



# OPEN DOOR MISSION

*Your Generosity At Work!*

N • E • W • S

Finding self-esteem through faith

## “With God on my side, nothing can be a hindrance”

Congratulations are in order! It’s been four years since Melvin graduated from Open Door Mission’s Alan and Ann Craft DoorWay Recovery program, and he’s never looked back. “I haven’t had a bad day since I’ve been sober,” he says. “My God is that big!” This statement summarizes the key to Melvin’s success. At a time when he was hopelessly addicted, God showed him that He is bigger than any problem we face.

Houston-born, Melvin grew up happy. He had a good, solid family and learned to respect God early. In school, he was active in track and band. He earned a black belt in karate, which became his passion and built his self-confidence. “It wasn’t just about punching and kicking,” he explains. “It was all about discipline in life and keeping God the center.” After a year in community college, Melvin decided to make karate his career. So he left school to compete, eventually earning the title as number-one black belt in his region.

To pay the bills, Melvin learned masonry. He married and

*When drugs came into Melvin’s life, he says, “I started losing myself.” But with God’s help, the real Melvin is back!*

had two children. Life was off to a good start...or was it? “I wasn’t mature enough for marriage,” he says. Melvin got into the party scene, and ended up divorced after six years. But so far, he was still clean.

### From honorable to dishonorable...

“The drugs didn’t come into my life until my second marriage,” he says. “She was the dream girl of my life.” But this dream girl had a nightmarish side. She turned out to be an alcoholic with a past that included crack cocaine. And when she started using again, Melvin followed her lead. “I went from honorable to dishonorable,” he says. “I’d fought in every karate tournament across Texas, but this was one opponent I couldn’t beat.”

In an effort to start fresh, Melvin and his wife moved to Louisiana and joined a church. For a while, they were able to stay clean. But gradually, they lost the battle. “In four months, we went from a nice home and two cars to living in a shelter,” he says.

Eventually they divorced, and Melvin ended up back in Houston—homeless.

On the streets, Melvin’s whole life became consumed by

drugs. To get crack, he took odd jobs—and committed crimes. Of course, this led to time in jail.

### Will the real Melvin please come back?

When his own mother told him she hated him and his dad disowned him, suddenly he felt tired and beaten. “I wanted the real Melvin back,” he says. That’s when God led Melvin to Open Door Mission.

“The Mission will put you back on your feet, one small step at a time,” he says. “The drug addict Melvin is gone,” he adds. Now the real Melvin is back. But just who is the “the real Melvin?” A man of faith. A hardworking man who has rebuilt a career as a brick mason. A man who has reclaimed his self-esteem and rebuilt family relationships. Just ask Melvin, and he’ll tell you the key to finding himself. It was losing himself to God. As he says, “...with God on my side, nothing else can be a hindrance.”

Your gifts are investments that help men like Melvin build new lives of faith!

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MY VIEW

A Message from Rick Hill

Perhaps you remember Amy Grant's popular hit song called "My Father's Eyes." The lyrics speak about seeing the world from our Heavenly Father's perspective. In our ministry, this is a crucial concept. You see, the men who come to Open Door Mission are driven by many different circumstances. Each has his individual "issues" to confront. But most, if not all, are devastated by low self-esteem. From the start, our goal is to help them see themselves through our Father's eyes.

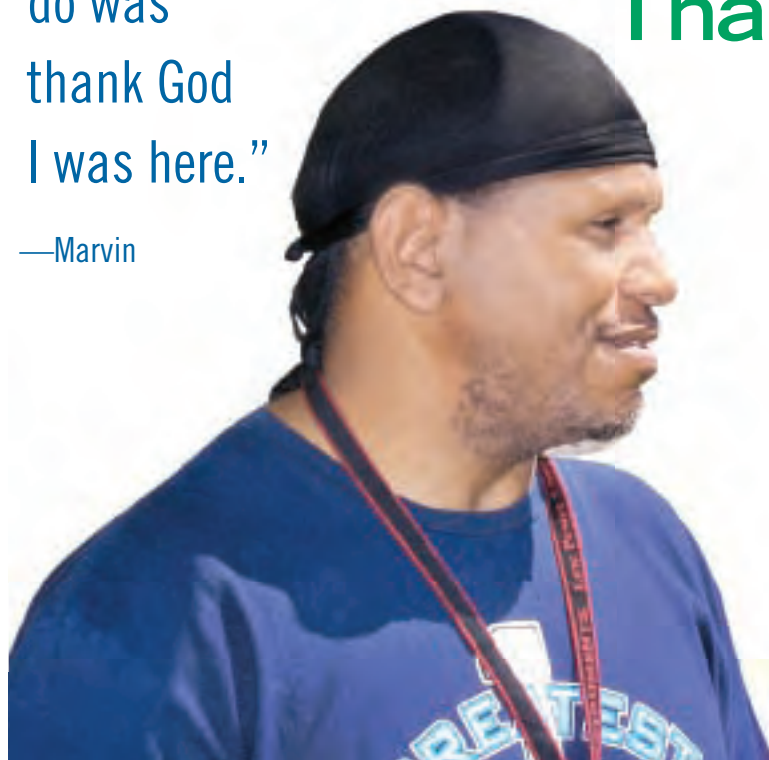
Once they understand that God holds the original blueprint for their lives—and still sees them in its context—it frees them to receive His forgiveness and surrender into His capable hands. Then, we're here to help them rebuild their self-esteem and reclaim their lives through our comprehensive services that can help them deal with their personal issues. We've shared some examples on the pages of this newsletter. May you be blessed in reading them—and feel your Father's joy over the hope you've helped make possible.

*Richard H. Hill, Jr.*

Richard H. Hill, Jr.  
Executive Director

"All I could do was thank God I was here."

—Marvin



Building self-esteem through job training

Thank you for helping Marvin find a job he enjoys!

Growing up poor, drugs were always part of Marvin's world. He recalls using them at the tender age of 8. And he was raised thinking that selling drugs was just a necessary way to make ends meet. No wonder his life took a wrong turn that put him in prison for 20 years.

When Marvin's sentence was complete, he had no idea where to go or what to do. One of those problems was solved for him. The bus ticket he was given upon his release took him to Houston—like it or not. But once he got here, he floundered for four months until the day he was jumped and badly beaten. It didn't feel like it at the time, but that beating was his ticket to a better life. He ended up in the hospital,

and later transferred to Open Door Mission's Russell M. Scott, Jr. M.D. Convalescent Care Center. "All I could do was thank God that I was here," he recalls. He *was* here—and things were about to change.

Not a handout, an opportunity

For the first time in his life, Marvin found himself in a place where he had an opportunity to help himself do better. Through a partner group called Working Connection, he was able to take a class. With help from our staff, he learned how to prepare a resumé, fill out job applications, project confidence and polish his communications skills in preparation for

interviews. While he was taking the class, he was also able to use our computers to conduct a job search. All of this paid off! Marvin landed a good job in maintenance at a law firm—a job he really enjoys.

"Open Door Mission is a wonderful place to get a good start," says Marvin. And he isn't just talking about the help he received landing a job. At the Mission, he began to reconnect with his family after years of estrangement. He's now active in a church, and he feels blessed by God every day. "I had low self-esteem when I got out of prison," he recalls. "I didn't know what to do, but I do now!"

◀ After 20 years in prison, Marvin didn't know where to begin. At Open Door Mission, he found the help he needed to start a new life.

Building self-esteem through friendship

You and David are friends who make a difference!

Friends and partners like you play such an important part in God's work at the Mission. A Houston businessman named David is a living example that one person can make a big difference. David felt a call to help others, and began looking around for a place to serve. "My relationship with the Mission started three years ago around Christmas time," he says. "My business was growing...I finally had something I could start giving back. I went online and did a search." Open Door Mission just happened to pop up.

David picked up the phone and called us. Becky Heath took that call and invited him down that very afternoon for a tour. David was amazed at the swift, warm response he received—and impressed by what he saw. "I knew after one meeting that this was the place for me," he recalls.

The friendship factor

Before long, David was coming down to the Mission once a week to lead an Accountability Meeting. He brought along a few of his own friends and met with a couple of the guys in our program. From four men at the first meeting, the group has now grown to about 30! David says there are about 10 committed men who will be there "come hell or high water." The others are not as consistent. But the important thing, as David says, is that "...we tell these guys there's not much they can count on in their life right now.... But the

one thing they *can* count on is that we will be there at 7:00 p.m. every Wednesday, no matter what."

The benefits of this group are twofold. First, it's helping men develop friendships that build accountability into their commitment to sobriety. And looking down the road, being part of this group now will make it easier for these men to find a support group after they leave the Mission and move on. David hopes to fortify them for "...that one time when you're going to be alone...it's going to be you and the Lord, and how do you fight off that urge that comes? The urge can come at any time to anyone who has this disease. Men will have a support group, a network in place, and a toolbox for when that urge comes."

We at the Mission know what a tremendous gift David is giving to the men we serve. But he would probably say, "That's what friends are for."

▶ When David was looking for a place to serve, he visited Open Door Mission and knew at once he wanted to be involved. Under his leadership, men are growing stronger.



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

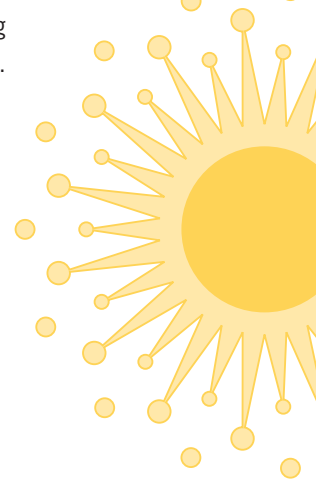


◀ **Gone fishing!**

*What's the story behind this Kodak moment? This is Michael, posing with a fish he caught on a trip to the beach with some of his friends from our Russell M. Scott, Jr. M.D. Convalescent Care Center. But not all of Michael's summer memories are warm and fuzzy! Like being homeless one hot, sultry night and climbing onto a rooftop to find a cool spot to sleep. During the night, he fell and severely injured his neck. After surgery and two months in the hospital, he came to our Center with nothing but his hospital gown. Here he found a place to heal—and start over. Thanks for helping men like Michael beat the heat!*

**IT'S IN THE MAIL**

Summer is a challenging time here at the Mission. We thank God for good friends to help us through—and you are one of them! An important letter is on its way to your mailbox. When it arrives, please read it prayerfully and respond quickly to help us face our Summer Challenge. Thank you!



summer's here, and we need your help to...

**BEAT the HEAT**

Houston's scorching summer heat can be relentless and bring misery for the homeless. There are also increased health risks—like dehydration and food poisoning. If you can help supply any of the items on our summer wish list, that would be cool!

- Bottled water
- Sports drinks
- Sandals or flip-flops
- Popsicles
- Deodorant
- **Special need for men with diabetes:**  
**InstaGlucose** (sold over the counter in drugstores)
- Bar soap
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Sunscreen
- Hats

**Thank you for helping us beat the heat!**

Please note: In order to responsibly steward funds, interviews for our newsletter stories are conducted long before the print date. The information herein is based on the interviewee's opinions and experience at the time of the interview.



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