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For Immediate Release

Rebuilding Lives for the Future: Looking Back, Reaching Ahead

*Mission and Local Businesses Renovate Recovery Program Dorms,
Mission to Announce Plans for Day Center for Homeless*

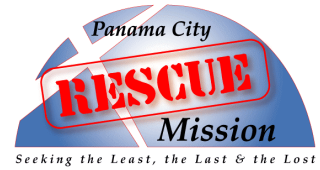
The project that once discouraged Mission board and staff with slow progress and a lack of funds is complete. Up to 20 men in long-term addiction recovery now have adequate rooms that will provide an environment to aid in their rehabilitation from drugs and alcohol in the men's "Power to Choose" Program.

A dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated dorms will be held today at 11:30 a.m. During the event, the Mission will announce plans to begin work on a Day Center for homeless. John Little, from the Orlando Homeless Shelter, will share his experience at their Day shelter.

"We feel the Day Center will be a concrete answer to the city's problems with homeless," Chambers said. "It will provide a safe place during the day that will be a positive alternative to being out on the streets between meals."

The Mission recently combined its two thrift stores, the Thrift Depot and The Bargain Center, to make room for the Day Center. The combined stores will be at the current Bargain Center location on the corner of Harmon at 401 E. Sixth Street. Current plans are to have offices for the Mission's counselors, volunteers to aid in job search, and other human service agencies to provide casework. An eye appealing fenced-in courtyard is also being proposed.

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Haney Technical Center’s carpentry class began in mid-September donating their time putting hammers to nails and raising the first boards in the area that would become the new restrooms. Since then, the Mission has received help with the renovation project from businesses and individuals such as Mid South Lumber, Stock Building Supply and Plumb Better in donating the needed materials and some of the labor.

Mission program students completed the rest of the labor as part of their work therapy program, keeping skills current and learning new trades.

“It was a unique situation; these mission program students took pride in their work. They were building the rooms they would eventually live in, the rooms that would help to save their very lives,” Chambers said.

The renovations will help all of the Mission’s programs by opening space for more beds for recovery program participants and in the emergency shelter as well. Now all the men in recovery can sleep in the same area and fewer homeless will have to sleep in the chapel at night.

Anyone wishing to contribute funds or needed materials to the Day Center project can contact the Mission at 850-215-9007. Panama City Rescue Mission is a non-profit Christian organization, receiving no governmental funding. It relies on the tax-deductible support of local businesses, churches and individuals. Please contact Amanda Harris, Development Director, for more information.

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