



OPEN DOOR MISSION

Your Generosity At Work! N · E · W · S

THANKS TO YOUR HELP

Victor is living proof that... "This Mission changes lives, big time!"

For years, Victor had been paying the price for rejecting the wholesome lifestyle he learned growing up in Galveston. He had everything going for him back then... hardworking parents, a loving family, straight A's in school. His happiest memories include playing street football after school and fishing at the beach almost every day. Victor threw away that good life at 13. "I thought I was just having fun," he recalls. "But drinking and drugs began to take on their own life." Then when he was 14, Victor left home and went to work to support himself. Soon he was using cocaine, and *his* life was slipping away.

A long journey to nowhere

For the next few decades, Victor was caught in a destructive cycle of abusing drugs, committing crimes and paying the

price behind bars. Multiple sentences put him away for a long time. And finally, in prison, Victor realized there was something inside himself that needed changing. Like his favorite verse from Jeremiah 33, he called out to God. He knew at once God heard him, and He wanted to change Victor's life. After six years of sobriety, Victor truly thought he had been successful. But he was still trying to do things his own way, and soon found out he couldn't.

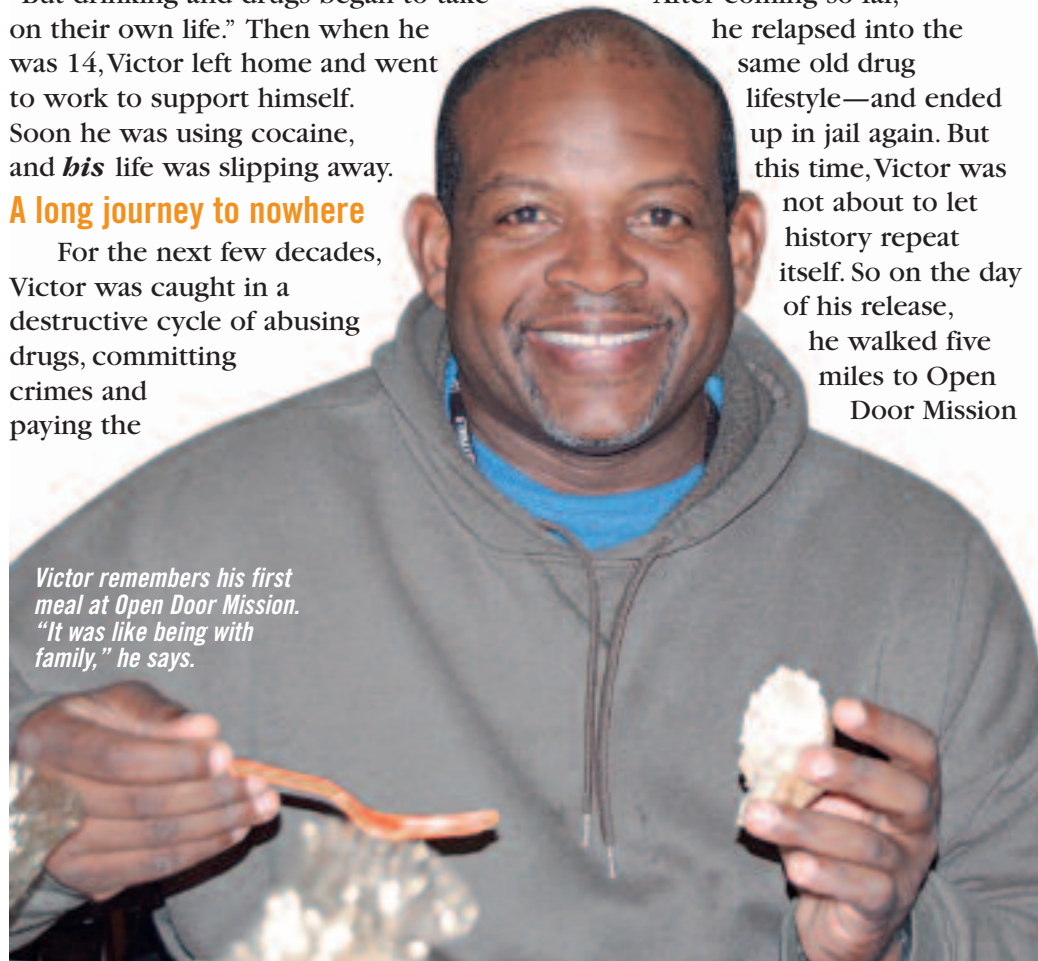
After coming so far, he relapsed into the same old drug lifestyle—and ended up in jail again. But this time, Victor was not about to let history repeat itself. So on the day of his release, he walked five miles to Open Door Mission

because he heard he'd find the faith-based help he needed here. Victor was ready, that day. "It was like being with family," he recalls. "I was able to sit at the table with my new family."

Coming back

As his first weeks at the Mission passed, Victor was amazed at the love people showed him. "It's extreme!" he said. By the time Thanksgiving rolled around, he was well on his way to a new life. His heart was *full of reasons to give thanks*, and a *growing desire to give back*. Today that desire continues to grow, and all Victor wants is to do "whatever Jesus would have me do." He isn't yet sure where the Lord is leading him. But he would like to work in ministry, reaching out to people who need hope. **This is a man who is grateful for your help, and wants you to know that your support really makes a difference. As he says, "This Mission changes lives, big time!"**

"Call to me and I will answer you..."
—Jeremiah 33:3



Victor remembers his first meal at Open Door Mission. "It was like being with family," he says.

GOOD NEWS *inside...*



A Thanksgiving he'll never forget.....2



Attitudes of gratitude2



Shop early and help someone in need4



MY VIEW

A Message from Rick Hill

With Thanksgiving on my mind these days, it occurs to me that a turkey is a very unlikely symbol for a celebration of gratitude. Think about it. Turkeys are not beautiful birds or intelligent creatures. (Many of them don't even fly!)

A more appropriate symbol is the one conveyed artistically by Norman Rockwell in his familiar painting of a grandmother serving her family a feast she lovingly prepared for them. This image says that Thanksgiving is not about turkey and trimmings. It's about family.

Thanksgiving at Open Door Mission is all about family. As you'll see in the enclosed newsletter, we are like family to the men in our program. (Ask them and they'll tell you that they feel like brothers!) Even after they move on, we continue to be part of their extended "family circle," offering our love and support whenever they need it.

At Thanksgiving and all year long, the commitment we make to our men is to help restore meaning and dignity to their lives...and give them "wings" to fly! A holiday meal at Open Door Mission can be a new beginning, so please remember us with your gifts and prayers at this crucial time.

Richard H. Hill, Jr.

Executive Director

YOU helped give Michael... A THANKSGIVING HE'LL NEVER FORGET!

Memories of last Thanksgiving bring a smile to Michael's face. "This was a Thanksgiving I will never forget!" he says as he describes the fun, feasting and fellowship. "And for a lot of guys, it was the first time in their lives where they even had a Thanksgiving," he explains. "We actually walked away that day, calling each other brothers!"

To understand what that day meant to Michael, you need to know that at 23, he has experienced a lifetime of sorrow. Abandoned as a baby, Michael grew up lost and lonely in foster homes—yearning to be loved. Briefly the longing was satisfied when he fell in love at 18 and married a sweet, Christian girl.

"She was beautiful in every way," he says tenderly. Then, with a baby on the way, Michael was deployed to Kuwait with the Marines. When his daughter was born, he came home on leave—the most cherished two weeks of his life.

His dream becomes a nightmare

When Michael returned to Kuwait, thoughts and dreams of his little family kept him alive. "Going through war was a nightmare," he recalls. But the real horror came when he was injured and sent home, only to find that his wife and baby had been killed by a drunk driver. "I almost went insane," he says, then tells of an attempted suicide. "I turned to the streets, where I was homeless for close to a

year," he says.

Michael roamed the streets, carrying everything he owned—including his wife's Bible. One night, Michael opened that Bible and found a prayer his wife had written, for him: "Lord, I pray that he will find You..." His heart pounding, Michael looked up several verses she had noted, as if God had led her to leave them for Michael to find. That night, under a bridge, Michael fell to his knees and gave his grief to God. "That was the day I was saved," he recalls.

A time to heal

God works in mysterious ways. A car crash, an injury...two months later, these were the circumstances He used to bring Michael to the

Russell M. Scott, Jr., M.D. Convalescent Care Center at Open Door Mission. "I only intended to be there long enough to get well," he says. "But...while I was here, my walk with the Lord just grew tremendously." This was a time to heal—physically and spiritually. So when Thanksgiving rolled around, Michael was able to celebrate with his new "brothers" and to honestly feel thankful to be alive. "I can sit here now...and thank the Lord for the things He's done in my life," he remarks. "That's one of the things I'm thankful to the Mission for...a closer walk with Him."

"We actually walked away that day, calling each other brothers!"

—Michael



Last Thanksgiving was a special day for the men in our DoorWay Recovery Program. Michael, shown here, says it's a day he'll never forget.

ATTITUDES OF GRATITUDE for your generosity

Four men from The Alan and Ann Craft DoorWay Drug and Alcohol Recovery Program would like to thank you for being a blessing in their lives.



▷ Cordell, graduate of the DoorWay Recovery Program. Shown here with his adult daughter Chantel and a young friend of the family.

"I am thankful for God allowing me to become the man and father that He has called me to be. I am also thankful for the Open Door Mission, because it gave me an opportunity to develop a more intimate relationship with God."

▽ Fred, DoorWay Recovery Program student. Shown here with his terminally ill sister, Veronica (in bed). Others shown are Fred's mother, sisters and nieces.



"It has been a long time since I have experienced life...25 years since I have experienced a real Thanksgiving with my family because of being on drugs. Open Door Mission has opened up the doorway for me to see my family again."



▷ Danny, DoorWay Recovery Program student. Shown here with his wife and their son Elijah Daniel.

"I wanted to go home [for Thanksgiving]... but I stayed here and it was a really good time...That's when I started feeling that this could really be a home away from home...right then, this was where God wanted me."

"I am grateful that Open Door Mission has allowed me to reunite with God...I have been able to reestablish my relationship with my wife and family. Thank you for everything you have done for Open Door Mission...without you, none of this would be possible."

▷ Ernest, DoorWay Recovery Program student. Shown here with his wife Michell.



"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." —Psalm 106:1

WE'RE PLANNING OUR... Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

The clock is ticking. The days are passing. Soon it will be time to celebrate Thanksgiving once again. As you can see from these photos from our "family" album, our guests will enjoy the best food in town and have great fun, too.

We're expecting to serve hundreds of turkey dinners at our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner, and thousands more throughout the fall season. (More than 51,500 meals, in fact!) All of this is possible through your support—and that's why we'll be counting you among our greatest blessings this Thanksgiving. May God bless you for caring!



**Thursday,
November
22**



CLICK

Our website is constantly updated with new information. Please visit www.opendoorhouston.org anytime!



Shop for Christmas early and help someone in need!



Consider a Christmas gift in honor/memory of a family member, friend, or business associate. Fill out the form below and send it in with your gift—or for more information, visit our website at www.opendoorhouston.org or call 713-921-7520, ext. 213. Whoever you choose to honor will receive a beautiful Christmas card, and your gift will be listed on our website.

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

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 Thanksgiving 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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ @ _____

This gift is in memory of / honor of : _____

Please notify: _____
Name

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

THANK YOU!

Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records. Please make your check payable to: Open Door Mission. 10N/07 11592

Please return this card with your gift to:
OPEN DOOR MISSION
P.O. BOX 4890
HOUSTON, TX 77210-4890