

## Hope Begins with a Meal

When Lin Zeng (our cover story) ran out of money and was forced to leave school, he didn't even know where his next meal would come from. But his worry changed to hope when he arrived at Union Gospel Mission. "I didn't have to pay for rent or storage or meals," he says. "I didn't have to worry anymore." Lin is just one of countless men, women and children who find a nutritious meal waiting for them at UGM each day. We've learned over the years, that a simple plate of good food can be the beginning of hope.

Thank you for providing meals that fill hungry stomachs and hungry souls at UGM. We couldn't do it without you.



## You Made It Possible!

The smiles and laughter were nonstop during our Mission Possible event, held on September 4th! Special thanks to Vern Eide Mitsubishi, Zero Gravity, 605 Barbecue Co., Poet, Townsquare Media and so many others who made Mission Possible AWESOME! We're also grateful to compassionate families throughout our community who donated warm winter clothing during the event. Thank you for thinking of our neighbors in need.

**Vern Eide**  
MOTORCARS

## Take Note!

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council (nhchc.org) reports an average 700 homeless people die each year from exposure to the cold. UGM wants to prevent these needless deaths in our area! Please consider donating your extra coats, hats, scarves and gloves to UGM. We will get them to those who need them most! Thanks, and God bless you!



Union Gospel Mission Sioux Falls  
701 East 8th Street | Sioux Falls, SD 57103 | (605) 334-6732  
**Give or learn more: [ugmsiouxfalls.com](http://ugmsiouxfalls.com)**

Follow us!  



## "I am blessed in my heart and soul"

At only 25, Lin Zeng has already experienced homelessness in a foreign land. Lin came from China to attend SDSU, but in less than one semester, Lin ran out of money, lost the roof over his head, lost his immigration status, and lost his dream.

Lin attended Holy Life Tabernacle in Brookings and asked his pastor, David Kaufman, for support and prayer. Pastor Kaufman counseled and prayed with Lin, then helped him connect with Union Gospel Mission.

"I was in constant worry because I didn't know what would happen," Lin says. "But then I had hope because every day there is chapel at the Mission. This blessed my heart and soul and gave me peace."

When Lin recalls facing the unknown, he describes it this way: "I



Lin Zeng, right, enjoys Bible study with Justin Heckel, our men's center co-director.

was like a sailor on the sea. The waves are strong, and the sailor tries to hold onto the boat, and it's hopeless. Then someone says, 'God is with you!' and so I have peace and hope. Now I hold on to God."

Lin's mother worried about her young son from afar. In a phone call, she told him to write a good report about the Mission because "the place took care of her son when he needed it most." "I'm very grateful for the Mission and so is my mother," he says. "The reality is, without the Mission, I would be on the street."

Lin leaves the United States in

mid-October, and says he was first tempted to become an illegal immigrant but chose instead to do the right thing. "I want to earn money the right way. I am trying to be a good man."

Even in a time of uncertainty and disappointment, Lin says, "I am glad to be here. I wouldn't have known there was such a wonderful place to help homeless people." Please pray for Lin Zeng as he continues to follow the Lord in the future. **And thank YOU for providing him with a home away from home!**

WINTER 2021

INSIDE:  
Christmas Blessings  
YOU Breathe Life!  
It's Christmas at UGM!  
Hope Begins with a Meal

Caring for the needs of the community with compassion while sharing the hope of Jesus Christ.



From Eric Weber, CEO

# Christmas Blessings



Eric, center, and the UGM team show off colorful backpack donations from local churches. "These will be given to kids in our community during the school year," says Eric.

In Matthew 25, Jesus talks about how we connect with Him as we give to the poor and imprisoned and hungry. I believe the best way we can honor His birth is to intentionally include those who are experiencing loneliness, hardship and hunger during the holiday season.

There have been times when I have looked back after Christmas and realized I never got around to

doing those things, though I really meant to! Now that I work with homeless and poor men, women and children here at the Mission, I know the words "I meant to" just aren't good enough.

So let me encourage you to remember the lost, the isolated, the sick and the hungry in your community—and, yes, here at UGM—this Christmas. Remember the relative in the nursing home, the single mom down the street, the elderly widower in your church, the woman and child who found refuge at UGM.

Make it a point this Christmas and beyond to spend some time with someone who is isolated ... spread some joy to folks who feel disheartened ... connect with the person you have "been meaning to call."

At UGM, we're all about breathing joy into the people we serve this Christmas. Throughout this newsletter, you'll learn of ways you can join us ... and we hope you will!

Wishing a blessed time of celebration to you and yours,

Eric Weber  
CEO



## It's Christmas at UGM!

We love Christmas at UGM, and we're getting ready now! On Christmas Day, we will open our chapel doors for a special program followed by holiday feasts at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. After the meals, we'll distribute Christmas gifts, both practical and fun, to every adult and child.

Want to join us? We need gifts from the lists below, along with volunteers to help with wrapping presents, preparing and serving meals and helping pass out gifts.

Reach out to Elly Heckel at [elly@ugmsiouxfalls.com](mailto:elly@ugmsiouxfalls.com) or **visit [ugmsiouxfalls.com](http://ugmsiouxfalls.com)** to find a complete gift list and to sign up to volunteer.

### Gift List (new only, please)

#### Adult Gift Package

- 3 pairs of socks
- 1 hoodie
- 1 jacket
- 1 beanie
- 1 pair of gloves
- 1 personal hygiene item
- 1 miscellaneous item, such as a 3-pack of NEW underwear, a shirt or blanket

- #### Kid Gift Package
- 1 clothing item, such as a jacket
  - 1 hat and gloves
  - 1 new undergarment
  - 2 pairs of socks
  - 2 stuffed animals (kids ages 8 and under)
  - 1 large toy
  - 1 small toy
  - 1 wooden toy, school supply or book
  - 1 game or sports ball (kids ages 8 and up)
  - 1 art item/book

- #### Gifts that Keep Giving All Year Long
- When you donate these items to UGM, we will use them to help the homeless throughout the year. Thank you for giving so generously!

- Disposable diapers, sizes 3 through 6
- Winter clothing for adults and children
- New, packaged underwear and socks for adults and children
- Steel-toed boots and work shoes
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Body wash
- Disposable razors and shaving cream



## YOU Breathe Life!

Here are the ways your compassionate gifts impacted the homeless and hungry of Sioux Falls. **Thank you so much!**

January-September 2021

**89,972**  
meals were provided

**14,999**  
men given shelter

**8,640**  
women given shelter

**1,250**  
people served through the onsite medical clinic

**8,685**  
food boxes distributed to needy families in the community

**866**  
people received counseling and case management

