

Salvation Army Center of Hope

At 74- years old, he is lovingly referred to as "Sonny" by the staff at The Salvation Army's Center of Hope. Sonny spent four years in prison on a weapons charge in a desperate attempt to retrieve property that was stolen from him. Upon his release, Sonny entered the Salvation) Army's 90 day program at the shelter. While in the program, Sonny worked with the case worker at the Center of Hope to replace his state identification and to get his Medicaid and social security benefits restored. Consequently, Sonny was able to find housing and successfully transition to self-sufficiency, but that is not always the case

It's hard to recover from poverty. Many right here in the River Region live without heat and power, and go without food or prescriptions. Poor people who, more frequently than not, have bad credit are usually required to pay higher interest rates, utility deposits, and have to have a minimum income and good credit to rent a house or apartment. Many people who lack a stable, permanent residence have few options but to turn to places like The Salvation Army for help. That is why we are here" for example)

While our social service programs focus on sheltering, feeding, giving spiritual guidance, and financially assisting impoverished people, the staff often find themselves faced with dealing with a vast and varied range of situations including drug and alcohol abuse, physical and mental illnesses, domestic conflicts, extreme poverty, lack of job skills, lack of health care and lack of affordable housing. The endless list of social ills that plague those who seek our assistance is one of the greatest challenges faced by The Salvation Army. With limited resources, networking and creativity is imperative in providing the means to helping people manage their crises.

Can this happen to me? While poverty is a quick downward spiral, it is often a lifetime of bad decisions that leads to homelessness. The one commonality seems to be the lack of a social support system from family, friends or church that can escalate an urgent situation to a catastrophe.

It is imperative that our community come together, united, to form a safety net for the most vulnerable of this society. You never know when that safety net may catch you.

To learn more about The Salvation Army services in our area, visit www.salvationarmymontgomery.org