

# A NEW DAWN

A PUBLICATION OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY RESCUE MISSION  
47518 Van Buren • PO Box 10660 • Indio, CA 92202-2564 • 760-347-3512 • www.cvrn.org



## Clients' Graduate to their "New Lives"

Friday, February 18 was graduation day for our "New Life Program" students! It was an amazing day celebrating the transformation in these men and women's lives. We had one of our largest graduation classes ever. The day was filled with joyous tears as we listened to the testimonies and life stories of our graduates. Every chair was filled and some people were standing to support their family members and friends.

Executive Director Darla Burkett presented the introduction. Our new Chairman of the Board, Floyd Rhodes, followed with his invocation. The testimonies shared by our client/graduates were emotional and powerful; their stories will be embedded in our minds for years to come. Our graduates help remind us of the great works of God and what he has in store for those who reach out to him.

Graduates shared stories of recovery from powerful, debilitating addiction. Others had lost their businesses but were now hopeful for success. One brave woman suffered frequent physical abuse and escaped to live in outdoors in a tree. She came to the Mission with guilt and shame . . . and no hope for a brighter future. Through the Mission and her new relationship with Christ she is now employed with the Betty Ford Center and moving out on her own next week.

Another graduate arrived at the Mission and asked himself, "could I really be amongst those that live at The Mission?"



He shared his dramatic story with us. He owned his own business and home. The economy had gotten so bad that within a year he lost everything. With no family and no resources he was forced to come to The Mission. His remarkable story of recovery and rebuilding brought tears of joy to many people.

Our Program Managers and assistants also had individual stories of triumph to share about each client. It was fascinating to see how each graduate had a different story, yet the work of God was weaved through all of them. It was easy to witness the strong bonds between the staff and graduates, the feeling that both have blessed each others lives. It was clear that today was not an end – it was a new beginning.

As the graduation concluded our hearts were filled with blessings that would touch us forever. I invite you to come out to our next graduation to be blessed the way I was today.†

### THIS ISSUE

A Stronger Family . . . . .	2
New Board Members . . . . .	3
Meet Our Volunteers. . . . .	4
Darla's Message. . . . .	4

# Transforming Into a Stronger Family

*Life milestone celebrated as couple commits to a happy marriage in the new year!*

Kelvin, 23, and Deelysa, 21, are a delightful young couple who come from troubled backgrounds. Despite their tough upbringing, they have changed the direction of their lives and are now on the road to success. On January 6, 2011 they became husband and wife while living at the Mission.

Kelvin was raised in a single parent home by his mom who worked hard to provide for herself and her children. She has instilled in her children two very important principles: a healthy work ethic and the need to be a part of a church family.

As a boy, Kelvin did not appreciate the value of church. But he reluctantly complied. He sang in the choir, ushered, participated in holiday productions, and memorized scripture.

Deelysa never spent more than a couple of weeks with either of her parents. Her family broken, Deelysa was raised in a series of foster homes. Having no family, Deelysa was taken in by Kelvin's mother when she was 13. Deelysa was required to attend church along with Kelvin and his siblings. This was a new experience for her.

Kelvin played football in high school and had a desire to go to college and fulfill his dream of becoming a pro player. However, he made some wrong decisions regarding "friends" and got himself in trouble. While waiting to find out his fate he prayed for a way to get help and avoid a lengthy prison sentence. God heard his prayer;



*Deelysa (mom), Kelvin (dad), KeeMiah (bottom left), Kelvin Jr. (middle), Kanijah (held by dad)*

Kevin was granted permission to come to the Mission and enter our New Life Program. He arrived October, 2010.

Since Deelysa joined Kelvin at the Mission with their three children, their lives began to change for the better. Their family began to build a new relationship with God. They studied the Bible and better understood God's wisdom. And their relationship with each other began improved and matured. Soon, Deelysa and Kelvin made a life-long commitment to one another and joined in marriage.

Kelvin's goal is to attend college and pursue an education that will help him build a business as a painting contractor. Deelysa plans to get her high school diploma and build a Godly home for her husband and children.†

*Submitting to one another  
out of reverence for Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 5:21**

# Welcome New Board Members

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*Three new community members are eager to contribute by serving on the Mission board.*

First, we say a hearty welcome to Floyd Rhoades, our new Chairman of the Board! Floyd is the founder and CEO of Vista Cove Senior Living. He lives in Indian Wells with his wife and daughter and has been serving on the CVRM Board for many years in a variety of roles. Floyd is active at Palm Desert Community Presbyterian Church as an elder and trustee. He served as President of the Indian Wells Rotary and has received numerous awards and accolades. Floyd, we're thrilled to have you as Chairman!

Next, we welcome Connie Dorst. Connie is no stranger to service. After high school, Connie worked as a volunteer sharing her faith in Liberia, West Africa. Connie has a master's degree in education and has taught at both private and public schools. She has served alongside her pastor husband in nine churches. Connie and her husband have 3 children and five grandchildren.

Finally, we welcome Cathy Helmstadter. Cathy is a graduate of Cal Polytechnic in Pomona. In 1995 she founded her own CPA firm. She has been a member of Southwest Community Church for many years. Cathy enjoys outdoors sports with family and friends. She is married with two sons, Joshua (a senior at Palm Desert High School) and Andrew (a sophomore at Desert Christian Academy).

We have been blessed once again to have such extraordinary individuals serving along side us in our pursuit to change lives!†



*Pictured from top: Floyd Rhoades,  
Connie Dorst, Cathy Helmstadter*

# Meet Our Volunteers

*Volunteers contribute so much to the Mission – we couldn't do it without them! This monthly feature in our newsletter highlights the contributions of our volunteers.*

We are blessed to have such wonderful community support! The "Stitch & Sew" group is one such supporter. "Stitch & Sew" is a group of women from Palm Desert Sun City that collects baby blankets, children's clothing, underwear, and a variety of personal hygiene supplies for our client/residents. Every so often they call us when they have a collection of items, and we send our truck over to pick them up!

Volunteerism comes in various ways and through many people. In total, our volunteers donate approximately 1,000 hours a month. Our volunteers do so much! They work in our pantry, in administration, in the kitchen preparing and serving food. Our volunteers also teach a



*Pictured from left: Millie Gilbertsen, Sandy Carroll (Coachella Valley Rescue Mission Development Coordinator), & Harriet Candlearia*

variety of subjects including spiritual classes, basic personal finance and art. Our volunteers also organize food drives and do simple repairs around the Mission.†

***It Takes A Village*** We'd love to have you as a volunteer! Our volunteers all tell us it is a rewarding experience. To volunteer please call Linda Garland at 760-347-3512x221.

## REASONS FOR RESOLVE

What an exciting time for the Mission! We've just broken ground on our new facility that will allow us to serve more people than ever before. It is truly a blessing—more people than ever will be fed, sheltered, given spiritual counseling and provided with the tools they need to end their cycle of homelessness.

Yet amidst this blessing our community is challenged by the unfortunate closing of the Martha's Village Emergency Shelter in Indio. Its closing means 100 fewer beds for those in need. It also means that our Mission is now stretched past its capacity. Many individuals and families arrive at our Mission looking for help; we can only do the best for them with what we have. But it isn't quite

enough.

Please make an investment in people in need. Your gift to the Mission will feed and house those with nowhere else to turn. But it can also change someone's life forever. A warm meal at our Mission has been the first step toward ending the cycle of homelessness for each person we've help.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darla Burkett".

Darla Burkett  
Executive Director