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"THE MISSION OF THE CHURCHES"

[www.missiondc.org](http://www.missiondc.org)

# THE MISSIONARY

Central Union Mission



April 2004

## The Experience That Lasts a Lifetime



**W**hen Shaneika Williams (pictured above with her husband and three children) jumped off the bus at Central Union Mission, the first thing her mother heard was joyous shouts of "I got saved!" Shaneika was on her way home from her second year at Camp Bennett, where she had learned about Jesus while talking around campfires, singing camp songs, and chatting with counselors as they not only spoke of, but emulated Christ's love to her.

Shaneika grew up in Southeast Washington, DC with her mother and one brother. As a single working parent, her mother disliked leaving her children at home in the dangerous city, and so she sent her children to various summer camps. Camp Bennett was one of the highlights of Shaneika's summer.

The counselors at Camp Bennett were extra special. Later that summer, Shaneika ran into her counselor at King's Dominion. "My counselor remembered me,

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## To God be the Glory

**T**he first time Mike Barrientos turned to Central Union Mission for help was in the early 1970s. In the middle of the evening chapel service, he walked out and forfeited his right to remain at the shelter. He preferred facing the street life to enduring an hour of singing and hearing about Jesus.

During the next 10 years, Mike's life spiraled downward as he struggled with alcoholism and drug addiction. Since age 16, drinking had caused serious problems with the law, his family, and his health. Mentally, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt, Mike was unable to keep a job or form relationships. He slept in abandoned buildings and cars, under bridges, and once even in a trash bin. He ate any food he could find, whether meals at rescue missions, breadcrumbs off the sidewalk, and at one low-point, leftovers found in a trash can.

Desperately seeking a



change, Mike joined Alcoholics Anonymous. One afternoon, fearful of a relapse and en route to meet his sponsor, Mike spotted a liquor store ahead of him. He knew he would be unable to drive past without stopping, and realized his only option was to ask God for help, even though he did not know how to pray. "God help me. Please don't let me take a drink," he muttered through gritted teeth. Suddenly his craving for alcohol vanished, and a sense of great peace filled him.

On Easter Sunday in 1982, Mike turned to God and truly began his recovery from alcohol. "When people

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Next month: Learn how the Children's Emergency Home opened the door for Camp Bennett!



FROM THE DIRECTOR...

In preparing for our 70th year of camping at Camp Bennett, I am reminded of the great tradition we have of caring for children. In 1944, Rev. Herbert and Mabel Eberhardt, already national leaders in the rescue movement, took the helm at the Mission and began to pour themselves into the men, women, children, and families who came to the Mission for help. One year later, in 1945, increasing requests to care for children caused the Eberhardts to re-open both the Children's Emergency Home and Camp Bennett, which had been closed for the war.

For over 50 years, the Children's Emergency Home lived up to its name, providing assistance to hundreds of children and their families. In 1959, Mrs. Eberhardt was named "Mother of the Year" in Washington, DC, for her work with the children from "broken" homes in



the District.

Now in our 120th year, the example of how we cared for children in the past encourages me to continue serving children in need. In 2003, 57% of children in the District lived in broken homes, while 29% of children lived in poverty. As summer comes, we are excited to continue serving these children by providing them with a week of camp. Please continue to help us serve the youngest members of our community, as we strive to help prepare them to be tomorrow's leaders.

## Send a Child to Camp

Camp Bennett is gearing up for the arrival of hundreds of at-risk children this summer! Please consider sending a gift to enable these children to escape the city for a week, and experience fun, friendship, and fresh air while they learn about exalting Jesus. Because your gift will be matched, your gift of \$90.00 will provide hope for one child as they experience the week of his or her life!



## Give the Gift of Continuing Education!!!

Finding and keeping a job can be especially difficult without the proper education. Many of the men in our Spiritual Transformation Program lack a high school diploma or basic reading skills and work hard to obtain their GED (General Education Diploma) or literacy skills.

We have two great opportunities for you to get involved with the continuing education of these men! You can help them study for their GED or you can help them achieve literacy as we partner with the Washington Literacy Council (WLC)! If you are a male with a college degree, you can help these men achieve either literacy or their GED by tutoring them one night a week. Call Shelah Wilcox at 202-MISSION to set up a time to volunteer.

## Experience *(continued)*

and that meant a lot to me," Shaneika reflected, "The counselors didn't know what we were facing at home, and so they didn't know the impact that even taking the time to get to know our names had on us."

Late one night after chapel, Shaneika remembers wrestling with her spirit.

Realizing she needed to talk, her counselor took her outside. Before they went inside that night, the counselor led Shaneika in prayer as she asked Jesus to enter her life. "That year I went to camp to have fun and came home with something better. Christ!" Shaneika's joy is evident as she remembers

that summer.

During the years since her camping experience, Shaneika has helped lead in her church in various ways. Now, she and her husband are considering starting a rescue mission in Ohio. "The Mission's Camp Bennett was an invaluable



Shaneika, at age 9

experience to me," Shaneika said, "I was saved through a Mission, so I know how important Mission work is."



### Helping Father, Helping Son

Do you have a favorite camp memory? Does your child? Many of our Spiritual Transformation Program (STP) graduates



Sam and his father.

never had the opportunity to sit around the camp fire or be told about Jesus by a caring counselor. As a holistic approach, we have been sponsoring the children of STP men to give them a summer experience that will help in changing their lives forever.

Last summer Sam attended Camp Bennett for the first time. His father, a supervisor at the Mission

and a graduate of our STP, never attended camp as a child. He wanted Sam to experience Camp Bennett because he “wanted him to get affiliated with other children in a Christian atmosphere to see how they live and talk.”

Sam had a great week at camp, learning valuable life lessons such as sharing with others. While on a three-day hiking trip, one of the campers left his food out, and an animal ate it! Sam and the other campers shared their food with him, so he was not hungry. Would he recommend Camp Bennett to other children? “Yeah, it’s a good experience and it’s fun.” He adds, “If you don’t know anything about God now, you will find out and get to know Him better than you had.”

### To God be the Glory *(continued)*

ask me how I stopped drinking, I always give the glory to God because after receiving the Holy Spirit, I truly was a different person...I was a new creature — in Him!” In 1983, Mike returned to Central Union Mission, met Dr. Robert Rich, the Executive Director, and joined the Spiritual Transformation Program while he continued to recover. Mike became the first to graduate from the program, and three years later he returned as a night supervisor. He soon married a wonderful Christian woman, Mary



Mike with Dr. Robert Rich

Lou, to whom he is still happily married! Mike also earned a BA in sociology and a Masters in Social Work (MSW), excelling in both programs. He now works with individuals and families who struggle with mental health and alcohol dependency issues — all to the glory of God!

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!**  
[www.missiondc.org](http://www.missiondc.org)

**Turn Up the Radio!**

Every morning find out more about the Mission's ministries on 105.1 WAVA-FM. You can hear our “True Stories of Hope” Sunday mornings at 6:00 a.m. on WAVA-FM.



### Happy Birthday to Yoooouuu!

On February 11th, 95 men gathered together to celebrate their birthdays at Central Union Mission. Happy birthday signs,



streamers, and balloons filled the room as both overnight guests and men in the Spiritual Transformation Program prepared themselves for a night of celebration and fun. Ten-year old Anna Nicholson, who sang on national television at the Washington monument on September 11, 2002, performed her rendition of “The Star Spangled Banner” and other birthday songs.

After dinner, 15 volun-

teers lit candles on each guest’s cupcake and handed out birthday cards to the men as they ate their cake. The men were delighted by the kindness poured into each card, especially since few of the men are remembered on their actual birthdays. The Mission received 2,570 birthday cards this year as part of our Birthday Party for the Homeless card drive with WGTS radio station!

Thank you to WGTS and all the groups and individuals who helped make this birthday party a special event for our guests!





## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

During March, many wonderful WGTS, 91.9 listeners served breakfast, lunch and dinner to our overnight guests and men from the Spiritual Transformation Program! Thanks to WGTS and all the enthusiastic first-time volunteers who helped serve. We look forward to having you visit us again!

We caught up with one of the WGTS volunteers to talk about the time she spent at the Mission:



Denise Lee

**Name:** Denise Lee of Laurel, MD  
**Family:** Adaora, my three-year old daughter

**Occupation:** I own a small wholesale food distribution business and sell janitorial products.

**How long have you volunteered at the Mission?** March

11th was my first time, but it certainly isn't my last.

**What did you do at CUM?** I greeted and served chicken to the men during lunch.

**What do you like best about CUM?** I like the educational resources offered to help the men turn their lives around. I also like the Mission's focus on religion and building a solid life foundation. The Mission gets people's lives straight so that they can help others.

**Why do you volunteer?** I like giving my time and helping others. It's nice to do things for others.

If you are interested in volunteering YOUR time, please contact Shelah Wilcox at 202-MISSION. We look forward to meeting you!

## FOOD DEPOT NEEDS YOU!

Help send our families home with balanced, nutritious meals by donating food for our Food Depot. We especially need canned meats and vegetables. If you can donate these items, please drop them off at the Mission (1350 R St., NW, DC)...we are open 24 hours a day!

## MAILING PREFERENCE SERVICE

We respect your preference regarding the amount of correspondence we send you. If you would like to discuss the type and amount of mail you receive, please contact Melissa Hilker at 202-MISSION or mhilker@missiondc.org. We will be happy to adjust your mail stream according to your wishes.

## DONATE YOUR VEHICLE

By donating your vehicle (a tax-deductible contribution), you can help Central Union Mission better serve Washington D.C.'s hungry and homeless men, women, and children. Call TaJuanna Patterson at 202-MISSION for more information.

## JOIN FRIENDS OF THE FRIENDLESS

Can you give to the Mission on a monthly basis to help feed and care for underprivileged men, women and children? Friends of the Friendless are a group of faithful donors who have made just that commitment. If you would like to give on a monthly basis by credit card or bank account, please contact Laura Shattuck at 202-745-7118 x240 or lshattuck@missiondc.org.

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(202) 745-7118 • (202) 647-7466

EDITOR IN CHIEF: DAVID O. TREADWELL

MANAGING EDITOR: KRISTIN E. LANE

WRITER: MELISSA R. HILKER

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**Yes!** I want to partner with Central Union Mission to help underprivileged children have the week of their lives at Camp Bennett.

Enclosed is my donation of:

- \$22.50 one child for one day
- \$90.00 one child for one week
- \$180.00 two children for one week
- \$360.00 four children for one week

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If you would like to donate by credit card, please call 202-MISSION or log on to [www.missiondc.org](http://www.missiondc.org).