

# CONNECTIONS

Rescue  
Mission  
of Utica  
Reaching Out...Changing Lives

CHANGING LIVES IN UTICA AND THE MOHAWK VALLEY SINCE 1890 | FALL 2025

**YOU** are   
**a blessing!**

**INSIDE:** Brandon shares  
how your support gives  
him hope.



**DON'T MISS...**

**2** Take action against  
hunger!

**3** "I feel ready to  
take on life!"

**4** Celebrating Our  
Award Winners

# Hearts and lives are full... thanks to YOU!



## A Message from WENDY GOETZ

As the seasons change, I'm reminded of Jesus' words to His disciples: ***"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."*** As one of our most devoted "workers," your support and care for our homeless, hungry neighbors is a powerful source of hope. For the people who come to us for help. For our staff... and for me personally!

This month, you have a special opportunity to make a difference for our struggling neighbors. September is Hunger Action Month – and we're inviting you to provide 30 meals over 30 days for our hungry guests. It's a meaningful way you can be a force for change here in Utica and the Mohawk Valley.

In September alone, we're preparing to serve over 10,000 meals – and more in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. Your support will help provide these life-changing meals that fill bellies with nourishment... and fill lives with hope.

**Just read how your generous gifts are bearing fruit in Brandon's life, whose story is on Page 3.** He is looking forward to a more hope-filled future – because of the dedication of "workers" like you!

Thank you for investing in the lives of more people like Brandon during Hunger Action Month and throughout the fall season!

Wendy Goetz, Executive Director

## OUR CURRENT NEEDS

### Donate essential items this fall!

Throughout the busy fall season, we'll welcome even more guests than usual here at Rescue Mission of Utica! With more people to care for, our needs also increase.

#### Our 3 most needed items:

- ☐ Sweatshirts (sizes M to 2XL)
- ☐ Men's undergarments
- ☐ T-shirts and underwear (sizes M to 2XL)

This fall season, you can give hope and healing by providing for these and other immediate needs of our neighbors.



Visit [uticamission.org/NeedsList](http://uticamission.org/NeedsList) to see our current needs list.

## SEPTEMBER SPOTLIGHT: HUNGER ACTION MONTH



# Over 10,000

Meals Needed by Sept. 30!



**September is Hunger Action Month!** Join our community in this month-long movement to fight hunger... and TAKE ACTION to help even more hungry neighbors we'll welcome this fall.



Sign up to  
serve a meal



Donate  
canned goods



Provide  
groceries



Invite others  
to join you

**For just \$2.65, YOU can  
provide a nourishing meal  
to end someone's hunger.**

Send your gift today OR online  
at [uticamission.org](http://uticamission.org).

*Scan to take  
action now!*



## *“I feel ready to take on life!”*

Brandon's childhood was filled with ups and downs, but life was held together by family. Then, a shocking loss sent him spiraling – Brandon was only 15 when his mother took her own life. “It was the breaking point,” he shares.

Left to help raise his brothers, Brandon took on responsibilities no teenager should have to shoulder. “I became the cook, the caretaker, the time manager and the chauffeur. It was overwhelming.” To cope, he turned to drugs. “It was the only relief I could find,” he admits.

Over the years, Brandon's addiction worsened. Eventually, he found himself homeless, living in and out of motels or his van... all with his young daughter in tow.

His worst moment came when Child Protective Services knocked on the door. “They told me they were taking my daughter, and that I wouldn't see her again until I got help. The need to change became an emergency.”

Brandon entered the Mission's Addiction Stabilization Center and his recovery journey began.

Brandon remembers the warm welcome and support

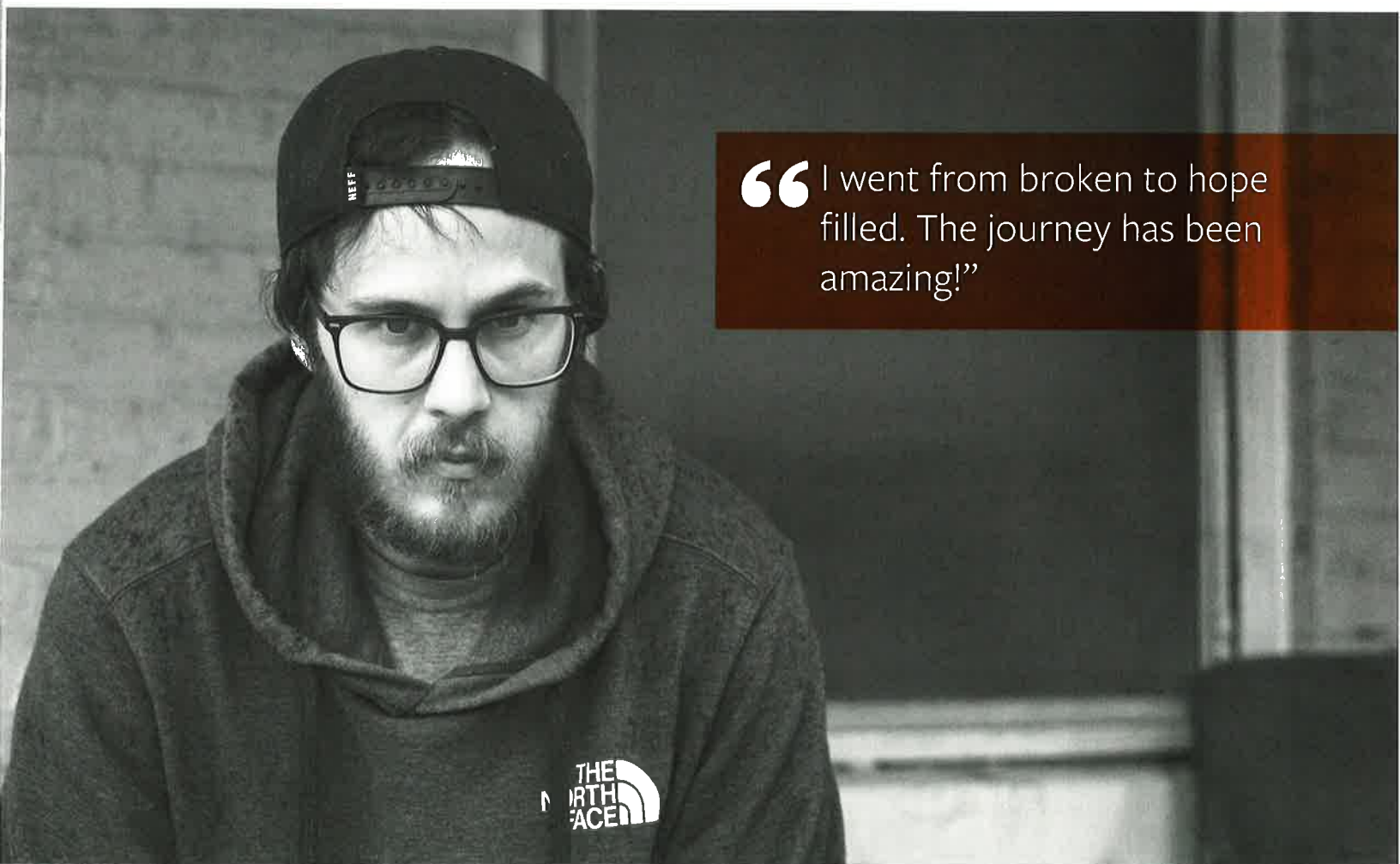
he received. “Pastor Dave made me feel like I belonged,” he smiles. “I'd even get up extra early for his Bible study.”

Now on more solid footing, Brandon has moved into Parker House where – slowly – his hope returned. “I went from not seeing my daughter to visiting with her twice a week. It felt so good to regain my family's trust and respect.”

Faith has been a powerful component of Brandon's healing, and he's committed to staying connected with his new friends and mentors after he goes back out on his own.

Brandon dreams of a simple yet meaningful future: having his own place, a job and regaining custody of his daughter. “That will be enough for me,” he says. “All because of the Mission and Christ's love for me.”

**Your gifts are bearing fruit in the lives of people like Brandon. Now, his heart is full of hope this fall... thanks to your kindness!** “I don't know what I would have done without this place. I've become a different person, and I'm forever grateful for that.”



“I went from broken to hope filled. The journey has been amazing!”

THE  
NORTH  
FACE

# Celebrating Our Award Winners



## Congratulations, Ernie! Amethyst Award Winner

Ernest ("Ernie") Lowenkopf is a dedicated advocate in the field of behavioral health. His journey in recovery support began as an RA at Rescue Mission of Utica. Now a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor-Trainee (CASAC-T), he blends lived experience with professional expertise to uplift others.

Ernie's commitment and compassion were recently recognized at the Center for Family Life and Recovery's Annual Awareness Breakfast, where he received the prestigious **Amethyst Award**. Join us in celebrating Ernie's impact and praying for his ongoing work!

### Fun Facts About Ernie

Outside work, Ernie enjoys reading, hiking, making others laugh and spending time with family.

## Great job, Tammy!

### A 2025 Women of Distinction Recipient

Also recognized at the CFLR Awareness Breakfast was our own Tammy Brady, who received a 2025 Women of Distinction Award. Her certificate from the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce sums it up perfectly: "You are truly an inspiration to those around you. Thank you for being a champion for others."



### YES! I'll help feed & care for my neighbors in need this fall:

- ☐ \$15.90 to feed & care for 6 people
- ☐ \$26.50 to feed & care for 10 people
- ☐ \$37.10 to feed & care for 14 people
- ☒ \$53.00 to feed & care for 20 people
- ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help as much as possible

Helps  
a lot!

Donate now! 📞 (315) 735-1645 🌐 [uticamission.org](http://uticamission.org)

☐ CHECK ENCLOSED ☐ BILL MY CREDIT CARD

☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

NAME ON CARD

CREDIT CARD #

EXP. DATE

CIV/SEC #

PHONE #

EMAIL

SCAN TO DONATE



NAME

ADDRESS

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