

MAY 2009

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OPEN DOOR MISSION

Your Generosity At Work!

N • E • W • S

“It’s because of the donors that I’m alive!”

It’s taken Russell half of his life to learn the power of forgiveness. He grew up with a loving mother, father and four sisters—a good family that gave Russell everything he needed. But for years, he wasn’t the son or brother he should have been. “At the time, I just didn’t care about people,” he says.

Russell didn’t show much respect for himself either. “I started drinking in the seventh grade,” he says. “Alcohol has always been a problem.” As he entered adulthood and started a family of his own, his alcoholism grew worse. “I put my family on the back burner. I wasn’t a nice guy to be around,” he says. Eventually Russell’s drinking destroyed his marriage and endangered his relationship with his daughter.

Get help...or give up

Finally Russell hit rock bottom. “I cut my wrist and took a whole bunch of Valium and ended up in the hospital,” he says. Luckily, Russell’s sister was there for him. She made a call to Open Door Mission after his suicide attempt, and tried to convince him to turn his life around. After

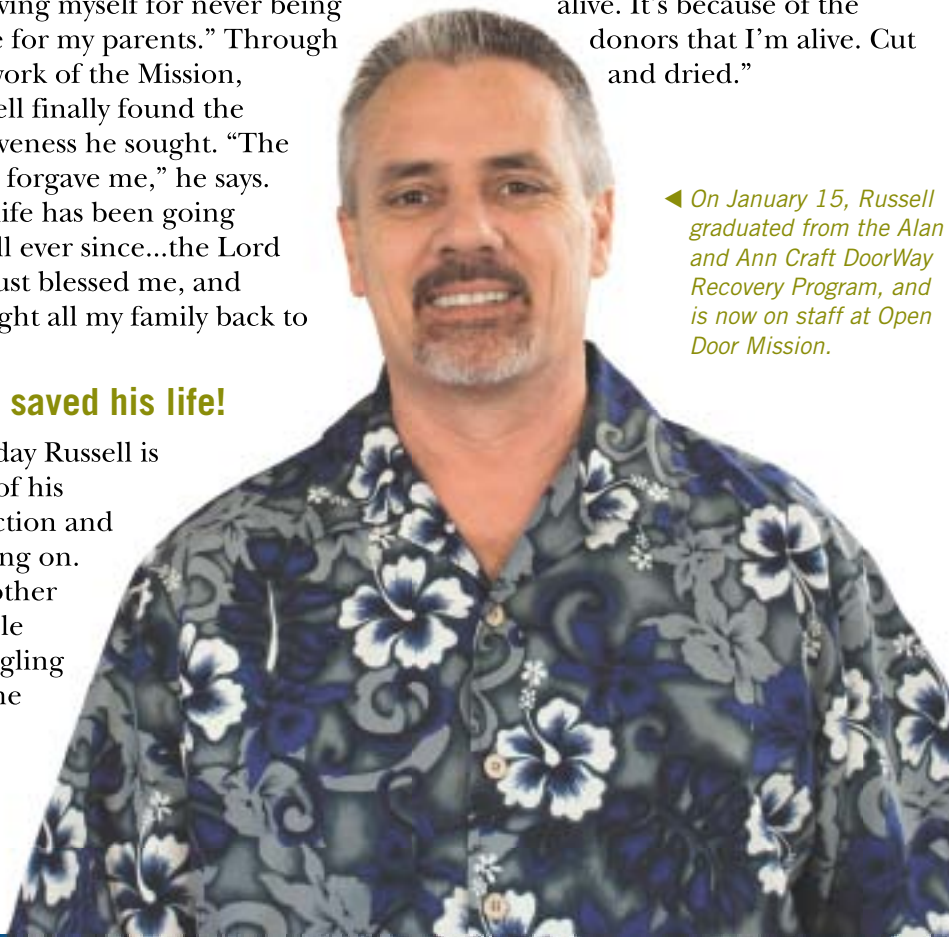
struggling with the decision, Russell decided it was time to change. “The Lord touched my heart, and I made up my mind to come. It’s either get help now or it’s over with,” he says.

Once Russell arrived at the Mission, he was able to see the truth for the first time in his life. “I finally found out that my underlying problem was forgiveness,” he says. “I had a problem forgiving myself for never being there for my parents.” Through the work of the Mission, Russell finally found the forgiveness he sought. “The Lord forgave me,” he says. “My life has been going uphill ever since...the Lord has just blessed me, and brought all my family back to me!”

YOU saved his life!

Today Russell is free of his addiction and moving on. For other people struggling like he

did, he says: “It’s O.K. to forgive yourself. Once you do that, you can get started and move ahead with your life. It’s what God wants.” And for caring people like you who support the Mission, Russell also has a message. “If the money was not there for the Mission and the Mission was not there for me when my sister made that call, then I simply wouldn’t be alive. It’s because of the donors that I’m alive. Cut and dried.”



◀ On January 15, Russell graduated from the Alan and Ann Craft DoorWay Recovery Program, and is now on staff at Open Door Mission.

“My life has been going uphill... the Lord has just blessed me, and brought all my family back to me!”

GOOD NEWS **2**
inside...

A reason to smile



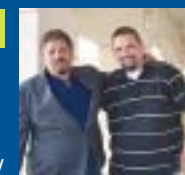
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We're proud of our grads



4

Tears of joy





MY VIEW

A message from Rick Hill

“God places the lonely in families...”

—Psalm 68:6, NIV

At Open Door Mission, we have a lot to offer—thanks to friends like you. Our proven programs are transforming lives and restoring relationships among husbands and wives, fathers and children...broken families are being put back together.

But restoration takes time. While the healing is in progress, Open Door Mission is “home.” And we—the staff and the men God sends to us—are “family.” The bonds that are formed here are strong and lasting. I often hear the men refer to each other as “brothers.”

As our good friend and supporter, you are also part of the Open Door Mission family. If you haven’t read Russell’s story on the front page, make sure you go back and hear what he has to say to you. Russell is only one of many men who are grateful for you today. May God bless you for making a difference!

Richard H. Hill, Jr.

Richard H. Hill, Jr. Executive Director

Thanks for giving Luciano a reason to smile

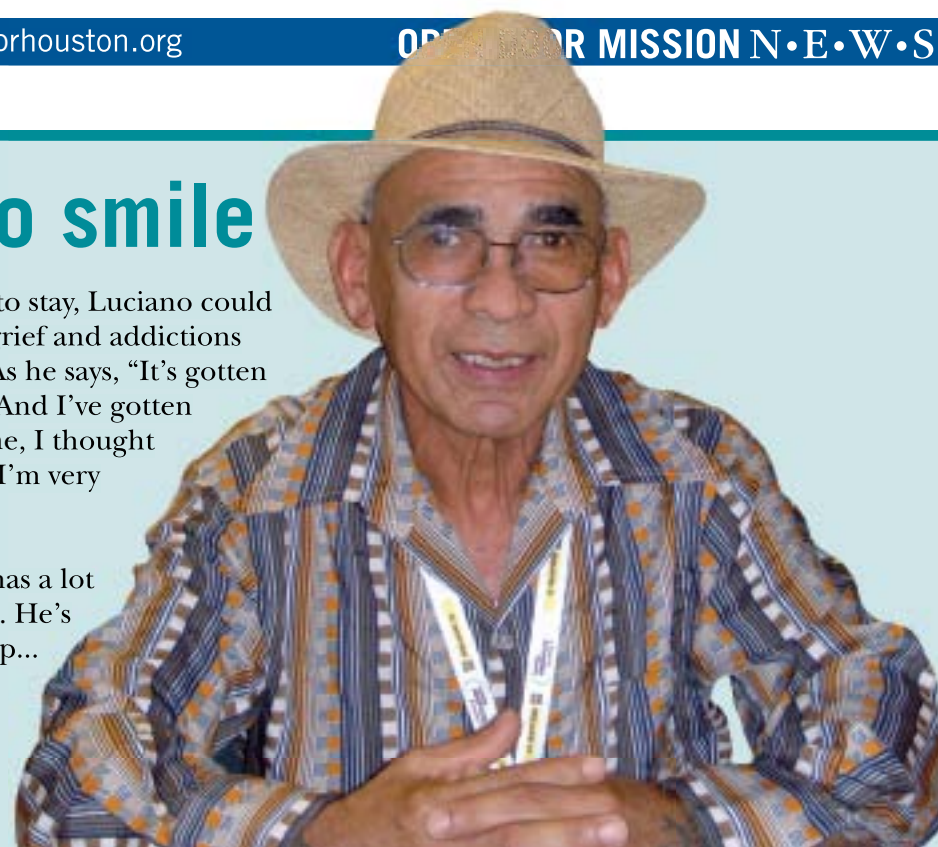
That pleasant smile you see on Luciano’s face in the photo at right? You can take a lot of credit for that smile! With God in his life and the programs you support that helped him get his life back together, Luciano has plenty to smile about these days. But it wasn’t always so. For years, starting in his teens, he was trapped in a cycle of drug abuse and crime. Then, just when he resolved to get his life together, tragedy struck...three times. Luciano lost his dad, his mom and his brother in the space of 18 months. Overcome by grief, he couldn’t work and began drinking heavily. “It got to the point where I was drinking all day long,” he says. “I had nowhere...to turn.”

Who were those guys?

But God had an interesting plan. Open Door Mission had a fitness walk every morning for the men in our programs. “The guys would see me out there...drinking,” says Luciano. “They kept telling me to come to the Mission for help.” It took a while. In fact, “...it took about 2½ months of encouragement from those guys, then I finally made a choice to come...”

With food and a place to stay, Luciano could focus on addressing his grief and addictions and growing spiritually. As he says, “It’s gotten me my whole self again! And I’ve gotten closer to God. At one time, I thought He was very mad at me...I’m very glad I found Him again.”

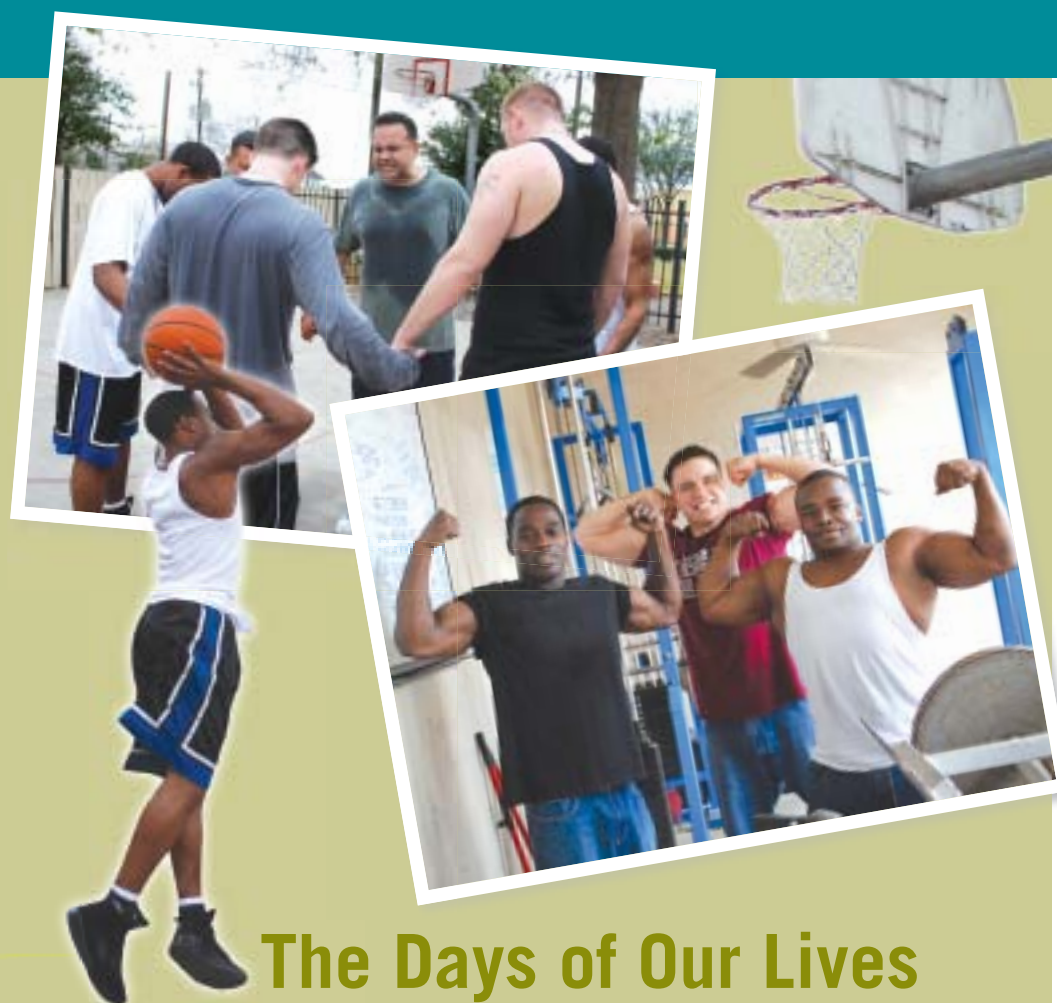
Like we said, Luciano has a lot to smile about these days. He’s very grateful for your help... and so are we!



“I’m my old self again!” says Luciano, who plans to return to work as an electrician after graduating.

For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 18:20



The Days of Our Lives

How do we spend our days at Open Door Mission? These photos give you a little glimpse at our program, which is designed to rebuild lives—physically, mentally and spiritually. As you can see, every day is packed with fun, fellowship and faith.

WE’RE PROUD OF OUR GRADS!



With smiles on their faces and arms around each other, six “brothers” celebrate graduation.

Shown here (left to right): Carlos, Gene, Patrick, Russell, John, and Larry. Congratulations, gentlemen!

You are cordially invited

Another group of hardworking men will soon be ready to graduate, and we would love to have you join us as we celebrate their success. If you would like to attend our next DoorWay Recovery graduation, please call (713) 921-7520, ext. 213 for information.

A special gift idea for Father's Day...June 21!

Here's a unique and meaningful Father's Day gift idea! Make a gift to Open Door Mission to remember or honor a special father in your life, and you'll also help fathers in need at the Mission who are recovering from illnesses or addictions to drugs and alcohol. It couldn't be easier! Simply complete this form and mail it back with your special Father's Day Gift today.



This gift is in memory of/ honor of

Name

Please send an acknowledgement postcard to:

Name

Address

City

State Zip



WITH YOUR HELP

Carlos found healing for a broken ankle and a broken life

Carlos first came to the Mission's Russell M. Scott, Jr. M.D. Convalescent Care Center with a broken ankle...and a broken life. He was given food, clothing, even bus fare. In return, Carlos gave himself to God. Two years later, he's on staff at the Mission. He's grateful to God for healing him, body and soul—and, to you, for supporting God's work.

"I knew about the Lord, knew about Jesus, but was just not

following Him," says Carlos. I realized I needed help spiritually more than physically. As soon as I started obeying God, everything started coming out just right."

It had been a long time since things were right in this man's life. Years of addiction and hanging out with the wrong crowd had

taken their toll, both on Carlos and his family. "I've got two boys—Carlos and Hugo," he explains. "Because of what I was doing, they wouldn't talk to me a lot. And I was isolated because I didn't want them to know what I was doing... I spent a lot of nights crying."

Today, any tears Carlos sheds are tears of joy. Finally, clean and sober, he

recently took the step to reconnect with his sons. When

he met with Hugo, now 27, it was a joyful reunion. "He could see I had changed, and even told me, 'I like what I see in you, Dad.' It felt good. I don't know how to describe this happiness in

my heart." Some things just can't be described in words.



Carlos, shown here with his son, Hugo. Father and son, together again...at last.

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.

Here's my gift for Houston's neediest men:

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

I commit to a monthly gift of \$ _____

I'm returning the Father's Day Gift form, along with my special gift of \$ _____ to help fathers in need.

To give a gift by credit card, visit us online at www.opendoorhouston.org or call (713) 921-7520, ext 206.

Please return this form with your gift to:
OPEN DOOR MISSION
Richard H. Hill, Jr., Executive Director
PO Box 849
Houston, TX 77001-0849

Please make your check payable to: Open Door Mission

THANK YOU!

Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.

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This gift is in memory of/ honor of: _____

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