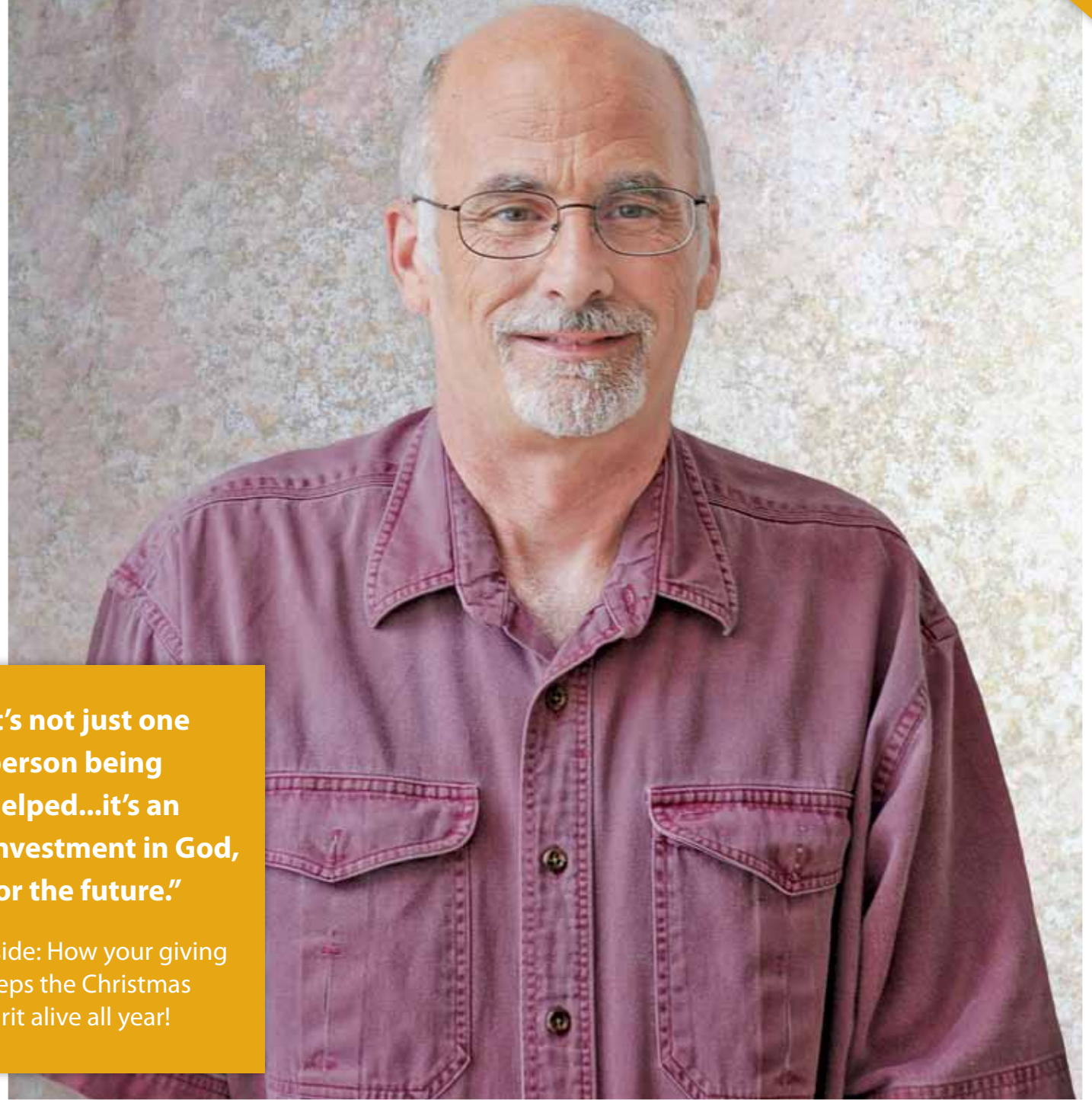


MEL TROTTER
Journal



"It's not just one person being helped...it's an investment in God, for the future."

Inside: How your giving keeps the Christmas spirit alive all year!

Stories of God's Provision Through You!

2 From crisis to Christ

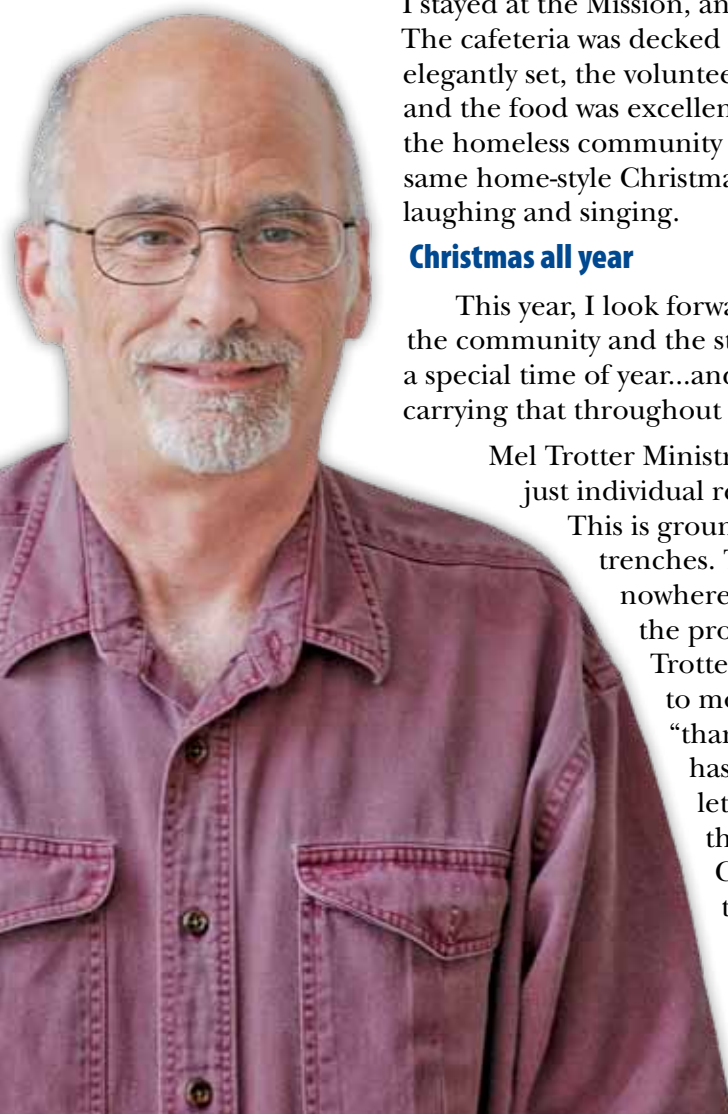
5 Shop 'til you drop

6 Brown M&Ms

FROM CRISIS TO CHRIST

My name is Steven, and I grew up in a family of privilege. I earned a Master's degree in chemistry, and eventually became a chiropractic physician. But alcoholism ran rampant in my family. My uncle died from it, another uncle went crazy from it and there was abuse of all kinds. At 47, I had an emotional crisis and admitted to my friends and pastor that I'd been abused as a child. They helped me turn my life over to God, but things got harder after that. To deal with it, I started drinking heavily. I was out of control, so my pastor and my wife gave me two choices. One of the choices included going to Mel Trotter Ministries. I agreed to that, but I was lying. I packed my van with camping gear and planned to disappear off the map. Instead I got so drunk I was unable to walk,

"I owe my life to the Lord and to Mel Trotter!"



unable to feed myself, and nearly died. My sister, bless her heart, hauled me down to Mel Trotter Ministries!

"They helped feed me..."

They made me feel so at home here and provided a safe environment for my relationship with God. The residents—my fellow residents—*helped* feed me. The staff surrounded me with love and took care of every need. It was the family environment that I'd always dreamed of.

Instead of going back home last Christmas I stayed at the Mission, and it was incredible! The cafeteria was decked out. The tables were elegantly set, the volunteers served the residents and the food was excellent! When we were done, the homeless community came in and received the same home-style Christmas love. Everyone was laughing and singing.

Christmas all year

This year, I look forward to serving the residents, the community and the staff in any way I can. This is a special time of year...and I'd like to be a part of carrying that throughout the year.

Mel Trotter Ministries is helping more than just individual residents or homeless people.

This is ground zero—God in the trenches. The sick, the infirm, have nowhere else to go, but through the programs and services at Mel Trotter, they have opportunities to move on. I just want to say "thank you" to everyone who has given to this ministry, and let them know that everything that has gone on is because of God. The glory goes to Him!

Steven says your support is "helping to build a stronger community." He thanks your giving spirit...and so do we!

READ MORE STORIES OF HOPE ONLINE

www.meltrotter.org/storiesofhope.aspx

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

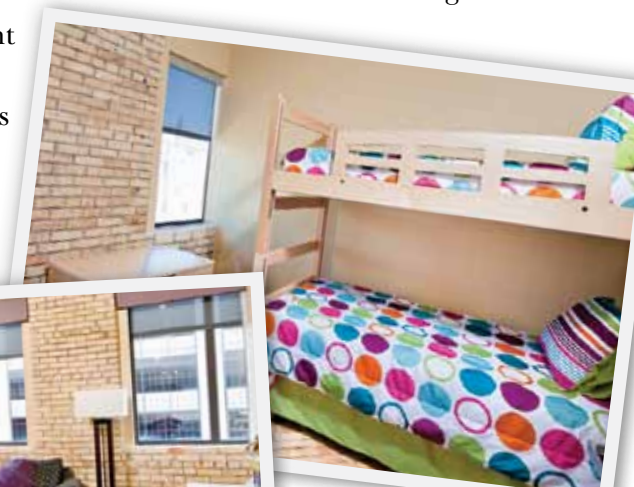
For the women and families who recently moved into our new fourth floor apartments, Christmas will be a very happy day. After all, there's no place like home for the holidays...or *any* day! The seven beautiful units offer comfortable, transitional housing to graduates of our year-long substance abuse program for women as they transition back into society. Along with the apartments, these women and their families also have access to a new library, play area, arts and

crafts center, and a comfortable room for small group gatherings.

After completion of these amazing fourth floor renovations, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on May 2. And in June, five grateful women moved in. As one said about her apartment, "Everything in it is new, right down to the toothbrush!"

Our happy home-dwellers are grateful for the gifts, prayers and hard work of

all who have helped make these renovations possible. And a special thank-you goes to Sonali Allen and Mercantile Bank for helping secure the Affordable Housing Grant for our Shelter from the Storm Campaign, which helped fund these incredible blessings.



With everything brand-new, the grateful residents of our newly renovated apartments are "happy home-dwellers"!

Give hurting neighbors...

HOPE TO HOLD ON TO!

In just a few weeks, Mel Trotter Ministries will launch our annual Hope Tote Campaign. We're announcing it now because we're going to need help from caring friends to get ready to distribute Hope Totes to needy Grand Rapidsians, beginning in February and continuing until Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012.

If you're new to our Mission family, you're probably wondering, "What's a Hope Tote?" It's a small plastic bag that can be filled with inexpensive, unused or travel-size items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tissues and socks and distributed to homeless people to help them clean up and feel better about themselves. When they do, they're more likely to make other changes that can transform their lives forever!



Mel Trotter's Hope Tote Campaign is a meaningful way for you, your family, your church or business group to get together and make a difference. We supply the Hope Totes. You simply fill and return them by Easter Sunday. Soon those little bags will be in grateful hands, giving our neediest neighbors "hope to hold on to!" **For more information, please call (616) 454-8249, ext. 242. Or visit us online at www.meltrotter.org. Thank you!**





THE CHRISTMAS ROOM

Once again, we need help to stock that special place we call the Christmas Room. Every year around this time, we transform this ordinary room into a mini-store and fill it with wonderful items like games, CD players, sports equipment and more. From December 5-8, we'll open the doors and invite our

residents to come and "shop" for Christmas gifts. We even help them wrap and ship the gifts to their children. This wonderful service we provide, with help from friends like you, not only empowers our residents, but also helps rebuild relationships during the emotionally difficult holiday season.

We still need donations of card games (Uno, Skip-bo,

etc.), single CD players, gifts for middle school kids and teens, sports and fishing equipment, board games, and more. For information about dropping off your donations, contact Rebecca Robertson at (616) 454-8249, ext. 266. Thank you for making the Christmas Room available for our residents!



FULL HOUSE

Winter in Grand Rapids is more than an uncomfortable inconvenience for homeless and vulnerable people. Lives are lost every year from exposure to our bitterly cold weather. But fortunately, many find their way to Mel Trotter Ministries. Most winter nights, we have a full house—and more. To handle the overflow, we fill every possible space in our Chapel, foyer and lobby with mats, blankets and pillows. And we're racing against time to complete a special remodeling project that will enable us to accommodate even more people in need.

As you can see, your gifts and prayers this winter are crucial. "We'd appreciate any help in making sure our people are insulated and warm and protected," says our president, Reverend Chico Daniels.

May God bless you for partnering with us to shelter and care for the homeless, hungry and hurting. Your support truly helps *change*—and *save*—lives.

Winter Center

An ambitious project is under way to remodel an old garage behind the Mission into a winter drop-in center. This facility would enable Mel Trotter to provide:

- Warm refuge for those who would be out in the snow, crammed into the public library or doorways downtown.
- A pantry for sorting, packing and distributing food boxes to people in need.
- A counseling center for connecting the chronically homeless with urgently needed community services.

Harsh Grand Rapids winters can be life-threatening to the homeless. Your donation to help hasten completion of this safe, warm haven of help and comfort would be greatly appreciated.

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP!

No matter how many names are on your Christmas gift list, you can find something for everyone at Mel Trotter's retail stores. The price is right, so come and browse through our gently used (often brand-new) items...toys, books, sporting equipment, jewelry, purses, hats, linens, household items, clothing, shoes and more! As an added "feel-good" bonus, one hundred percent of our profits go directly to our work of restoring lives and building a better community!

As you head out to shop at one of our stores, see if you have any

gently used items to donate and bring them along! Your donations will help restock our shelves, and you'll receive a tax deduction as you partner with us in generating funds for our ministry to Grand Rapidsians who need help.

Each of our five retail stores features daily and weekly specials—and a 20 percent discount for shoppers 55 and older. We stock our sales floor with new items each day, so come and shop 'til you drop! For a store location near you, visit: meltrotter.org/RetailStores.aspx



WE'RE JUST A CLICK AWAY

Through your support, you are a vital part of Mel Trotter Ministries! We want you to know what's happening and invite you to keep in touch with us through your favorite online social media sites. Connect with us any time at the following sites for up-to-date information about the work you support.

facebook

Find us on facebook:
Mel Trotter Ministries

You Tube

Subscribe to our YouTube channel:
Meltrottermin

twitter

Follow us on Twitter:
@meltrotter

tumblr.

View our blog at Tumblr:
<http://meltrotterministries.tumblr.com/>

flickr

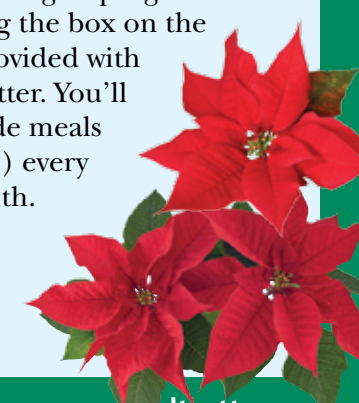
Check out our photos on Flickr:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/meltrotterministries/>



Make a difference every month as a...
MEALS-A-MONTH PARTNER

If you're a compassionate person with a concern for the homeless and a desire to make a difference, then you've got the heart of a Meals-A-Month Partner. This is a group of very special friends—faithful donors who help change lives month after month, all year long. As a Meals-A-Month Partner, you'll enable Mel Trotter to continually provide vital services such as meals, clothing and outreach for people in our community who desperately need help. It's easy, too! Mel Trotter Ministries can set up an automated deduction from your checking account or credit card, and you can even customize your mailing schedule.

Interested? Simply contact timswiney@meltrotter.org or call (616) 454-8249, ext. 268. You can also sign up right now by checking the box on the coupon provided with this newsletter. You'll help provide meals (and more!) every single month.



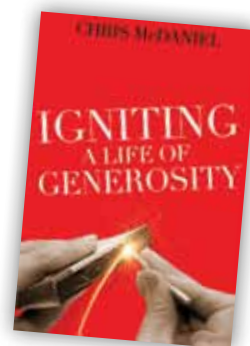
TAKING OUT THE BROWN M&M'S

Have you ever heard the story of the classic rock band Van Halen and their notorious insistence that a bowl of M&M's be provided backstage—with every single brown candy removed? This was actually written into the contract, allowing Van Halen to cancel a show with full compensation if this provision was not implemented correctly, according to the book *The Checklist Manifesto*. Van Halen reportedly followed through at least once, canceling a show in Colorado when the band leader found some brown M&M's in his dressing room. It turns out this was not a case of arrogant celebrities making insane demands; but rather an ingenious safeguard to ensure every detail was handled correctly. Van Halen was the first band to take huge productions into smaller arenas, where technical errors were common. As lead singer David Lee Roth explained, "If I saw a brown M&M in the bowl...guaranteed you'd run into a problem. And the mistakes could be life-threatening."

If details are important for a rock concert, how much more so for the precious resources God has entrusted to us to bless our families and the ministry organizations close to our hearts! Jesus said, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." (Luke 16:10) One important way we can be trustworthy—whether we have little or much—is to make sure we have an up-to-date Will.

For a FREE copy of "Estate Planning Checklist Inspired by Brown M&M's," check the box on the reply card or contact Tim Swiney, Director of Development, at Mel Trotter Ministries at (616) 454-8249, ext. 268 or timswiney@meltrotter.org

Source: *Igniting a Life of Generosity and Checklist Manifesto* by Chris McDaniel



7 GEMS FOR SUCCESS

When you make a donation to Mel Trotter Ministries, you are not just providing "three hots and a cot." The journey often begins with a hot meal and a good night's sleep, but our shelter program is a gateway into so much more. In fact, our programs and services are designed to prepare and empower our residents so that, when they are ready to leave, they are equipped with these 7 gems for success:

1. A **job**, so they can be self-supporting.
2. A **GED** to complete their basic education.
3. **Spiritual life** and hope through Jesus Christ.
4. A **vehicle**, often secured through our Auto Service Program.
5. An apartment, or **housing** of their own.
6. A **church** home, perhaps one of the 80-100 that partner with us each month.
7. Restoration and reconciliation with their **family**.

As you can see, your gifts have a far-reaching impact in the lives they touch. Thank you for helping us celebrate new life all year long here at Mel Trotter Ministries!



Another year is about to end, and so many lives have been touched and changed at Mel Trotter Ministries. None of it would have been possible without you—our generous donors, caring volunteers and community partners like Chemical Bank, Biggby Coffee and WOOD Radio that played a crucial role in our Brownbag and Turkey Drop projects. How can we ever thank all of you who have supported Mel Trotter Ministries? There are simply no words to express our gratitude!

PLEASE JOIN US

Celebrating the spirit of giving is the essence of Christmas—and our Mission's ministry!

Please join us:

Christmas Food Box Giveaway:

December 22

2012 Hope Tote Distribution:

February - Easter Sunday (April 8)

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!



HOPE BY THE NUMBERS

JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2011

You have made a difference! So far this year, your support has helped provide:



Meals served:
184,179



Nights of shelter provided: 56,418



GEDs earned: 7



Articles of clothing given: 4,496



Chapel attendance: 15,201



Dental visits: 431



WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Please pray for:

- Graduates to find steady employment
- Steadfast spirit for clients in sin recovery
- Hope for the homeless to be motivated to try life again
- Family reunification this holiday season
- Employers who will give our clients a chance to work

Please give praise for:

- People who have volunteered to tutor and interact with children at Mel Trotter
- One graduate's progress through the Pathways to Prosperity program job training and assistance program at GRCC
- The classes that are helping one graduate through the No Worker Left Behind program
- All our current graduates are working!

SPECIAL WINTER NEEDS

We need help to offer warmth and comfort from the cold to homeless Grand Rapidians who are coming to us this winter. If you can provide any of the following items, we would be very grateful.

- Warm winter clothing
- Winter boots for all ages
- Socks/footies
- Underwear
- Diapers (including pull-ups) sizes 4, 5, & 6
- Baby wipes
- Baby/children's thermometers
- Umbrella strollers
- Body wash and lotion

For a full list of daily needs, please visit www.meltrotter.org/fillneed.aspx or call (616) 454-8249, ext. 266. Thank you!



A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM CHICO

MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES

Every year, we all hope that the Christmas spirit will never end. Unfortunately, we're soon confronted with the holiday bills we've accumulated—and the tax man, with his hand out. It doesn't take long for us to realize we've got to get on with life. But for the believer, I think every day is Christmas. In our spirit, we know that Christmas is all about John 3:16..."God so loved the world that HE GAVE..." To me, this is the essence of Christmas—God giving to us. We come to Him empty, with nothing to give. Yet He gave everything in the form of His cherished Son, so that our emptiness could be filled with new life.

New life is something we get to celebrate every day of the year here at Mel Trotter Ministries. It's exciting to watch people like Steven (who tells his story on page 2) as they "unwrap" God's great gifts of grace and hope. At first, when lovingly confronted with God's claim on their lives, there can be a lot of mourning over the past. It reminds me of an Old Testament scene where the Israelites, who had been living outside of God's law and His blessings, are convicted by His word. They weep, brokenhearted, over the wasted years. But then they are encouraged with these words: "It is a time to celebrate with a hearty meal, and to send presents to those in need, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10, LB)

At Mel Trotter Ministries, we're getting ready to celebrate Christmas with a holiday feast! Thanks to your generosity, our residents have been able to send presents to their children. And many, like Steven, are overjoyed to have Jesus in their hearts. For them, the holidays will have new and deep meaning this year. What joy and hope you've given, and how we thank God for the gift of your friendship! On behalf of our staff, volunteers and the people who are celebrating new life because you care...Christmas blessings!

Your friend,

Chico Daniels, President & CEO

P.S. If you would like to receive a copy of our annual report, please visit <http://meltrotter.org/financials.aspx> or call Rebecca Robertson at (616) 454-8249, ext. 266 for a printed copy.



Rev. Chico Daniels
President & CEO

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son..."

—John 3:16, NIV

OUR MISSION

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

19352

MY CHRISTMAS GIFT YES, Chico, I'll help Mel Trotter Ministries feed and care for homeless and hungry Grand Rapidsians this winter.

HERE'S MY GIFT OF:

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

Please complete this slip and return it to Mel Trotter Ministries with your generous Christmas 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 *Estate Planning Checklist Inspired by Brown M&M's*

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

225 Commerce SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (616) 454-8249

MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES