

Our Daily Bread, Mission Possible working to open shelter

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Throughout the pandemic, Our Daily Bread Ministries never quit feeding people in need.

“We will serve anybody dinner, anytime. They don’t have to bring any identification, it’s just a matter of if you’re hungry, we will serve you,” said Rachel Justice, the new director of Our Daily Bread.

A faith-based feeding program, Our Daily Bread, has been serving hot meals, five-days a week since they opened in 2006 — although meals were switched to take out due to COVID-19. Now, the ministry is looking to expand its services through a partnership with the nonprofit Del Norte Mission Possible, which focuses on providing services to homeless individuals.

The partnership is essentially a building-share program between the two organizations. Currently, Mission Possible is working to renovate the building at 1135 Harrold Street. Once completed, those renovations will allow for a more than 25-bed shelter at the building, which will also be operated by the non faith-based Mission Possible. Food and addiction recovery services will continue to be run through Our Daily Bread.

Justice said the shelter — which will become the only true shelter in the county — will not only provide a roof over the heads of unhoused individuals, but will allow for Mission Possible and Our Daily Bread to have better access to their clients, and get them connected to services, such as assistance in obtaining permanent housing.

Jesse Finkenkeller is an advocate and outreach worker for Our Daily Bread. Finkenkeller used to be homeless, and said he knows what it's like to be "less fortunate." He credits Our Daily Bread for turning his life around, including helping him quit drugs.

"This is where it all started for me. I was on the streets, I had an argument with my wife and I wound up here. I was half-dead when I came here, and that's the honest-to-God truth...But when I started getting healed, I decided this is where I belong, and this is what God wanted me to do," said Finkenkeller.

Finkenkeller said he hopes sharing his testimony can have a positive impact on someone else experiencing substance abuse. Additionally, he's aiming to spread awareness, and reduce stigma surrounding homeless issues in the community, along with other community partners who have experienced similar hardship.

"Our biggest thing is the community here, we've all been in that situation; drug addicts, we've all been homeless, we've all seen that, so our eyes are wide-open to helping people," said Finkenkeller. "If you start helping people instead of stomping on them; people need that."

Since taking over the directorship from her husband in February of 2020, Justice said she has been focusing on collaborating with other community groups and organizations. Also, like Finkenkeller, she's working to reduce the "homeless stigma" by connecting unhoused individuals with other members of the public through a new bible-based fellowship program.

"We really encourage the general public to come and participate and get to know some of our unhoused...get to know their story, we have the most amazing stories," said Justice.

The new program will be held at 1 p.m. on Thursdays at Our Daily Bread.

Additionally, Justice recently graduated with a certificate in addictions studies from College of the Redwoods, which will allow her to start up more faith-based counseling programs, beyond the weekly 12-step meeting they already host at the ministry.

With an expected increased clientele, Justice said they are looking for more volunteers, especially cooks, as well as financial partners and food donations. Justice said she expects their meals served to double when the shelter is up and running. What's more, the ministry took a financial hit during the pandemic due to decreasing donations.

To learn more about Our Daily Bread, volunteer or donate, contact Rachel Justice at (707) 954-7731