



THE Missionary

May 2020

A publication of Central Union Mission missiondc.org

*No one
should live
hungry and
homeless*

A Partnership Strategy that Shares Community Benefits

FOR JAMES NELLIS, connections are what make business possible. “I believe everything in life is relationship-based.” The Nellis Group is one of Central Union Mission’s established and faithful donors. Their corporate partnership began with a personal connection.

Vicki Nellis started the Nellis Group in 1983, and her focus was on serving others and the local community. Since the Nellis family shared the cul-de-sac with David Treadwell, the Mission’s former executive director, the opportunity presented itself immediately. More than twenty years later, James, Nicole Nellis Cockrell and Keith Cockrell continue the tradition in supporting the Mission both personally and through their business: “We are thankful over the many years to have assisted families from the Mission with real estate-related plans. We have found opportunities to give of our time and money to the Mission. We’re always looking for ways we can help and assist,” James responds.

The Nellis Group (nellisgroup.com) employs 25 people and provides real estate expertise in all three local jurisdictions, property management and investment counseling. They have 13 agents who live throughout the area to provide true hometown expertise.

Making a Difference

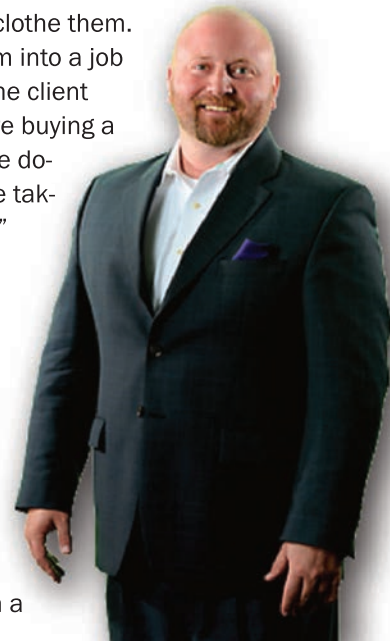
The Nellis Group is upfront about its community involvement. Before committing to working with them, clients select which local charity they want to receive the Nellis Group’s contribution. “The contribution comes out of my pocket, and it’s fun because we get to participate together with our clients knowing it will make a difference.”

One client first picked another charity, but then they asked James, “What does Central Union Mission do?” He responded, “They help people experiencing home-

lessness; they feed and clothe them. They try to transition them into a job and create a new life.” The client changed her mind: “We’re buying a home today, so I think the donation should go to those taking people off the street.”

100th Home for Charity


Another program James created is the “100th Home” campaign, now in its fifth year. The Nellis Group donates the entire commission from the one-hundredth house they sell—regardless of the price and with a guaranteed donation of \$10,000. The community selects the winning charity by voting on social media. Last year, the group sold nearly 200 houses; this year’s goal is to serve 300 families! They have committed to donate on every 100th Home sold in 2020.



James Nellis

James calls the Nellis Group’s partnership with the Mission “a natural alignment.” He said, “We are pro-

Partnership continues on page 7



*Thank
You* Central Union Mission
stands firm because of your
generous compassion.

*“All this is for your benefit, so that the grace
that is reaching more and more people may
cause thanksgiving to overflow to the
glory of God.”*
2 Corinthians 4:15

Nip Family Conflict in the Bud

A READER'S DIGEST COMMENTER QUIPPED, "Ours was a family of eight children, but only one boy. One day, I was complaining to my brother about having six annoying sisters. He retorted, 'What are you griping about? I have seven!'"

Sibling rivalry is common, but every parent hopes their children grow to share a healthy relationship.



One way you can help your adult children experience peace is by creating an up-to-date will. Through this one simple action, you will help your children avoid unnecessary arguments and drama, and your family will hear important messages like, "In this family we:"

- **Value peace.** Your children will see the steps you took and appreciate that you cared enough to plan ahead, creating peace before there was even a chance for conflict.
- **Value communication.** Even though discussions about death can be difficult, no one wants to deal with a messy estate. You have an opportunity to communicate your wishes (and love for your family) while you are still alive.
- **Put our values into action.** By including a gift in your will to a ministry like Central Union Mission, you will set a powerful example of living your values, as well as additional legacy. ■

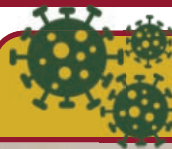
For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy of **How to Get Your Family on the Same Page** by contacting Rev. Deborah Chambers at dchambers@missiondc.org or (202) 827-3078, or bless your family today with a God-honoring Will at www.christianwill.org/missiondc

In Grateful Tribute

Central Union Mission was honored by a generous \$10,000 gift in memory of the mother of one of our supporters. The long-time Mission donor reported, "She was a generous person, and we are just keeping her legacy going.... We wanted to make this donation to encourage you during the COVID-19 crisis."

A No-Cost Way for You to Prepare

Central Union Mission recently partnered with Mama Bear Legal Forms (nationally endorsed by Dave Ramsey) to provide an online platform for creating a will that's quick, comprehensive and comes at no cost to you. In fact, in just 20 minutes you'll have a legally binding document that's ready to sign—and peace of mind knowing your legal affairs are in order. With a gift to Central Union Mission in your will, the lives you help restore will be an eternal testament to your generosity. Contact Rev. Deborah Chambers at dchambers@missiondc.org or 202-827-3078 to learn more.



COVID-19 RESPONSE



Sanitizing the Mission down to the bedsprings is an all-hands-on-deck project done by overnight guests and program participants.

This Pilgrim Keeps on Trucking

By **Dr. Cheryl Cook-Posley**

PATRICK SPENCER CALLS HIMSELF a “pilgrim for Christ” because of his journey on foot from Lancaster, California, through the southern portions of the United States. Never fearful of where he laid his head or who he encountered, he pressed on with an unwavering faith in God. During his sojourn, he says he “listened while God spoke.” He believes God matured him and led him back to Central Union Mission for a season of renewal.

Patrick Spencer’ pilgrimage was a return trip. He participated in Gospel Rescue Mission’s work program in 2008 for a year. Then he left for Illinois, and for about ten years he worked security and maintenance jobs and put his CDL license to good use as a truck driver. In August 2018, his walk to DC was a chance for a new start.

Arriving at the Mission, Patrick was able to reconnect with the Mission’s flagship Ready2Work (R2W) program and former co-workers; because of his integrity and past performance, he was re-hired. As a member of the DuPont Circle Clean Team, he was an exceptional employee and a true community ambassador, befriending all he met.

Patrick is a living testimony of the goodness of God and how God grants us strength and courage, while empowering us to let our faith trump all of our fears. We celebrate

with Patrick Spencer as he embarks on the next chapter of his life as a regional truck driver with Advanced Transportation in Bridgeview, IL. The Mission is blessed in knowing this disciplined man of God, and we pray for God’s continued favor as Patrick models the love of Christ in his new job. ■

Dr. Cheryl Cook-Posley is senior director of the Mission’s Workforce Development and Education program.



Dr. Cook and R2W director Curtis Wright congratulate Patrick Spencer (center) on his renewed truck driving career.

From the President Better Together



TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV

That ancient advice is as sound today as it was back then for many situations—including running a business or a social service

agency. That’s why this issue of The Missionary focuses on one of our long-time business partners, the Nellis Group. We have dozens of business partners that are the community face of Central Union Mission all over the local area,

helping us to make important friends to support our efforts. Please see our thanks on pages six and seven.

But, what if you don’t own a company or have a lot of money? Your most valuable contribution is sharing your social capital. Tell your friends, family and contacts about the Mission’s successes, pass along this newsletter, share our Facebook and Instagram posts and pray for us regularly. Your network is wide and powerful, and we appreciate you. Thank you for your compassion. ■

Joe Mettimano

President & CEO

You will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. 2 Corinthians 9:11 NLT

From Haiti to LA - New Life Ahead

By H. Patricia Blackshire

ELUSMA PHARISIEN, a former resident of Central Union Mission, begins speaking over the phone in a very soft, but candid manner. He arrived in the U.S. with his family in 2010 from Port Au Prince, Haiti. The family was rescued by the American Red Cross after an earthquake devastated their homeland, leaving it in ruins.

Soon after, he found work as a part-time security guard in Miami, Florida, and then joined the Air Force. When his service was over, he departed Miami for Washington, DC, in search of a higher-paying job. His family's teetering financial



Elusma Pharisien

stability was causing anxiety and frustration, and the family split up to increase Elusma's chances of finding work.

Starting Again in DC

In 2017, on his first day in DC, he "googled" the word "Mission," and chose Central Union Mission because of its proximity to Union Station. Here he met with the chaplains and inquired about housing and job prospects. They helped him enter the Ready2Cook program, enrolling him in DC Central Kitchen's culinary training where he received his chef certification. The chef certification opened the door to an internship with the Ritz Carlton Hotel in DC. He reveals that he prepared about 400 meals a day. It was a high point in his life: he boasts, "Meeting people from around the globe, I was dizzy with excitement. I had to pinch myself!"

Besides cooking, he was also employed in the Mission's Ready2Work program as part of a maintenance crew that helped with the upkeep of the Northeast H Street Corridor and DuPont Circle. The Mission helped pay his transportation costs, and he spent a year in the On the Rise transitional housing complex, receiving a stipend for emergency expenses.

This spring, Elusma moved on to yet another big city. He is now living in the Weingardt Center with other veterans in Los Angeles, CA. Since his arrival, he has jumped into ac-

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

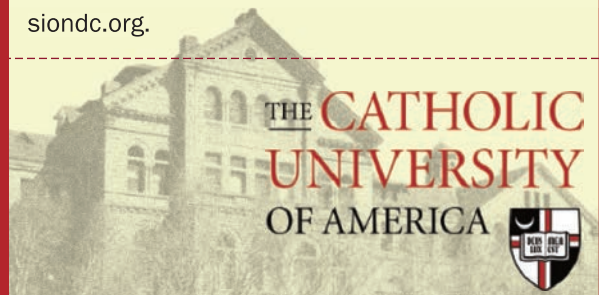


Many thanks for the hand-made masks and hand sanitizer.

COLLEGE IN THEIR FUTURE

Catholic University is launching a pilot program for higher education with Central Union Mission that will help people experiencing homelessness to complete an associate's or bachelor's degree. Planned for fall 2020, four students will begin with a one-year \$5,000 scholarship, consisting of one course with two classes per week each semester. This schedule will enable students to transition gradually into a disciplined academic culture.

Students will receive a tour and orientation sessions, and mentors and counselors will be provided for support. While Catholic University is underwriting tuition costs, students will need funds for books and fees. If you are interested in helping out with the Mission's Catholic University Scholarship Fund, please contact Rev. Deborah Chambers at 202-827-3078 or dchambers@missiondc.org.



Persevere for Unexpected Blessings

By **Dr. Cheryl Cook-Posley**

SITTING IN THE DAYROOM in the basement of Central Union Mission, a few men gather to catch up on the news of the day. Today's television coverage relates to the stimulus checks scheduled to go out to millions of Americans. Paul Brown, who has been at the Mission since November 2019 and served in the Marines for eight years, recounts, "There are guys who talk about doing things, and you know they're just blowing smoke, then there are the guys who mean business—and that's who Johnny is."

Getting Ahead

Johnny Ferguson, honorably discharged from the US Army, arrived at the Mission in November of 2019. Immediately he connected with the Mission's Senior Director of Social

The Importance of Accountability

Of course, there were those who had lofty aspirations for how to spend their money. Some of the guys said they would pay off a bill or child support. Otis Thorne, a returning guest, notes, "All of this is what we learn in Dr. Ako's class and from other staff at the Mission: the importance of setting up and maintaining checking and savings accounts. It's about us being accountable to ourselves and each other—we encourage and lift each other up." MBI Health psychologist Dr. Ako Tabetah, who provides services as part of Central Union Mission's transformation platform, is their group facilitator who helps them with a broad range of issues from anxiety and depression to life skills and financial literacy.

Mr. Brown continues, "The majority of the guys thought about how they could use this money as a lump-sum blessing that would give us a boost." Mr. Brown recalls, "For me, that's how I see it. I hate the virus thing that is upon us, but this stimulus check is truly a blessing because it will help

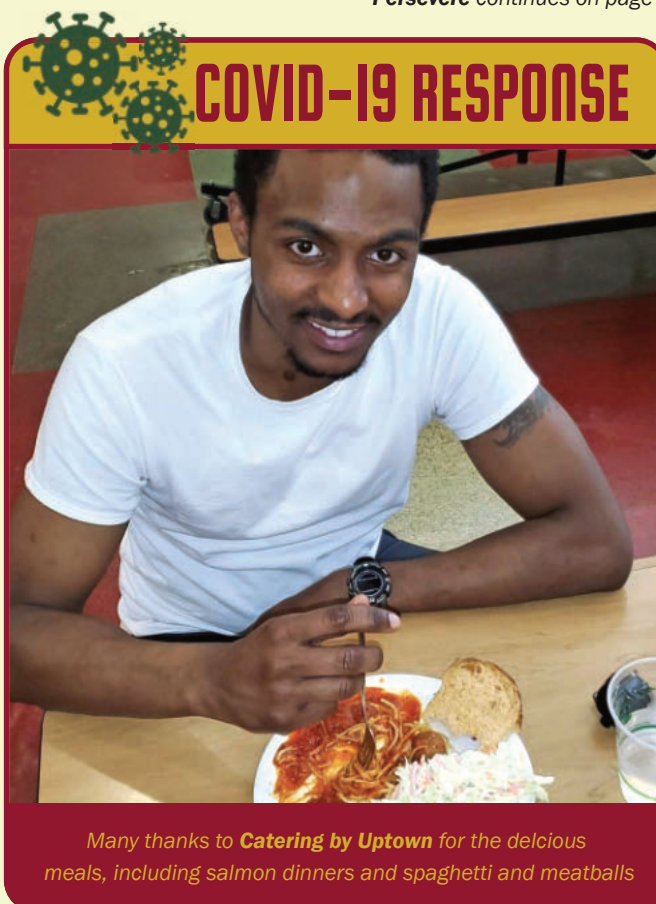
Persevere continues on page 7



Johnny Ferguson (center) is getting back on his feet. With President Joe Mettimano and Senior Director of Social Work Sylvia Johnson.

Work Shirley Johnson, who drove him and four other veterans to the Veterans Resource Fair. There they received suits and shoes for interviews and were assigned a case worker along with other support services. As a result of his follow-through, Mr. Ferguson leaves the shelter this morning to pick up the keys to his new apartment.

Mr. Brown smiles as he reflects, "When we all heard about the stimulus money we began to wonder about who was eligible and what the amount would be. Johnny was the one who went online and did the research; he let us know we were eligible since we had filed our taxes. See, this is what we veterans do. We follow the rules and do what is expected; the military teaches us that kind of discipline and follow-through."



*Many thanks to **Catering by Uptown** for the delicious meals, including salmon dinners and spaghetti and meatballs*

Helping is So Sweet



HUGO CARNEY SAYS THE IDEA occurred to them after a week of being out of school due to COVID-19: "What can we do in our house with the time we have on our hands to help make life better for other people? Della's expertise with baking got us where we are now." Hugo and

Della Carney, brother and sister who attend a DC private school, donned masks and gloves to bake desserts for the men at the Mission.

Then, Della said, "I reached out to a few of my friends who told me they were doing nothing all day." Together over several weeks, they baked hundreds of cookies, brownies and cupcakes for the Mission men. They also created home-made hand sanitizer, and a friend sewed 20 face masks."

Hugo said, "The days where I feel I'm doing something worthwhile are the days where I spent a couple of hours baking brownies and driving them down to the Mission." Della added, "I gain a lot of energy and feel fulfilled when I do this. I think you'd be surprised how good it can make you feel."

The inspiration flows both ways. Mission guest Patrick exclaimed, "I couldn't believe that people would go out of their way during this time to bake for us." Rev. Deborah Chambers noted, "It's difficult for the guys to shelter in place, but it's really humanizing for them to eat these treats; they are touching hearts."

Hugo concluded, "Now is the time to help people. And once you do, you will feel a lot better about yourself. It's really amazing what helping people can do for them and for you." Mission President Joe Mettimano agrees, "as it says in Acts, 'it is better to give than to receive.' Hugo and Della are demonstrating this in a great way. We are lucky to partner with them." ■



Hugo and Della Carney

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viding homes for people while the Mission is taking people off the street and providing them a safe location.” “After that,” he adds, “it really goes back to our relationships. I know that when we donate to the Mission, the funds are being used in the right way. We want to be strategic givers, investing where our money and time can do the most work.” Through their continued personal and business giving, they demonstrate their mother’s heart for the community and honor the longtime relationship. Central Union Mission greatly appreciates the Nellis family’s and the Nellis Group’s generous, consistent and intentional support.

Partnering with Central Union Mission offers local businesses many benefits and blessings. For more information, please contact Rev. Deborah Chambers at 202-827-3078 or dchambers@missiondc.org. ■



The Tolkan family donated much appreciated brisket and fried rice.

Pharisien, continued from page 4

tion by completing numerous employment assessments and participating in job training classes. Elusma simply says he is “awestruck” by all the different kinds of people in California, and the mountains and weather are huge reminders of his country, Haiti. “I intend to work hard,” he says. He hopes to reunite with his family very soon.

Mission is a Training Ground

Elusma says, “The Mission is the best organization that I have ever been a part of. It’s a place that encouraged me to look at my past life and make some corrections. The daily Bible studies were very encouraging and full of wisdom from the Mission’s staff and visiting pastors. Every day, I looked forward to the chaplain prayer services.” He also believes that his time at the Mission helped him become more proactive in achieving his goals.

Elusma brought his strong faith to Central Union Mission, and the Mission was privileged to help him prepare to care for his family and find successful employment. We can’t wait to hear what God continues to do in his life. ■

Journalist H. Patricia Blackshire is a valued Central Union Mission volunteer.

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me realize one of my goals.” For Brown, Ferguson, Thorne and other men at the Mission, this stimulus check is a way to achieve more quickly a long-time goal—to move out of the shelter and become self-sufficient. This payment potentially puts them and others ahead in their savings plans.

“I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and I see that all that I have prayed for is possible and will soon be my reality,” says Mr. Brown. For Mr. Ferguson, the stimulus will enable him to replenish his bank account after having just paid a large deposit, including the first and last month’s rent. “Now, I will be able to have an emergency cushion—that’s my blessing fund.” ■

Dr. Cheryl Cook-Posley is senior director of the Mission’s Workforce Development and Education program

Premier Business Partners (continued)

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Here's a practical way you can help Central Union from a social distance: Visit missiondc.org/vdrive for the opportunity to provide food, cleaning supplies and protective equipment.

Thank you so much for your compassion.

*God bless
you for
caring!*



Mission men took apart and sanitized the cafeteria line, as well as cleaned the stoves and ovens.



Food

DONATE
\$25



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Sharing Hope in a Crisis

Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, you can still help share hope with neighbors facing homelessness this summer. Now more than ever, we're counting on your generous gift today to provide to provide nutritious meals, safe shelter, recovery services and a second chance!

Please use my donation of:

- ☐ \$20.90 to feed and care for 10 guests
- ☐ \$52.25 for 25 guests
- ☐ \$104.50 for 50 guests
- ☐ \$156.75 for 75 guests
- ☐ \$_____ to help as many as possible

Please make checks payable to **"Central Union Mission."** To donate by credit card, please see our website at missiondc.org, or visit Facebook at **"Central Union Mission, DC."**

Central Union Mission

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