

You got me back on my feet and I'm honoured to share my story

Meet Michael

The Mission's Phoenix Recovery Program did a miraculous thing for me.

After I hit rock bottom, the staff helped me rebuild my life.

Before Phoenix, I was in a 17-year relationship with my girlfriend, and we owned a house together. When I lost my way with addiction, she wouldn't let me stay at our home anymore, so I was forced to live out of a motel while struggling to find my own place and work full-time.

I'd just gotten out of a rehabilitation centre for the third time. After a few weeks, I

relapsed hard and continued my downward spiral. Nothing mattered and I lost all sight of reality because of my obsession with drugs, alcohol, and gambling.

I turned to the Salvation Army where I detoxed for a week, and they referred me to Phoenix. It took a real leap of faith for me to go there.

Phoenix is a three-month residential program that's led by people who know what I'm going through. Through peer and one-on-one counselling, I began to feel less depressed and found even more hope by reconnecting with my family. Being sober and seeing people on the street deep in their addiction was a real turning point. I thought, "I can't live like that. I can't give up on myself."

Not everyone wants the help, but if you know anyone young or old who's ready to begin recovery, I highly recommend the Mission's Phoenix Recovery Program.

You know, I fought depression



and addiction for years. I felt like a robot. But at Phoenix, I discovered great camaraderie and learned new skills to cope with my emotions in a positive way. Now, I'm confident about the future and feel prepared to face any hardship.

"I can't live like that. I can't give up on myself."

When I was ready, the staff encouraged me to volunteer in the community. I also helped out at the Mission's booth in the ➤



“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” — 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

Every time I read this Bible verse, I smile.

That’s because it captures how important supporters like you are to everyone here at the Mission who’s participating in our Phoenix Recovery Program and our job-training initiative, the Enterprise Program.

A lot of people turn to The Downtown Mission when they’ve lost all hope and feel like they have no options in life. At such a dark moment, your generosity reinstills confidence and gives them the strength to begin again.

From January to June of this year, 18 people graduated from the Enterprise Program and so far 10 have found jobs. I’m also thrilled to tell you that all 29 of our Phoenix grads have found housing.

Not only do our program



participants build themselves up, they find meaningful ways to give back to our community. Whether volunteering at WYC (The Windsor Youth Centre) or helping with community meals, they often share their own stories to give hope to neighbours in need.

Going into the holiday season, our staff are coordinating with other agencies and shelters to

ensure as many people as possible can sit down together and enjoy special holiday meals in our dining room. We’re also asking for donations of gently-worn winter coats and boots as well as new socks and underwear. If you’re going through your closet this fall, please consider donating items to the Mission.

And I hope you’ll consider supporting or attending one or all of our upcoming events: the WYCKed Run on October 24, our 24-hour Bench Talks on November 5th/6th, and Trivia Night on December 3rd.

Together we are building each other up!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Rukshini'.

Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin
Executive Director

continued from page 1

farmers’ market on Saturdays, giving information and answering questions. After graduation, I had a job lined up as well as housing which I’d worked so hard to get, to reclaim my independence and stability.

For someone like me who lost all hope, Phoenix

is everything. I’m grateful to everyone who donates to the Mission. You got me back on my feet and I’m honoured to share my story.

*If you’re struggling like I was, remember you can find peace. **Thank you.***



Get ready! Get set! Go!

WYCKed Run: Lacing up to support youth programs and services on October 24



Registrants of all ages are gearing up for our WYCKed Run, a 5K run, walk, or stroll to empower youth and provide essential programs for young people who need them most.

"We're so excited to roll out the Windsor Youth Centre's major fundraising event for the second year in a row. WYC doesn't receive any government funding, so generosity from the community is crucial to providing youth in need with essentials like food and hygiene items as well as one-on-one support to help with housing, employment, and education," says Jordyne Rose, manager of youth services.

Taking place on Saturday October 24, the WYCKed Run is a fun, family-friendly event. With Halloween just around the corner, participants and their supporters are invited to dress up

in costumes or come as they are.

"There's something for everybody at the WYCKed Run. It's a great way to socialize, get some exercise, and show your community spirit. Community members can learn more about our programs for youth and rally together on behalf of young people facing challenges like homelessness, unemployment, and food insecurity. And, of course, the kids will be thrilled about the candy stations along their separate trick-or-treat trail," Jordyne adds.

This year, there will be medals given out for best individual and group costumes, as well as the Spirit Award.

Last year's Spirit Award winner was Rosie L., who's been part of the WYC community for more than a decade. She was one of the first youth to come to WYC and the first walker to show up at our registration table last year.

As a mom, she's involved with Generation WYC that supports young families by providing parenting education and services.

Thank you to all of our WYCKed participants, sponsors, and donors. If you'd like to support a participant or donate directly to the event, please visit wyckedrun.com.



Meet two members of the Mission's chaplaincy team



"As Christians, we are called by Christ to be in solidarity with the poor."

You can hear the passion in George Bozanich's voice as he describes the volunteer work of the Mission's six-person chaplaincy team. Made up of members of different Christian denominations, the chaplains' aim is to be spiritually present in the lives of our guests.

As team leader, George says, "We move the work of the church outside of the walls of the church."

Inside the walls of the Mission, George and the team check in with guests and staff, sharing their distresses and celebrating their successes.

The chaplains lead a weekly Friday worship service, offer prayers at our Enterprise and Phoenix Recovery program graduation ceremonies, and are always there with a welcoming smile and time to listen.

George, who was born and raised in Windsor, is the minister at Emmanuel United Church. He's also the co-founder of the Windsor Youth Centre where he still

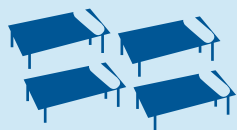
volunteers regularly.

Volunteer chaplain Brian Stocks, who has a background in counselling, offers support to our employees and helps with professional education as needed. "It's uplifting to see how the staff guide our guests with compassion and give them opportunities to find their own hope. I've been brought to tears seeing graduates from the Phoenix and Enterprise programs tell how they felt lost and defeated before coming to the Mission, and how they are now experiencing stability and hope. Lives are indeed being changed for the better," he says.

Thank you to George, Brian, and everyone on the Mission's chaplaincy team for your compassion and fellowship.

Your Generosity in Action

Look at the incredible difference you made in 2025—thank you!



43,968
overnight stays
at our shelter



158,394
hot meals
served to neighbours

44
men and
women
graduated from
our Phoenix
Recovery Program



THE
Downtown
Mission

THE DOWNTOWN MISSION

875 Ouellette Avenue, Windsor, ON N9A 4J6

519-973-5573

downtownmission.com

Charitable Registration #11926 0420 RR0001