

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:**

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**Guiding Light Mission Continues Empowerment Through Education and Job Readiness Programs**

Guiding Light Mission has been evolving its emergency shelter into more of a program of opportunities for men. *"We are beginning to use words like Justice, Empowerment, Accountability, and Reconciliation."* said Stuart P. Ray, executive director. *"We are about empowerment, and to back that up, beginning Monday, January 10, 2011 we are offering an Education and Job Readiness Program."* The program in collaboration with staff from Grand Rapids Community College and will take place at City Life Church, is an opportunity available to the men in the emergency shelter to obtain their GED if they do not have a high school diploma. The other side is the Job Readiness Program that will guide men to the career best suited for them, and assist them with their training. Computer classes, tutors and educators are all part of the program.

Mike A. in the START Program is working on his GED through Guiding Light Mission. *"It means a lot for me to get my GED. I have been working on my own in construction and as a handyman. I'm looking forward to obtaining employment as an automotive painter. I'm a certified automotive painter and by obtaining my GED, I'm hoping to get a job in that field. I'm also looking to make my family proud of this accomplishment."*

*"We realize the challenges in obtaining employment, and we want to assist those interested in obtaining their GED, learning computer skills, or even discovering what career may suit them best. We are expecting anywhere from 10 - 20 men to utilize the service. This new program aligns nicely with the relationship we have with Booth Family Services."* said Stuart P. Ray. *"We can offer opportunities for housing, employment and training skills. This is the beginning as we are looking at other opportunities to take care of our neighbors."* In addition to the programs noted above, Guiding Light Mission also collaborates with:

- Heartside Ministries: Intake process of all men wishing to stay at the shelter
- Booth Family Services: Assist in housing for chronically homeless
- Coalition to End Homelessness – Steering Committee
- St. Mary's Community Reinvestment Committee
- GRCC: Pathways to Prosperity: a part of the Dept of Labor.
- Network 180 – Project Get Connected

**About Guiding Light Mission**

Guiding Light Mission provides meals to anyone in the community in need. An average of 12,322 meals per month is served to men, women and children at Guiding Light Mission as well as distributed to local charities and emergency food basket providers. Guiding Light Mission provides emergency overnight shelter for 51,200, and offers a Christian based, residential substance abuse and life recovery program known as START (Spiritual Truth And Recovery Training). The Mission is funded entirely by private donations and relies extensively on

volunteers who serve over 12,900 hours. For more information about Guiding Light Mission, please visit [www.lifeonthestreet.org](http://www.lifeonthestreet.org).

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