



Roseburg Rescue Mission

*A Beacon of Hope
for the Homeless*

OCTOBER 2011



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Juanita Benedict, Charlotte Richardson, & the Williams': Hazel, Freeman, Norman, Freeman Jr.

Mission History

The Roseburg Rescue Mission began in 1964 by Norman Williams. He was a combat veteran of WWII. He served in the Pacific islands. Norman returned from the war hardened and drank heavily. He has been described as "the black sheep of his family, never a tougher, more profane man". Such a life led to a divorce. But then, he had a dramatic conversion, accepting the Lord at an evangelistic crusade at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in the early 1960's. He attended Full Gospel Temple in Winston and was baptized in the South Umpqua River. He owned Winston Shoe Repair. Norman put feet on his new found faith, taking the same Gospel of salvation and hope that had given him new life to others that were still hurting. He rented a small shop to repair shoes downtown Roseburg across the street from the train depot and rail yard. It was at the

corner of SE Sheridan St and SE Lane Ave, a location the Mission remains today. He shared his faith with transient men that went by his shop. Norman started providing food and clothing, then shelter, and the Mission was born.

They were humble beginnings, yet he had the prayer, financial and volunteering support of his parents and sisters (pictured above). It was mostly a family run mission during the 1960's, until volunteers became more prominent in the early 1970's. Norman played the guitar, sang and preached in chapel and in the park. His sister Juanita went to Bible College and his sister Charlotte played the piano and was the bookkeeper. Norman, himself, bought the first building in 1975. They did not have a formal Board of Directors until 1976. In 1977 the Mission applied for and received state

VISION STATEMENT:
To establish and develop saving relationships with Jesus Christ among the homeless.

MISSION STATEMENT:
A Beacon of Hope for the Homeless

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Miguelena
President

Jim Eveland
Vice-President

Ron Aitken
Jeff Wikstrom
Mike Winters

incorporation and federal tax exempt status, 501(c)3. At first, the Mission was named Lighthouse of God Mission, then in 1980, the name was changed to do business as (dba) Roseburg Rescue Mission. 1980 was also a year of leadership change. Norman resigned as the founding Director and served as the interim President of the Board. Robert Lange, the first President, then served as the interim Director. In those early years, titles and duties were not as distinct as they are today, everyone was directly involved in daily operations.

Norman Williams layed his hands on that first building and prayed, claiming it for a Gospel mission for Douglas County. He even hoped that one day the Mission would comprise the whole block. He did not live to see that happen, but his year, 2011, 47 years later, that last parcel was purchased. In addition over the years, two other buildings were acquired on an adjacent block, as well as three houses in another location for women and children. Property values declined after the Blast of 1959, center point being only a block-and-a half away. The Mission has been a good steward, acquiring property at very reasonable prices. We now have 166 beds.

The face of homelessness has changed over the

years, but the Mission's purpose has not. In the early years, the typical client was an older man with an alcohol problem. Now clients are younger with other issues like drugs and mental illness. Women and children have become a part of the ministry, even the fastest growing segment. Homelessness continues to increase, and the services offered continue to improve. At first, "soup, soap and salvation" seemed to be adequate. Now we have a New Life Program that includes work training, Bible Studies, chapel, GED, life skills, addiction recovery, personal counseling and goal setting. We work with the homeless to get them into appropriate, independent living situations, yet the primary purpose remains the preaching of the Gospel to the poor that they would know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

This history has been gathered from available materials and persons with connection to the Mission. Many of the founders and early workers have gone home to be with the Lord. This history is not written for the glory of mankind or his accomplishments. God has done the work. May we never forget our roots, never just do good works of social service. May we always preach with boldness, unashamed of the Lord of our salvation!

**Family Picnic 1981
Norman Williams,
Hazel Williams,
Brenda Benedict,
Freeman Williams
and Trisha
Richardson in the
baby stroller.**

**Norman loved to sing
and play his guitar in
chapel and the park.**



**"Lighthouse of God
Mission" was painted
on the side of the
Mission at 516 SE
Lane Ave sometime
before 1980.**



**A lighthouse and
Scripture verse
accompany our name
on the side of the
Mission at 806 SE
Pine St sometime
during the 1990's.**

