

THE MISSION Bell

"DEAR CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE WITH WORDS OR SPEECH BUT WITH ACTIONS AND IN TRUTH." - 1 JOHN 3:18

Chris Shaw

RESIDENT TESTIMONY

From the Streets to Salvation: How the Mission Taught Me to Live Again

My name is Chris Shaw. My journey to the gates of the Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia was paved with thirty years of shadows, silence, and survival. To understand where I am today, you have to understand the weight of the years I carried on my back. My childhood was far from easy; we were poor, and the instability of my early life eventually led me into the foster care system. Without a solid foundation, I spent much of my adult life caught in a cycle of incarceration, moving in and out of jails and prisons, never staying long enough to find a different path.

For three decades, I was an addict. For a long time, I was a master of the "hidden" struggle—I kept my addiction tucked away from the world while it slowly ate me alive from the inside. But addiction is a greedy thief. Eventually, it took everything. I lost my wife, my home, and my sense of self. I moved from Tennessee to Georgia looking for a change, but the divorce and the weight of my past followed me. I found myself living with friends or sleeping on the streets. I was a ghost in my own life.

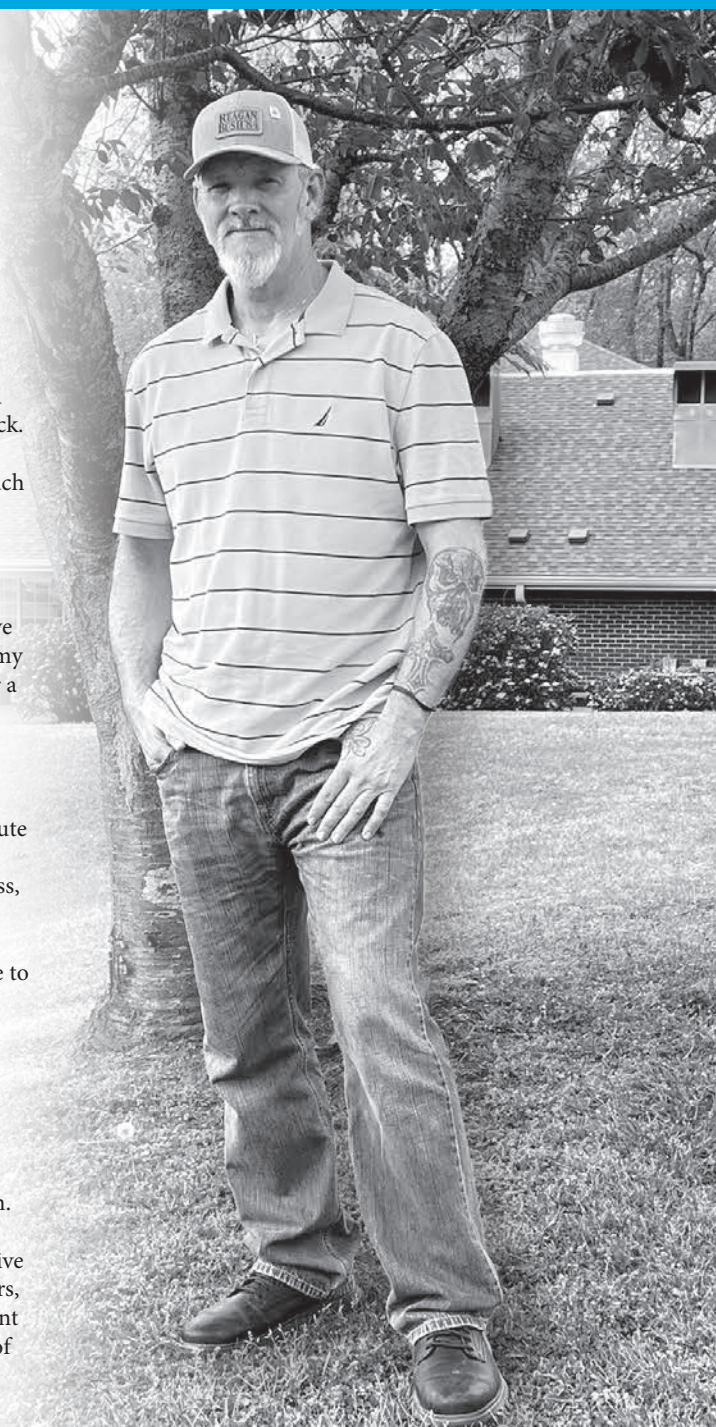
The reality of fentanyl is that it doesn't give many second chances. I died twice on fentanyl. My own mother died from an overdose of the same drug. I was at the absolute bottom, and I truly did not care if I lived or died. I felt I had nothing left to offer the world, and certainly nothing left to offer myself. But through the haze of that darkness, there was one truth I couldn't ignore: my daughter deserved better.

When I was locked up most recently, I was offered a choice: return to prison or come to the Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia. I chose the Rescue Mission, though I didn't know then that it would be the choice that saved my life.

When I first arrived, I was overwhelmed. I didn't understand the kindness the staff showed me. After a lifetime of hard knocks and transactional relationships, I kept waiting for the "catch." I couldn't believe people would care for me simply because I was a human being in need. But as the days turned into weeks, the most meaningful part of my experience began to take root: I was being taught how to love myself again.

The impact of this place is found in the community. My housemates here don't just live with me; they treat me like family. For someone who has felt discarded for thirty years, that belonging is everything. Furthermore, my relationship with God was non-existent before I walked through these doors. Now, I am learning every day about the depth of

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Jesus' love for me. He is changing my life by the minute. In return, I have learned to show Him my true heart and give Him my love without reservation.

The restoration hasn't just been internal; it's reaching into my family. Because of the changes I've made here, my daughter is speaking to me again. She is allowing me to be a part of her life, a gift I once thought was lost forever. I have learned that by sharing my pain, I actually get better. I walk differently now. I am proud to say I have become a better man.

I spend my work therapy with the maintenance staff, and they have been a blueprint for me. Watching how they show love to every new person who walks through those doors has taught me more about manhood and service than I ever learned on the streets. The Mission has prepared me for the "real world" by keeping me on a busy, disciplined schedule. It is getting me ready for a busy world that used to overwhelm me.

Every day is precious to me now. I used to be a man waiting to die; now I am a man eager to live. After graduation, my plan is to stay in the aftercare program on the Mission campus. Eventually, I may go to work on my brother's shrimp boat in Key West, but my heart is shifting. I know I have a job waiting for me that pays a lot of money, but I find myself entertaining the thought of working somewhere where I can help others. If God decides it, I want to spend my life making a true difference in someone else's life, just as the Mission did for mine.

My change and growth would not be possible without the prayers and support of the Rescue Mission's generous donors, volunteers, board, and staff. Thank you for your continued support. I was once lost, but through this community, I have found my way home.

Save
the Date



CLAY SHOOT - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

AUCTION - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

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