

Spreading
HOPE
SUMMER
2010

MEL TROTTER
Journal

"I knew I needed to go to a place where I could grow spiritually. I thank God I came to Mel Trotter."

Inside: Scott's incredible story of transformation

Stories of God's Provision Through You!

3 Wheels of change

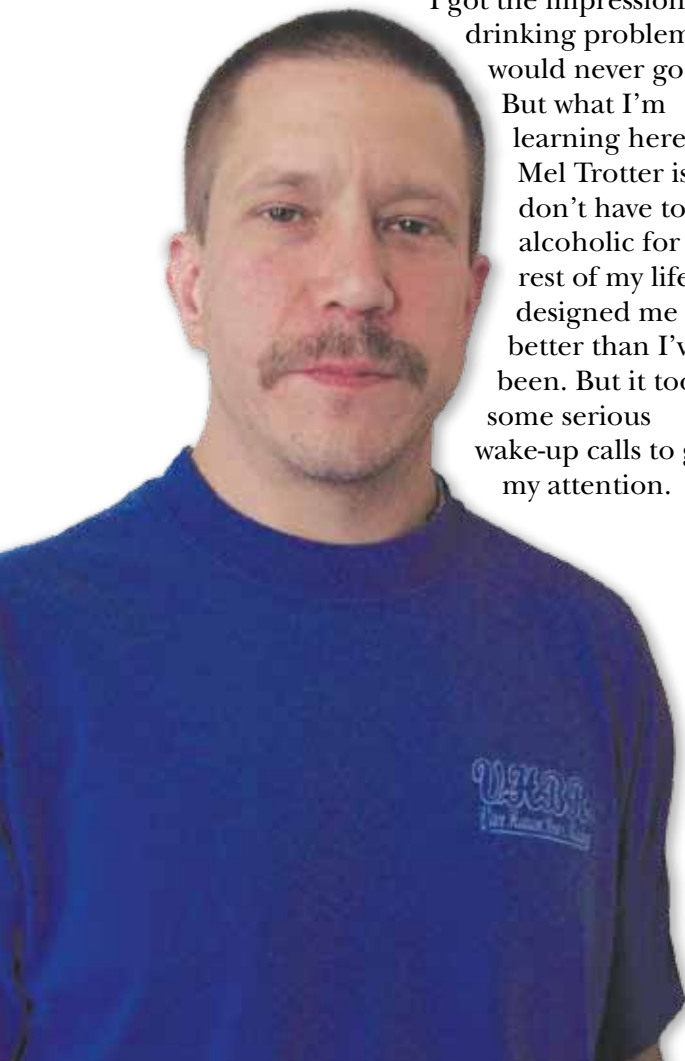
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“The hill was so steep...and I could never climb to the top on my own. THEN ONE DAY I MET JESUS...”

My name is Scott. If I were to describe my journey to sobriety in a picture, it would look something like this: I kept walking up a steep hill until I came to a level spot. Then I'd keep walking, but before I knew it, I'd slip and fall halfway down the hill. I'd then hike back to the same level spot, and the process would be repeated day after day, year after year.

I was in AA for 20 years. Trouble was, I always wanted a drink after the meeting. In those meetings I got the impression my drinking problem would never go away. But what I'm learning here at Mel Trotter is that I don't have to be an alcoholic for the rest of my life. God designed me to be better than I've been. But it took some serious wake-up calls to get my attention.



I needed to grow spiritually

I came to Mel Trotter right from jail, where I'd been sent for driving under the influence. I've had five drinking offenses in my life. I also drove for 18 years without a license. The good news is that I found Christ in jail. When I was finally released, I knew I needed to go to a place where I could grow spiritually. I thank God I came to Mel Trotter.

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In the past, a typical day for me would be to get up, have a beer or two before breakfast, go to work, come home and drink an 18-pack. If I didn't drink, I'd start to shake.

When I wasn't drinking I was lying to people, saying, “I can handle this.” There'll be other jobs. Someone will bail me out. All lies. Today I'm a different person. I'm

most proud of the fact that I've been sober now for the longest period in my life. I'm awestruck by what God's doing to me and for me.

I also want to say a word of thanks to you who donate to Mel Trotter Ministries. Your donations go a long way to help us. We need just about everything—from clothing and food to personal hygiene products. Every dollar helps people like me stay close to the Lord. God bless you for caring.

Scott Says, “Thank you for your support of Mel Trotter Ministries, and for helping me get my life back on track.”

READ MORE STORIES OF HOPE ONLINE

www.meltrotter.org/storiesofhope.aspx

With your help, THIS CAN BE A SUMMER OF HOPE!



Summer can be a pretty discouraging time for homeless neighbors here in the West Michigan area. In fact, without access to water, long, hot, humid days can leave the homeless dangerously dehydrated. That's why we'd like you to consider making a generous gift of \$20, \$30 or any amount in June, July and August.

Your ongoing support will help Mel Trotter Ministries continue to offer nourishing food, safe shelter and life-transforming services during the challenging months ahead. And we'll be ready with a hearty meal and an open door to help all of our neighbors in need.

For more information on how you can help make this a Summer of Hope for the homeless, please call (616) 454-8249 or give now at <http://summer.meltrotter.org>

Thank you for caring!

HELP START THE WHEELS OF CHANGE

When you donate your vehicle to Mel Trotter Ministries' Auto Center you not only get a \$500 tax deduction, you start the wheels of change for many of our residents on the road to recovery.

Because Mel Trotter Ministries' Auto Center is a state-licensed auto dealership, we are able to sell the vehicles that are donated to us. Each car also serves as an opportunity for men and women in our

long-term substance abuse program to become certified mechanics.

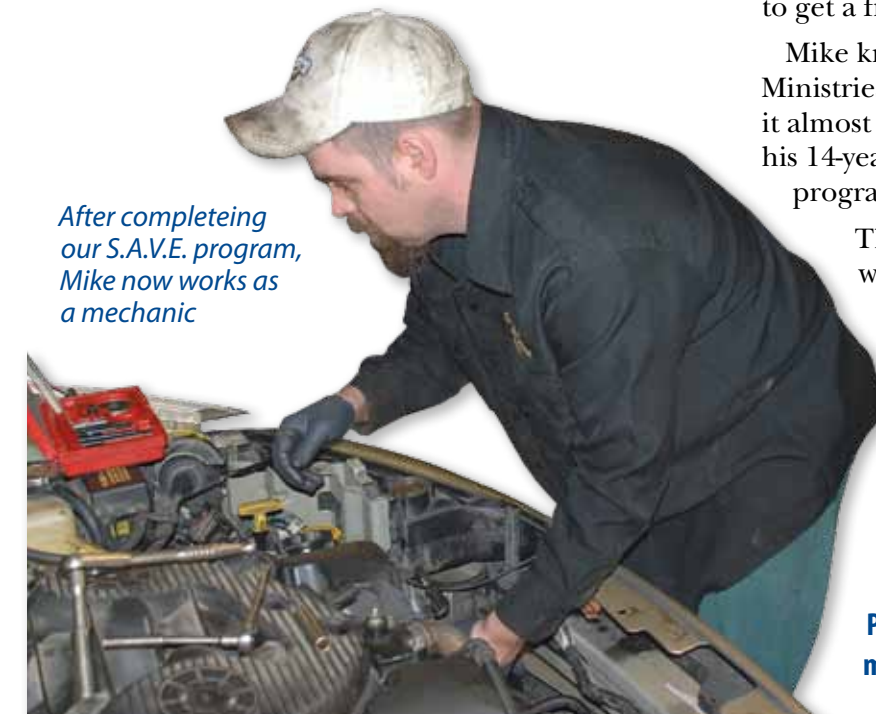
Here they will learn valuable skills in automotive repair by working on vehicles, doing computer research, and reading and studying repair manuals. By learning these valuable new skills they are able to become state-certified in brakes, suspension, engine repair and engine overhaul. Recovering men and women are finding purpose in their lives and are able to get a fresh start in a new career.

Mike knows this well. Before coming to Mel Trotter Ministries, Mike was a truckdriver. His long trips made it almost impossible for him to have a relationship with his 14-year-old son. Now, a graduate of our S.A.V.E. program, Mike works as a mechanic.

Thanks to the skills training he has received working on our donated vehicles, Mike is completing state certifications. He's also taking classes in automotive technology at Grand Rapids Community College. Even better, he's rebuilding his life and his relationship with his son.

To find out more about donating your vehicle to Mel Trotter Ministries, go online to www.meltrotter.org/donatevehicle.aspx

Please consider donating your vehicle. It will help so many on their road to recovery. Thank you.



After completing our S.A.V.E. program, Mike now works as a mechanic

Rebuilding families

ONE HARDWORKING MAMA AT A TIME



Many of the moms that enter our drug and rehabilitation program at Mel Trotter Ministries have been separated from their children. And often, it's the first thing they want to fix.

Sometimes children can be reunited with mom while she receives treatment. "It has been wonderful to watch this happen; mom getting healthy both physically and spiritually while she is learning to parent in a wholesome environment," Kathy, our children's supervisor, says.

At Mel Trotter we do everything we can to reunite and rebuild families. But we make sure we focus on getting mom healthy and ready to be the best mom she can be through parenting classes with lots of instruction and encouragement.



Below, several of our moms share their stories of hope—all made possible through the generosity of friends like you.

Holding my head up high Mel Trotter's shelter has given my son and me a new beginning. Mel Trotter has given me the strength as a single parent to keep moving forward and not give up, to hold my head up high. **If it wasn't for God and Mel Trotter, I really don't know where my life would be at this point.** I am very thankful for the help and opportunity Mel Trotter has given me.

—Brandy

Building a bright future Being a single mom of twins is hard, and with the addition of homelessness it was unbearable. **When I arrived at Mel Trotter Ministries I didn't expect what I received; overwhelming concern for me and my children,** compassion, my love of Christian faith and yes, respect! My stay here has helped me remain focused on my goal to find housing and employment, also to build a better future for my family.

—Dorie

Being the mom she wants to be Mel Trotter Ministries has helped me in many different ways to become what my heart desired, a loving Christian mother. The recovery program here at MTM is for me "a safe haven." My counselor has helped me to reconnect with my children.

I love it here at MTM, for it is a peaceful place that is very kind and loving to all of us who stay here. I have gotten my respect back for myself, and even towards others. I know more in my heart, God is telling me to grow up and pick up my cross and start living my life for Him and my children.

Knowing that Christ is there leading my life is a feeling, an emotion, a thought, a lifestyle that I'll never change! But change in my life is not just knowing about God, it is knowing God has changed me.

—Mary



For those who've lost their way, YOU ARE PROVIDING A SUMMER OF HOPE and lighting the way to new life

Because you continue to reach out to those in need, Mel Trotter Ministries is able to provide safe shelter, nourishing food, warm clothing, education, work training and more for men, women and children in need throughout our community.

Every donation you give...every prayer you utter...and every compassionate act of service you provide helps us live out our mission to demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ toward the hungry, homeless and hurting in the West Michigan area.

Special friends like you are the backbone of this ministry. Even though you may never meet the people you're helping, we assure you they do not take you and your kindness for granted. Because of your compassion, this is a Summer of Hope for the needy.

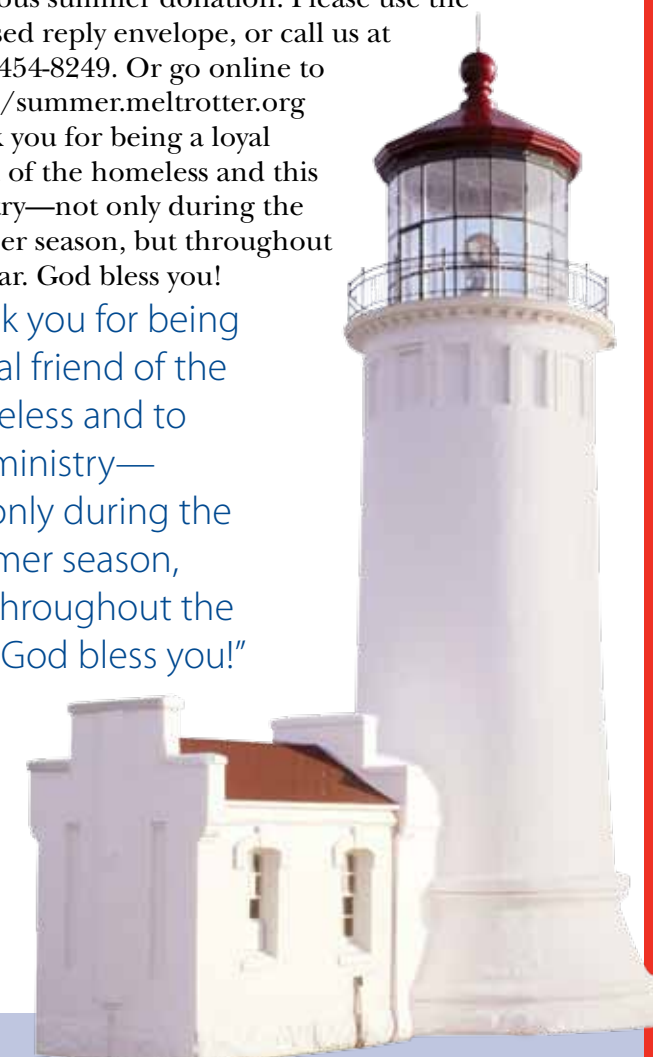
A priceless gift

You were more than generous during the recent Easter season, when we shared the miraculous story of the empty tomb with hundreds. Thank you for all you did to make resurrection Sunday the success it was. But the need continues. And often in the warm months ahead, hunger, despair and homelessness grow.

That's why once again we ask you to give the precious gift of hope to a homeless person who needs your help to start over. Please continue to allow God to take shattered lives and make them whole.

Right now, you can make a difference for someone in desperate need by providing a generous summer donation. Please use the enclosed reply envelope, or call us at (616) 454-8249. Or go online to <http://summer.meltrotter.org> Thank you for being a loyal friend of the homeless and this ministry—not only during the summer season, but throughout the year. God bless you!

"Thank you for being a loyal friend of the homeless and to this ministry—not only during the summer season, but throughout the year. God bless you!"



PLEASE JOIN US

Join us for some exciting events at Mel Trotter Ministries this summer:

August 27-28

28th Street Metro Cruise

Enjoy the cars and sales at our store, 555 28th Street.

September 22-October 10

Art Prize 2010 Venue

Stop by Mel Trotter and see artists and their art on display during the International ArtPrize competition.

Go to www.meltrotter.org/events.aspx to find the latest about what's happening at Mel Trotter Ministries, and how you can get involved!

"The best thing I ever did was to walk through these doors. THAT'S WHEN MY LIFE BEGAN TO CHANGE."

My name is Kim. I made a good decision when I came through the doors of Mel Trotter Ministries. In fact, it's the best decision I ever made. I have a new set of friends. I feel better than I've ever felt. I'm studying the Bible, and I'm learning more about who God really is. This place is a safe haven for me—and so much different than the life I once lived.

I've been addicted to heroin, hash and opium. My uncle was the one who taught me how to put a needle in my arm. All of the weed, the pills and the terrible lifestyle I lived almost killed me. In fact, I used to be worried I'd take my own life. But then I always heard a small voice that said, "Don't do it, Kim...don't do it."

For three years I studied to be a professional model. After my training I worked as a model for three additional years. It was a terrible life. Men took advantage of me again and again. It was not the career I hoped it would be. But I always wanted a friend. I was lonely and alone. I just couldn't find anyone I could trust.

God is walking by my side every day

Today I can honestly say God is my friend—and so are the people I'm with here at Mel Trotter. God is protecting me. He's walking with me every day. Yes, I've had a lot of sadness in my life, but now I'm beginning to feel a joy that can only come through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

At the moment I have hepatitis-C, and I need chemotherapy. All those years of using needles are the reason I'm suffering as I am right now. But that's okay. I can say that because I now know I'm a child of God. My Father in heaven is with me every step of the way. At the same time, I also have many people here on earth to thank for my walk with God.

To be specific, thank you for your donations of money, time and service. I came here for shelter, but because of your generosity I received so much more. My heart is now filled with joy, peace and great happiness. I still need to work on forgiving those who hurt me. But that will come in time. Thank you again for your kindness.

"I came here for shelter, but because of your generosity, I received so much more."



"I don't want to leave this place. It is truly a haven of hope for me."



KEEP US IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Please pray:

- That each person who leaves walks in the truth they have learned here
- For spiritual growth of our residents and children
- For safety during the summer months as the children participate in offsite activities

Please give praise:

- For the youth groups that come weekly to play with the children here
- For the residents who have asked Jesus into their lives
- For our graduates who are currently on the Dean's list at college

MEET ONE OF THE GREAT FACES AT MEL TROTTER



For two and a half years, Dan Flier has worked in support services at Mel Trotter Ministries. He feels blessed to be able to talk openly about his faith and to mentor residents in their walk with Christ.

Even when he's not at work, Dan likes to rebuild things. But nothing compares to the work he does at Mel Trotter, helping residents restore their lives.

To learn more about volunteering at Mel Trotter Ministries, visit www.meltrotter.org/volunteer.aspx

Making it easy...
GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

Did you know you can support what God is doing through Mel Trotter Ministries and receive a fixed income for life in return? You can, with one of the oldest and most reliable giving tools, called a Charitable Gift Annuity!

A Charitable Gift Annuity pays you an income for life (or the lives of you and your spouse). The rate of return is based on your age at the time of your gift. You receive a charitable deduction for a portion of the gift when you make the gift. Additionally, a portion of the income

comes back to you tax-free. After your lifetime, the remainder of the gift goes to Mel Trotter Ministries.

For more information, ask for a FREE copy of "Questions & Answers About Gifts That Give Back" by simply checking the box on the enclosed reply card, or contacting Kent Vanderwood at kentvanderwood@meltrotter.org or (616) 454-8249, ext. 311.

HOPE BY THE NUMBERS

JANUARY-MARCH 2010

Here's how your compassion has changed lives this year already:



Meals served: 56,527



Nights of shelter provided: 23,617



Articles of clothing given: 2,401



Chapel Attendance: 13,794

SPECIAL SUMMER NEEDS

If you can provide any of the following new or gently used items, we would be so grateful. Thank you for being such a blessing for our ministry!

- Baby items
- Spring jackets
- Umbrellas
- Christian CDs
- City Bus Passes

For a complete listing of our needs, please call (616) 454-8249, ext. 266 or visit us online at www.meltrotter.org/fillneed.aspx

THANK YOU!



A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM CHICO

MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES

Dear Friend of Mel Trotter Ministries,

How I thank God for you and your heart of compassion. While some might make excuses for not reaching out to the needy, you do just the opposite. By your prayers and gifts you're telling the homeless, hurting and the addicted how much you care. Thank you.

Now we're entering the summer months and, as I've said it before hunger and homelessness will never take a summer vacation. The pain of shattered lives will simply not go away. However, because of your kindness this can be a Summer of Hope for individuals and families in need.

You are already making this a summer to remember

This summer we will probably see a 20 percent increase in the number of hungry people who come to Mel Trotter for a food box from our pantry. Children who receive lunch at school during the year now will go hungry—unless we're there to help. And we are—to provide these precious children with nutritious food.

Because you stand alongside us, this is already a Summer of Hope—hope that usually starts with a meal. But as the Bible reminds us, what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? That's why we also provide heaping portions of the Bread of Life. Jesus Christ is that Bread...and we have the privilege of sharing this life-saving message with all who have ears to hear. Last year we provided over 7,000 hours of Christian counseling to our residents and guests. Many made decisions to follow Jesus.

As you make travel plans this summer, please remember the poor who will not be enjoying a summer vacation. And keep us on your prayer and giving list. God bless you for all you do to make Christ known to so many.

Your friend,
Chico Daniels, President & CEO



Rev. Chico Daniels
President & CEO

"Last year we provided over 7,000 hours of Christian counseling..."

OUR MISSION

To demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ toward the hungry, homeless and hurting of the Grand Rapids area.

MY SUMMER OF HOPE GIFT

YES, Chico, you can count on my support as Mel Trotter Ministries rebuilds lives during the critical summer months.

HERE'S MY GIFT OF:

- \$15 \$35 \$50 \$150 \$_____

Please complete this slip and return it to Mel Trotter Ministries with your generous summer gift. Your donation is tax deductible as allowed by law. You will receive a receipt.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Please make your check payable to: Mel Trotter Ministries

Please send me a FREE copy of "Questions & Answers About Gifts That Give Back"

Donate online by credit card at <http://summer.meltrotter.org>

225 Commerce SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (616) 454-8249 www.meltrotter.org

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