

Wishing you Christmas blessings!

GIVING
HOPE
WINTER 2010



MEL TROTTER Journal



“It felt just like home...like Mom was right here.”

Inside: Dexter shares how you helped give him a *home* and *hope* for the holidays!

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This Christmas, Dexter has... HOPE AND A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

My name is Dexter, and I'm really grateful to Mel Trotter Ministries for helping me get my life back on track. Growing up with two alcoholic parents, alcohol was around all the time. Everybody in our family drank, and I fell into it, too. The first drink I ever had was when I was eight years old.

As a young adult, I was working in the lumber business and was seriously injured when a tree fell on me. I nearly bled to death, but I guess the good Lord wasn't finished with me yet. I survived, but I started having seizures—especially when I drank alcohol.

Life goes on. I met a lady, fell in love, and my children were born. Everything was going along really well until we broke up.

"Mel Trotter put me back on the right track and gave me something to look forward to."

That's when liquor became a real problem. I also began using marijuana and cocaine. I didn't steal to buy alcohol and drugs, but would take jobs like cutting grass, shoveling snow, or washing cars to support my addictions.

Basically, I became homeless—sleeping in the back seats of cars, vacant houses and on porches. Sometimes I would go out and help my brother, who is paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair. One night, after I had been drinking, I was with him and had a seizure. When I regained consciousness, my brother was sitting there, helplessly watching me. There wasn't anything he could do for me. I broke out in tears and said, "I've got to find some help."

Just like home

My brother and I looked through the phone book and came across information about Mel Trotter. When I walked

through the door, it felt just like home...like Mom was right there. I said, "Oh Lord, here I am." And I've been here ever since! I'm looking forward to the future and really have a desire to give back by helping other people in any way I can.

Your support of Mel Trotter Ministries helps put people like Dexter back on the right track. And because you care, many who would otherwise spend Christmas out on the streets will have all the blessings of a "home for the holidays." On behalf of our staff, volunteers and the clients we serve, may you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



To friends like you who support Mel Trotter, Dexter would like to say, "Keep up the good work and God bless you!"

READ MORE STORIES OF HOPE ONLINE

www.meltrotter.org/storiesofhope.aspx



With help from friends like you...

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN!

It may be winter, but at Mel Trotter, we've gone green. In fact, our serious efforts to recycle have earned us the Michigan Recycling Coalition's Recycler of the Year Award. And that's not all. The State of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources and the Environment honored Mel Trotter with the Neighborhood Environment Partnership Award for our innovative recycling and composting program and for hosting a "zero waste" Thanksgiving dinner.

Needless to say, we're delighted to receive these awards and pleased that our commitment to recycling has made a difference. To help local restaurants, churches, schools and agencies that have struggled to find a cost-effective means of recycling their disposables in the Greater Grand Rapids Area, Mel Trotter Ministries has opened our doors to collect polystyrene from the public for DART's recycling pick-up program. DART transports the material from the drop-off location to its Michigan recycling center for reprocessing. "We hope that those in Kent County who use polystyrene disposables will strongly consider recycling them by bagging them in clear bags and dropping them off at our facility," said Mel Trotter's sustainability officer Michael Merren.

Please drop off your polystyrene recyclables at 225 Commerce SW, Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 AM-6:00 PM or on Saturdays between 11:00 AM-6:00 PM. For more information, call Michael Merren at (616) 454-8249, ext. 228. Thank you!

MAKE MEL TROTTER YOUR ONE-STOP CHRISTMAS SHOP!



'Tis the season for gift-giving, and you can find something for everyone on your list at one of Mel Trotter's four retail stores. We carry gently used (often brand new) items...toys, books,



sporting equipment, jewelry, purses, hats, linens, household items, clothing, shoes and more!

Here's an added bonus—a "feel-good" gift you give yourself when you shop at a Mel Trotter Ministries Store. One hundred percent of our profits go directly to our work of restoring lives and rebuilding families in Jesus' name!

And, as you head out to shop at one of our stores, if you have any gently used items to donate, 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 the greater Grand Rapids community.

Each of our stores feature daily and weekly specials—and a 20 percent discount every day for shoppers 55 and older. We stock our sales floor with new items each day, so come and browse often—and support Mel Trotter Ministries.

Mel Trotter Ministries Store locations
555 28th Street, Grand Rapids
538 S. State Street, Sparta
363 E. State Street, Belding
4525 N. M37, Middleville (Middleville's Town Center)

This winter, please help provide...

SHELTER FROM THE COLD

When icy storms put Grand Rapids into a deep freeze, you can imagine the misery of being outside and unprotected. Sadly, some people literally freeze to death here every winter. But thankfully, many more find their way to Mel Trotter Ministries and other shelters in the community.

As they walk through our doors, we welcome them with a warm greeting, a cup of hot coffee or cocoa, and the relief of knowing they'll sleep snug and safe inside our Mission. 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.

As you can see, your gifts and prayers this winter are especially needed—and valued. "It's just grand to keep the light on and the doors open for people..." says our president, Reverend Chico Daniels. "I enjoy the fact that we are a Lighthouse at a time during the year when people need it most. When it's cold outside, it's unbearable."

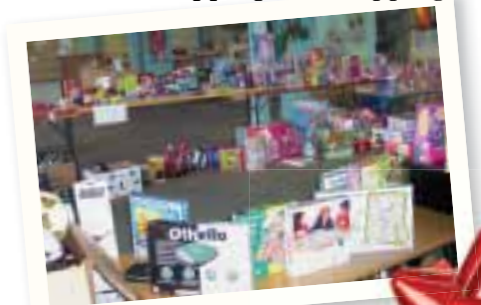
May God bless you for your concern for "the least, the last and the lost" and for partnering with us to shelter and care for them. Your support truly helps *change*—and *save*—lives.

THE CHRISTMAS ROOM

Have you heard about our special Christmas Room—where our residents can "shop" for Christmas? The room is transformed into a mini-store—filled with games, toys, books, jewelry, CD players, Christian CDs, watches, sports equipment, socks, etc.

Here residents can select their gifts, wrap and ship them to their children. Not only is this empowering for them, but it also helps rebuild relationships during this emotionally difficult holiday season. It's a wonderful service we provide, with help from friends like you.

We still need gifts for older children and volunteer "elves" to help set up, take down and assist in shopping and wrapping.



If you would like to help, please contact Vince Desmond at vincedesmond@meltrotter.org or (616) 454-8249, ext. 226.

PLEASE JOIN US

Goodwill and good times are all a part of what Christmas is all about. Please join us as we share and celebrate:

Christmas Food Box Giveaway

December 20

Christmas Dinner:

December 25

To volunteer goods, time or for additional information, please contact Vince Desmond at vincedesmond@meltrotter.org

Coming up: After the holidays, our food pantry supply runs low. If your business or school would like to help with a food drive, please call (616) 454-8249, ext. 266.

THE MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES ONLINE 2010 CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOG IS OPEN FOR SHOPPING!

Get gifts that truly matter—for everyone on your list. Forget the stress. Forget the hassle. Forget gifts that are buried in a drawer soon after the holiday ends. This year, give gifts that truly matter—and shop from the comfort of your own home or office.

The Mel Trotter Ministries online 2010 Christmas Gift Catalog offers unique ways to honor your loved ones while helping change the lives of our community's hungry, homeless and hurting people.

Give hot holiday meals in honor of Mom. Show Dad he's special by putting a roof over someone's head for a month. Or let grandma know the comfort she's given you, by giving a warm blanket in her name to someone who has none. They'll thank you for bringing the true meaning of Christmas home with these thoughtful gifts of love.

Start your shopping today at www.meltrotter.org/catalog



COMING NEXT SPRING... ANNUAL HOPE TOTE CAMPAIGN



Please start stocking up on toiletry items and help us fill Hope Totes this spring to help homeless men and women in our community. Watch for more information to come in February. To learn more now, contact Sandy Enders at sandraenders@meltrotter.org

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!

WANTED WITH A LIST

needs here at Mel Trotter Ministries. If you can provide any of the following items, we would be very grateful:

- Batteries
- Christian music CDs
- Alarm clocks
- Craft kits
- Shower shoes
- Twin sheet sets, pillows & blankets
- Towels

For a more complete list of items we need, please visit www.meltrotter.org/fillneed.aspx or call (616) 454-8249, ext. 266.

"MEL TROTTER PUT A SMILE ON MY FACE!"

My name is Karrie, and I want to thank you for supporting Mel Trotter Ministries. If it wasn't for you, my two daughters and I would be out on the streets. I'm grateful this place is here to provide shelter, food and other help for women like me, who are struggling to get on their feet.

My dad was an alcoholic, and he and my mom were divorced when I was just five. After that, my mother worked three jobs to take care of my sister and me.

I did okay in life. I graduated from high school and had two children. I held down a steady job. Then, about a year and a half ago, my mom was diagnosed with stage four cancer. Doctors gave her only six weeks to live, so I took a leave of absence from work to be with her.

"If it wasn't for Mel Trotter, we would be out on the streets," says Karrie, shown here with her daughters.



It turned out she lived for nearly 10 months. After she passed, my job was gone, and I could only find part-time work paying \$6 an hour. I wasn't making enough to get my own place—and I wound up with nowhere to go. Someone told me about Mel Trotter and we came down here.

Come inside

I walked through the door and said, "I have no place to go and I have two children. Can you help me?" And they said, "Yes, come inside." Mel Trotter has been such a blessing. They provide a roof over my head, two meals a day and a lot of emotional support. Before I came here, I blamed God for my mom's passing. I didn't go to church anymore. I didn't pray. I didn't crack open a Bible. After I came here, I learned that God does what He needs to, when He needs to do it.

Mel Trotter helped restore my faith, gave me hope and put a smile on my face. Not long ago, my oldest daughter told me, "I don't ever want to leave here." When I asked why, she said, "Because people care." She's only nine, but being here has helped her understand what's really important in life. From my heart, thank you!

More and more women like Karrie are coming to Mel Trotter Ministries seeking shelter and care for themselves and their children. They come because they are enduring hard times caused by the loss of a job, foreclosure of homes, domestic violence or other difficulties in their lives. Your support helps us provide food, shelter, a safe place for their children and holistic, Christ-centered programs to help them find long-term solutions for their problems and move on with their lives. Thank you and God bless you for caring!

THANK YOU!

At Mel Trotter, we are grateful for our supportive partners! As another year of changing lives draws to a close, we would like to thank the following businesses for their support in 2010:







- Total Fire Protection
- Kirkstra's Precast
- U.S. Food Service
- DeVos Place
- Country Fresh
- Meijer
- Borisch Manufacturing
- ProForma Combined Products
- Ken Jipping State Farm
- Parable Christian Integrity
- Johnny B'z
- The Shack
- The Pines Golf Course
- RAILSIDE GOLF COURSE
- Grainger
- Van's Delivery
- Amway Hotel
- Marriott Hotel

This is only a partial list. So for those that are not listed, please know we are thankful for **all** the generous supporters of Mel Trotter. You are helping us care for the hungry, homeless and hurting in our area.

HOPE BY THE NUMBERS

JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 2010

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

 Meals served: 143,208	 Nights of shelter provided: 58,635	 Emergency food boxes provided: 3,371
 Articles of clothing given: 3,928	 Chapel attendance: 52,897	 Vision visits: 80

HELPING ADULT CHILDREN HONOR GOD WITH MONEY

God calls parents to teach, encourage, and faithfully guide their children. They have been given a special trust to serve as stewards or managers of their offspring. Yet even with the biblical challenge of teaching and training children, parents are not responsible for the decisions their adult children make—each person is held accountable individually. Parents are accountable, however, for the guidance they provide.

There are several things parents can do to help their adult children honor God with their money. First, they can help them understand God's principles. Second, they can continue to offer appropriate guidance. Third, they must be willing to allow their adult children to fail. Fourth, they can help them be dependent on God (rather than their parents). And finally, they can provide assistance with caution, to allow God to lead them in a manner that will not thwart His purposes in their lives.



For a FREE copy of "Questions and Answers about Giving to Children" simply check the box on the enclosed reply card or contact Tim Swiney, Director of Development, at (616) 454-8249, ext. 268 or timswiney@meltrotter.org

CONNECT WITH US THIS CHRISTMAS

At Mel Trotter Ministries, we want to stay connected with our friends like you through your favorite online social media sites. Visit us online at any of the following sites for up-to-date information about the work you support.

 Find us on facebook: Mel Trotter Ministries	 Subscribe to our YouTube channel: Meltrottermin
 Follow us on Twitter: @meltrotter	 View our blog at Tumblr: http://meltrotterministries.tumblr.com/
 Check out our photos on Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/meltrotterministries/	

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Please pray for:

More tutors, more mentors, and graduates who are still looking for employment
Mel Trotter Ministries to meet our financial year-end goal

Please give praise for:

A woman who befriended a single mom in our shelter. She has provided transportation and babysitting so the mom could attend job interviews
Grand Valley State University for helping replace the kitchen roof at camp and Cornersone University for helping clean out the 4th floor and gather over 600 pounds of food for our pantry
A 9-year-old boy who asked for donations to be given to Mel Trotter Ministries in lieu of birthday presents



A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM CHICO



Dear Friend of Mel Trotter Ministries,

Here in Grand Rapids, we are a very family-oriented community. During the Christmas season, even if we don't have all the "things" we might want under our tree, we have the best treasure of all—the gift of each other. But sadly, most of our clients have burned all bridges to their families. This can be a desperately lonely time for them. For us, it's a time of opportunity to bring Christ's spirit—the true Christmas spirit—into their lives.

I remember sitting at a table last Christmas with a man who was contemplating suicide. God, in His wisdom, placed at that same table a caring family who had come to serve the poor. As the man poured out his heart, they listened with compassion, offered encouragement, and prayed for him. The man's spirits were lifted and before the evening was over, he was thanking God!

I've often said that proclamation demands demonstration. It's not enough for us to proclaim truth, if we are not demonstrating the love of Christ. The love of Christ is the gift this family offered, and I believe they helped save a man's life.

See what a difference your support can make? Like the Magi who brought gifts to the Christ child, you are giving to Jesus when you care for the poor and homeless; and I am very grateful! In the weeks ahead, we would especially appreciate the gift of your prayers. With Christmas coming and cold winter weather bringing more and more people to Mel Trotter, we need extra supplies of food, gloves, hats, warm children's clothing, sweaters, jackets, blankets...you name it, we need it! Please join us in asking God to use us to supply everything we need to provide hope and a home for the holidays.

An extra-special thank you goes out to all of you who have given sacrificially to help others this year. Michigan's economy has been hit so hard, and we know your donations are sacrificial. We're just so grateful for you! May God bless you at Christmas and always.

Your friend,

Chico Daniels, President & CEO



Rev. Chico Daniels
President & CEO

"Like the Magi who brought gifts to the Christ child, you are giving to Jesus when you care for the poor and homeless."

OUR MISSION

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

MY CHRISTMAS GIFT

YES, Chico, I'll help Mel Trotter Ministries provide hope and a home for homeless Grand Rapidians this Christmas.

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 "Questions and Answers about Giving to Children"

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

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

