FOOT WASHING

For information or to make a reservation, please call Lindsey VandeZande at 713 921-7520, extension 214.

Easter Dinner and Children's Egg Hunt

Date:
Easter Sunday, April 8

Time:
4:30 p.m. (Children's Easter egg hunt immediately following)

Here's my gift for Houston's neediest men

\$25 \$50 \$150 \$ _____

I commit to a monthly gift of \$ _____

To give a gift by credit card, visit us online at www.opendoorhouston.org, or call 713-921-7520, ext. 213

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