

Unknown Speaker 0:02

Okay, so first tell me a little bit about your business. Um, what do you guys do? And what does it look like on a day to day operation?

Unknown Speaker 0:12

Okay. Well, the

Unknown Speaker 0:17

the

Unknown Speaker 0:18

place where I work is the Winston Salem rescue mission. The rescue mission was started back in 1967 by five local pastors about a vision for helping arm men in particular that were involved in addictions. Back in those times, it would have been some drugs but a lot of it was alcohol. And so we they begin praying about starting a ministry and helping them to

Unknown Speaker 0:53

to become productive citizens.

Unknown Speaker 0:56

And so that's about the time when The rescue mission was, was I guess you could say birth.

Unknown Speaker 1:05

We we continue helping men

Unknown Speaker 1:10

with with their addictions and our recovery programs. We have a 90 day life builders program for men that are coming either out of jail or out of hospitals

Unknown Speaker 1:24

out of prisons,

Unknown Speaker 1:26

I'm out of recovery programs that are not maybe as lengthy as ours or detoxes. And we are helping them

Unknown Speaker 1:36

to get them into our 90 day program. And after our 90 day program,

Unknown Speaker 1:40

they can

Unknown Speaker 1:42

elect to go into our one year program to where they'll be getting more extensive help in education with their addictions. And but the most important thing to us

Unknown Speaker 1:55  
would be that

Unknown Speaker 1:56  
we want them to have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Um, so we share the gospel with them, and we let them know that God loves them, and that they do need his forgiveness. The Bible says that to all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And so that's the first thing that they have to admit that they have a need, and that they are sinners and they need to be forgiven for by God. And so that would be the the easily aside the a means to admit that you're a sinner and be is believe you have to believe God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. And so that's the other thing is believe. First is admit that you're sinner be is believe in God's Son, Jesus Christ and see, I would be call of the Bible says in Romans 10:13, whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And that's that final step is to call upon God for salvation through a Son Jesus Christ. Now That seems, that seems.

Unknown Speaker 3:03  
Um,

Unknown Speaker 3:04  
I guess the word I'm trying to think of is very simplistic, but that's the way it's intended to be. God wants it to be that simple. Because when they make that

Unknown Speaker 3:15  
decision, okay, um,

Unknown Speaker 3:18  
even though it may seem like a remedial decision or simplistic decision that is going to assist them that is going to help them toward recovery. Because we believe in the rescue mission, because our programs our 90 day and one year program are biblically based. They are Christ centered. We believe that once they make that decision to give their life to the Lord, on to call upon for salvation, not only does he give them eternal life, but he can empower them to have an abundant life here on earth before they get to heaven.

Unknown Speaker 3:48  
Okay. So, um, essentially,

Unknown Speaker 3:52  
if they take care of the spiritual, the rest will take care of itself. And that's what Jesus says in Matthew 6:33. Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Which means this, they'll get help emotionally, mentally, financially, in every

sense of the word on the Lord will take care of the rest, but they first need to enter that relationship with him. So that's really what we're all about is, um, you know, we want to make sure that they that the inner man the inner core of a person is first minister to and then we also help them to get educated with their addictions. Um, we do have classes here that help them with social aspects of their life. For instance, we have I teach an anger management class here because some of the men that come to Michigan cannot hold a job. Part of it is their addictions. But other parts of it is the things that happened in their life like those root issues that have kept them in a dip in diction. It could be on a you know that they were they came out of abuse. of situations or their father wasn't there when they lost their mother to early age or both their parents or their parents were in addiction, or they got into some legal issue. So they have, you know, if you would they have a lot of, I guess you could say, you know, dirty laundry, they just have hard pasts. And so through counseling, and sharing the gospel with them, you know, we're trying to get to those root issues that keep them in addiction. So, we do have classes here that will help them socially, like I say, on anger management, for instance, we have a life skills class, educationally, we help them to get their GED while they're here, they must work on their GED while here at the mission or the high school diploma, they could also work on that if they choose to, because we know that if they're going to make it in life, the Spiritual Emphasis is here but also, the educational emphasis has got to be here because there's the reason why I sit in this chair as Interim Executive Directors because, well, God's working in my life, but also my education. So we want them to get an education while they're here because that's going to greatly enhance their ability to get a good job. Also, emotional and mental health.

Unknown Speaker 6:15

The

Unknown Speaker 6:16

addiction is on the rise in our country and throughout the world, but also mental health issues. We see that all the time on the news. When incidents occur, especially violence, a lot of it is you know, is also those that are challenged and had a disability of mental disorders. So while at the rescue mission, they're going to get those help, or those helps through our counselors and also we network with other agencies like, like Nova like, like Wake Forest, Baptist Hospital and other clinics in the area. They're going to be able to assist them seeing a psychiatrist, psychologist, but sometimes Medical Doctors. So um, and by the way, we also have a medical clinic that we do offer here. We have a couple doctors that have their own private practices here in Winston. And also nurses have their staff with. And this is all volunteer basis. We have a medical clinic on Mondays and Thursdays. And these doctors and nurses dedicate their time they volunteer here. And so we provide the facility but they actually provide the clinic, but the rescue mission provides the, the venue, so on, but we also help the men physically, medically because a lot of these men, they might have diabetes, or high blood pressure or heart issues, a variety of medical issues, physical issues that they've not been taking care of, because a lot of them had been in addiction. They've been on the street, they've not been taking care of their bodies. So we want them to help them Yes, spiritually, but also physically. So if you're a medical clinic, we do that. And also we provide a shelter here It's a 24 seven, like I say 90 day recovery program and one year recovery program that they're being provided for physically, they have a place a

safe place to stay, where they have a structured program, they get good rest, they have to go to bed at a certain hour, they got to wake up at a certain hour making sure that part of recovery is taking care of your body meaning getting adequate rest. So we provide shelter, safe shelter for them, and also food. We provide all their meals here, breakfast, lunch and dinner, to make sure that they're again being taken care of physically, we have a weight room. We have exercise programs. We also have outside agencies and our community that we partner with like Winston Salem State University novant Baptist Hospital, where they are involved with the medical rescue mission to help them with their, you know, their dietary programs, some physical programs, so they can get that kind of help. So we do network with other agencies.

Unknown Speaker 9:01

So, I'm trying to think what else here?

Unknown Speaker 9:09

Do you think you'd speak a little bit about the

Unknown Speaker 9:14

Oh, thank you.

Unknown Speaker 9:14

Yes, yes, thank you. Yeah, we do have a thrift store. And that's the other word I was trying to think of.

Unknown Speaker 9:23

Braden is a occupationally, occupationally.

Unknown Speaker 9:29

When the men come to the rescue mission, they are expected to do some sort of a work therapy assignment, we call it work therapy. And essentially we're preparing them occupationally so that when they transition to the rescue mission, that they are able to be successful in a job because in order to be a productive citizen, you have to be able to work. So um

Unknown Speaker 9:52

we do have a thrift store

Unknown Speaker 9:53

and other departments at the rescue mission. We have a food kitchen we have a food services that they might Help in. Or we have for instance customer service with a front desk where they're answering phones. We have a food pantry where they might help people come in to get food. But also like you mentioned our thrift store. Our thrift store assists us with providing a good part of our revenue, part of our budget to keep the rescue mission you know, being a nonprofit

Unknown Speaker 10:28  
501 c three B, we, we

Unknown Speaker 10:33

use that money to generate back into the rescue mission to keep our programs funded. So our thrift store is open Monday through Saturday, we have reduced hours from 9am to 1pm 3pm. I'm sorry, 9am to 3pm, Monday through Friday and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. And again, that provides the Well they we receive donations right now we're receiving contact less donations. We're our our trucks go out and pick donation pickup donations from our donors. We call them physical donations or gift in kind donations, and that might be in the way of clothing on novelties furniture bedding. To where we sell the most we've been into the mission, we do some basic repairs or cleaning of those items of refurbishing and but they're usually gently used items that are functional items that we can resell and so on. We do get the public our community that's come in and we sell it at a very reduced prices very fair competitive prices. I guess you could say our competitors would be like goodwill or Salvation Army, you know, but again, our prices are three thrift store level two. We're on that will provide, you know, a good relationship with the community providing good sales quality things. And then that money is generated back into the rescue mission again to keep our programs funded and operating, but also provides an opportunity for us to have a relationship with the community and our men to get receive occupational therapy, because they are expected to be there. Really a good portion of the day beside their counseling and classes that they get there. They're spending up to usually four hours a day in work therapy, and they are assisting with with either bagging items or selling or helping to sell items. Some men come near and they have experienced retail. So we would like to try to plug them in with the job experience that they had, you know, coming to the mission. But again, a while they're going to recovery, they're participating work therapy, some are working at our loading dock receiving donations. So there'll be receiving those things coming in. The door. And some of those things would be like sorting that they're doing a sorting of clothing. Um, but again, it's just an opportunity for them to interact with supervisors and co workers and, you know, just to learn how to be accountable and how to be productive. So, yeah, we're very, very reliant upon our thrift store, to to provide our revenue here at the rescue mission. So, yeah, I'm not sure if that covers everything that you'd like to cover about our thrift store. Any other questions that you might have?

Unknown Speaker 13:34

Absolutely does and that's all incredible. So now, if you don't mind, can we transition to COVID? Yes, okay. So I'm at the beginning of the pandemic, in the United States around like, late February, early March. What was your thought? What was the thought of your executive team? How did you think it was going to impact your business?

Unknown Speaker 13:58

Well, that's a great Question.

Unknown Speaker 14:05

We, again, just, you know, watching the news, the world news, and, you know, just keeping up with current events, we could tell on that, you know, the way we understand it that it might have had its origin in the Far East. And it was working our way, you know, toward the Western Hemisphere. And, you know, we knew that we needed to have some sort of a plan we needed to be at least prepared for when it did eventually inevitably hit the United States and our country. So while I remember, I was going down for a week of vacation to be with my mom, she's a widow, she lives down in Florida. And the Lord I believe, you know, again, through what I was seeing on the news and reading on the internet, as far as what was up Gonna shortly be probably potentially taking place in our country and here in North Carolina, that we needed to do some preparing. So before I left for Florida, I got my leadership team together, our executive leadership team, and I said, Guys, we need to pray and we need to plan and we need to prepare, pray, plan and prepare for what we probably will be going through. We were very concerned for our residents that live here 24 seven, and for not to mention our staff. At that time, we had 75, approximately 75 residents, between our 90 day one year programs here for recovery, primarily, and we had approximately 40 staff members. And so coming out of that mission of that meeting, we begin to, again, plan and prepare for measures that we would have to take You know, relative to the Coronavirus and so that was a, that's how it kind of begun. Um,

Unknown Speaker 16:11

you want me just to continue? It is braiding? Correct?

Unknown Speaker 16:16

Yeah. Um, okay.

Unknown Speaker 16:18

I didn't know what, you know what, what

Unknown Speaker 16:21

next direction you wanted me to go in to?

Unknown Speaker 16:24

Okay, so we're just going to kind of transition through the timeline. The whole thing. Okay, Yo, I'm now moving forward to a point where it became more serious in this country and in North Carolina. What measures were you forced to take

Unknown Speaker 16:42

to comply with

Unknown Speaker 16:45

COVID-19 restrictions from the government.

Unknown Speaker 16:49

And what kind of guidelines did you have to implement?

Unknown Speaker 16:52

Okay. Yeah, um, well, as far as the residents are concerned

Unknown Speaker 17:01

I'm in early March

Unknown Speaker 17:03

now it's been almost 16 weeks, we restricted our residents to the rescue mission property. Um, the only thing that they have been able to do is to have a smoke break outside. Otherwise they had been restricted to the rest commission property since approximately the first week or so first or second week in March,

Unknown Speaker 17:31

I'm

Unknown Speaker 17:34

also In addition, if they are to go to any legal appointments, or primarily even even most illegal, meetings have been virtual, but if it be a doctor appointment or something where they had to leave the property, then we have quarantine areas that we designated the rescue mission to where they would have to go on a two week quarantine if they were to leave property. They would have a two week quarantine about Upon coming back to make sure that the residents, other residents were not affected. So, again, on the rescue mission, the residents of the rescue mission had been on a lockdown or restricted mission property since early March. That would have been, let's see. Then, on the 21st of March, we closed our thrift store, because there was the potential

Unknown Speaker 18:34

of our residents

Unknown Speaker 18:37

and our staff, um, and also customers, you know, to be you know, spreading the virus so we shut down even though it was it was, it was a it was a it was a hard decision, but it wasn't a difficult decision. We knew the right thing to do. So it wasn't difficult, but it was hard and that we knew it would affect our revenue. We had no idea what would happen. So So one but we knew it was the right thing to do. And we were going to trust the Lord that He would take care of us and he would provide in spite of the circumstances. So we did close our thrift store on March the 21st. That was on a Saturday, I believe. And also on March the 27th. I think it was 26th 27th. It was a Friday. We again under the local mandates of our mayor, and of course our governor, ultimately, in the era here in Winston, we went to just essential staff working here at the Winston Salem rescue mission. Those that work directly with the with the men were considered essential and other leadership team members, essentially approximately of our 40 staff members or team of 40 employees, a 17 remain to the rescue mission they were considered either required or essential staff members. The rest were furloughed And

thankfully, through a PPP loan for small business we applied for and Praise Lord that we did receive and we use those to keep those those members that were now at home furloughed our payroll, also through the wind Salem Foundation, um, and also through the United Way We were able to get through a number of sponsors and we applied for a COVID-19 grant, again through the wind sailing foundation and we received a World War \$200,000 that we were able to use for COVID related issues and an items here at the rescue mission, so that was very helpful so to get to PPP loan was very helpful that we qualified for we, um, we applied for and we did receive, and again also being awarded that grant very, very helpful also we are nonprofit, we If we function strictly off of donations from businesses, churches and individuals, we don't receive any federal or state funds, we function off strictly of individuals, businesses and churches to continue operating the rescue mission. And that is we're entering our 53rd year this year. And the Lord has been provided in that way as a faith based ministry for 53 years now. 24 seven, that's how we function. Now we do receive and we do apply for grants that we you know, beyond that, that we do qualify for. We do apply for for instance, you know, that grant I just mentioned, the computer related grant. But other than that, it's just strictly donations and things that come through our thrift store, not to mention also. So while we knew again, the closing of the thrift store was it was gonna affect us but the Lord really is provided through the grant through the loan, and also our direct mailing and the newsletter. letters. We are relied upon our donors that send in donations and our our donations have actually been up the Lord has really been provided not just our rescue mission, but we're involved in association of rescue missions called city gate. And city gate is our parent organization. And not just the wind Salem rescue mission, but many of our affiliated rescue missions. They have seen the same thing that incredibly amazingly, the Lord has really been providing for us and we really praise the Lord for that for his goodness and mercy to us. So then again, moving on this timeline, like I said, the 21st our thrift store closed, Brent Braden, and then the 27th or so our essential workers just stay the rest of the workers are furloughed. Well, that continued and then on maybe 11th or three Store reopened. And we were very thankful for that. On May the 11th, it reopened and

Unknown Speaker 23:07

the thrift store that week from that Monday, May 11, was on a Monday through that Saturday. We did incredibly well, or thrift store. Again, we really Praise Lord, just we're blown away by the communities, helping us and of course, purchasing items. And the thrift store did very, very well. So that was great. On June the first and I haven't mentioned this yet to volunteers. I haven't touched that at all. Um, my wife actually is our volunteer coordinator here. And, by the way, my name I think I kind of started this whole interview with you awkwardly, but my name is Luke character. And I am the Interim Executive Director of the Winslow rescue mission. This probably should go at the very beginning of the tape actually, or the interview. Again, I'm kind of new at this because I think I've worked at the rescue mission Braden since September 2005. I worked at a rescue mission up in Charleston, West Virginia, called the Union Mission ministries of the Union Mission trees up in Charleston, West Virginia, is another one of our affiliated rescue missions in the city gate, the parent organization I mentioned earlier. But back in 2005, I came down to Winston Salem and interviewed for chaplain position. So, um, that door open for me, our executive director at that time was Danny Parsons. Our Regional Director, by the way is



Reverend Neil Wilcox. He started the rescue mission before he was the first executive director back in 1967. And that is Reverend Neil Wilcox, who lives now. Now he lives down in Greenville, South Carolina, but after he was here for 33 years, and then after Reverend Wilcox left, then Danny Parsons came on board, and he was the executive director for around 15 years. And then we have another executive director came in for about five years and then last June, June 2019. was asked by the rescue missions board to step in as the Interim Executive Director and I have been fulfilling that role since then. So I've had a few different jobs or duties for the rescue mission, but now currently the Interim Executive Director. My wife is the volunteer coordinator. We relied very heavily upon volunteers at the rescue mission to help out in our our food pantry. We have a food pantry on Tuesdays and Fridays. So today's Friday, we'll be having a food pantry this afternoon at one o'clock our food pantries on Tuesdays at 9am. And then

Unknown Speaker 25:37  
on Fridays at 1pm.

Unknown Speaker 25:39  
And we help with approximately a 50 pound box of food that lasts about three or four days for our clients. It's called. It's called

Unknown Speaker 25:54  
bill it's called food choice and

Unknown Speaker 25:59  
it's a food pantry that is available to anybody in our county Forsyth County that that needs food assistance. So they can come on a Tuesday or Friday. We just asked to provide, you know, verification that they have a physical address, and they have to bring an ID. As long as they live in the county they can receive the food assistance. And we have volunteers that help out in a food pantry. We also have a clothing closet and that's also on Tuesdays and Fridays. We have volunteers that help there in our food pantry. It's called client choice. By the way, it's called client choice food pantry this way they can come in and kind of do shopping. We're not kind of saying this is what you're getting. They are a they have the ability to come and to to receive groceries based on what they need, what their needs are, instead of giving them what we're giving them. They kind of select what they can really use in their house. And so we get our food from donations. come to the rescue mission dry foods that we get from from donors and also we do get some assistance through the food bank. We also get some food through the local food bank here

Unknown Speaker 27:12  
in our area. And so on.

Unknown Speaker 27:15  
A we we have volunteers also that help out not just in our food pantry in our clothing closet, but also in our thrift store. We have a quite a few volunteers to help out there. And also on our GED program with the men, which you know, we coordinate with for site Tech Community

College, and the men work toward their GED or high school diploma. So we have volunteers helping out there and some volunteers do some like stuffing of letters or newsletters that go out and just sometimes they come here and serve food. We also have chapel speakers. We have chapel services for the men we have visitors or volunteers that come in, they do like devotions at them and Bible devotions. So again, my emphasis here was what I'm referring to right now with you, Braden is our volunteers. We haven't had any volunteers, or during that COVID period of beginning early March, we stopped receiving volunteers or visitors here at the rescue mission because to protect volunteers and visitors and also our staff and our men. So one that was another hit that we took by not having our volunteers here, which we we rely on heavily. But beginning on June the first, we begin bringing volunteers back on a limited basis. So the only volunteers we currently have that present which today is what July the 10th 20 22,020. We are we have a just very few volunteers helping out our thrift store now that begin on June the first we probably will not bring any more volunteers in or certainly until the governor at least puts us into phase three governor Cooper mandates that we are now in phase three course we're still in phase two. But until we deem it safe for our other volunteers to come in, they will not be coming to the rescue mission. But again, that was another area, you know, that was really, really affected us through the the pandemic was with our volunteers. So, but again on June the first will begin taking some volunteers on a limited basis. And also on June the first, we began taking new intakes into our recovery programs. From early March to June, the first we didn't take any more intakes, we had no new resonance.

Unknown Speaker 29:37

So

Unknown Speaker 29:39

and the reason for that was we didn't want to have our current residents affected by anybody, any new people coming in. But beginning on June the first we begin bringing in new intakes and what we did was, is again, we use our quarantine area and that's what we're currently doing even as of today. We're bringing new intakes in, we can process them and screen them to make sure they're appropriate for our recovery programs, and they go into a two week quarantine. So they're not

Unknown Speaker 30:13

potentially

Unknown Speaker 30:14

spreading the virus to our current residents. So after the two weeks of quarantine, then they're actually able to begin the 90 day program. once they're done with the 90 day program successfully, then they can transition if they choose to a one year program. But again, so that was something so significant June the first we begin bringing in volunteers unlimited basis, and new intakes on June the first, um,

Unknown Speaker 30:41

and let's see.

Unknown Speaker 30:48  
I also want to mention that

Unknown Speaker 30:52  
I want to say it was

Unknown Speaker 30:55  
June.

Unknown Speaker 30:58  
I'm trying to think of our timeline here. Brent Braden, um, I'd have to look at some notes I have here actually.

Unknown Speaker 31:09  
Let's see if I can find it here.

Unknown Speaker 31:20  
Well, I would just say sometime in, in May, we began bringing all of our employees back. So that was a big, big event too. I'm kind of jumping around in the timeline a little bit. I'm sorry for that. But I think I mentioned in a March the 26th, or 27th. We only had essential workers here, or are required workers that work directly with our men. So during that time, from that point, March 26 27th, till around the end of May, I think it was that we bring back all of our employees to the rescue mission. We did a little bit of restructuring But for the most part, all of our employees came back so that was a big deal to, to where we finally had our full team back at the rescue mission. So that was something significant. But you know, as we sit here today, we're continuing to I'm against some details as far as our menu, the rescue mission. They are tested for symptoms twice a day. We take their temperatures and we write down and login the results. Every day. We've been doing that since early March. We have

Unknown Speaker 32:39  
added sanitizing,

Unknown Speaker 32:40  
regular emphasis on sanitizing, um, washing their hands or cleaning social distancing. We have gone to which again since early March, we have limited our classes. I would say the average class would be, let's say 20 to 25 men well now it's just 10 men, again, according to COVID measures and limitations on our classes had been, and still are actually 10 men at a time, six feet social distancing within the rescue mission

Unknown Speaker 33:19  
are

Unknown Speaker 33:21

our eating arrangements were limited. Usually we have up to, let's say, 2025 men eating at a time. Now it's only 10 men in our dining facility with six feet, you know, distance sitting. So again, that's all under these different COVID measures. Um,

Unknown Speaker 33:39  
and let's see,

Unknown Speaker 33:43  
trying to think

Unknown Speaker 33:47  
there's something else I wanted to mention. I'm just kind of at a blank at the moment. Any other things that you want me to touch on?

Unknown Speaker 33:56  
Yeah, what kind of code measures have you had to implement? For the food pantry and the thrift store, so those can function

Unknown Speaker 34:04  
through all of this. Okay, yeah. Great questions on the thrift store currently as we speak. We do require masks that customers wear masks when entering our thrift store. Um, so they must wear a mask on we are requiring our residents that work in work therapy, that they must wear a mask. Our employees that work in the thrift store that are assigned specifically to thrift store, they are required to wear masks and we've been doing that for a while now, as far as our employees having to wear masks, really all of our employees. If anybody steps out of their office, including myself, if I were to lead this interview and step out of my office, I have to have my mask on. So all of our employees have been required I implemented that made that mandatory that they had to wear the mask. We've been doing that for a while. But the thrift store employees it is required customers and also our residents. We do have our six foot distancing markings as you approach the purchase area to purchase your items there at the thrift store, that's all you know marked off quick COVID requirements and also we have our shields we put up shields there at our customer service desk, and by our cashiers to protect our cashiers and customers.

Unknown Speaker 35:33  
And let's see what else

Unknown Speaker 35:38  
Okay, you mentioned our food pantry. We have not stopped our food pantry. Praise Lord this whole time during this whole ordeal of the pandemic. We kept our food pantry going but normally we bring our clients inside our facility to screen them. We've been doing all at the curbside. So we've been doing outside wearing gloves and masks,

Unknown Speaker 36:01

um, and

Unknown Speaker 36:03

so the they still receive their food items or their food boxes, but we did that again outside of our facility. So that was another another measure protective measure that we took. And let's see yours our clothing closet. We haven't had a clothing closet since early March, just due to, you know, again, being taking precaution as far as you know, possibly the virus lingering on clothing and fabric. We did decide to close to close and discontinue our clothing closet till further notice that began in early March. And again until we received that Governor's mandate phase three and we deem that it's appropriate and safe to reopen our clothing closet. We're going to continue to to not have it but we do help with clothing and our thrift store. If somebody comes in with a voucher, from an outside agency, or even a residence that live here, they can get assistance to our thrift store. So instead of going to the clothing closet, they would just go through our thrift store and get assistance there. So that touched on the food pantry. And then also, Oh, and by the way, something that I haven't mentioned yet, which again, I been, every time I get an opportunity to share this, I want to share this and just say we thank the Lord, we praise the Lord for His mercy and His goodness, because we haven't had any cases of COVID-19 among our residents, or our staff members, we have not had the virus. So now what do we attribute it to God's mercy and goodness, through prayer, our diligent efforts of our staff to implement COVID measures and our residents being for the most part, very, very cooperative. You know, we will We're concerned because the residents, you know, just, you know, essentially going stir crazy, you know, being limited restricted to the rescue mission property. You know, we were concerned for their emotional mental stability. And, you know, not being able to see family members not leaving mission property, and also those that had jobs because once a man finishes the 90 day program, they can either transition to our one year program, or they can begin working out once they're, they have that 90 days of sobriety under their belt. Some of them were working out when this all began, but we had them go go to their employers and just say, you know, that I'm the rescue. I am a resident the rescue mission, and they are requiring me to remain a property and I will not be able to work any longer. We'll Praise the Lord. Again, God's favor and goodness, almost all of those employers were our men were working, told them that they would hold their jobs for them. So that was a great blessing. You know that And some of them have already now currently, on July 10 2020, they have gone back to their jobs we have implemented a certain area of the rescue mission we've designated as an isolated area to where the men working out or going. We had a couple of our residents and all this that were going to Forsyth Tech Community College. A couple of these residents made the President's list. That's not the that's not the that's not the auto roll. That's not the Dean's list. It's the President's list. That means they were carrying a 4.0 GPA. So these were men that were in addiction, other their lives, just very in turmoil. And

Unknown Speaker 39:41

and just

Unknown Speaker 39:44

without hope, hopeless, some of them homeless. These men have done very well, not just getting their GED or their high school diploma, the rescue mission but actually going for their college degrees. So um, we have Have a designated area now, where men are back to work, because their employers held their jobs during COVID-19. And under phase two, they were able to go to go back to their employers and begin working again. And also, some of our residents have been able to go back to Forsyth Tech where they have labs required. Some of our residents were able to continue their education online, like a lot of other universities and colleges, but some of them they had to be physically on campus for labs where we've made a again, we prepared an area designated area here at the rescue mission to where it allows them to actually go to the lab on campus, but they're they're also still isolated from the rest of the residents. So um, that's one thing that I wanted to make sure that I shared with you, Braden that we haven't had any,

Unknown Speaker 40:49  
any

Unknown Speaker 40:51  
really any symptoms of the virus or have the virus hit the rescue mission we the Lord's really covered us and protected us So that was a big, that's been a big blessing.

Unknown Speaker 41:03  
And that's absolutely incredible that you guys have been able to basically continue to operate through all of this and not have the virus at all. I know a lot of other businesses like manufacturing companies that had to operate through this even under social distancing guidelines and such had outbreaks of cases. And with you guys having people actually live on the property that's really incredible. So just kind of going back to how COVID affected your business from what I'm hearing. The main thing it did was it dropped your revenue that you produced from the thrift store. And other than that, it was just changing how you operate to make sure people don't get sick. And then you mentioned the loans and the grants that you were able to get So looking back, did COVID with all of that end up forcing you to change how you're going to have to operate or are you looking back and seeing that you were able to kind of stay the course. And you guys aren't going to have to, like make serious decisions about how you're going to operate. If that makes sense, I can clarify if you want.

Unknown Speaker 42:21  
Now, that makes a lot of sense. That makes a lot of sense. Um,

Unknown Speaker 42:25  
well, um,

Unknown Speaker 42:27  
I think that only the Lord Himself knows what the future holds, you know, with the virus

Unknown Speaker 42:35

and

Unknown Speaker 42:37

how, what things will look like in the next number of months or even years. I would say that, probably for a while. It seems to me I'm just realistically

Unknown Speaker 42:53

that we are

Unknown Speaker 42:57

not going to have Be if you would, um, we're not going to look like we did at the beginning of all this, um, I guess you could say, quote unquote, being normal again.

Unknown Speaker 43:13

We

Unknown Speaker 43:15

are going to continue. And that's one thing too is that I think as you mentioned, as you're just kind of summing up things I've shared with you here. The The good thing about it was is that the men, the men benefit, really from all this in the sense of that, even though they were restricted to the property, which you know, is really, you know, tough on them. It gave them sober time, that's what they came here to do. I just naturally afforded them the time that they needed to become sober and stay sober and abstinent. Because that's our goal here at the rescue mission. They have to want that. We can't force it upon them, but we encourage them towards sobriety. abstinence and they have all this time, to the best of my knowledge we have not we have not lost anybody. Because we do drug testing and alcohol testing regularly. We haven't lost anybody to a positive alcohol or drug test. So meaning that the men have stayed sober. And that was a blessing out of all this. Also, we were able to continue with the men's counseling and classes and process groups that we have here for for addiction education. So we never stopped that we made sure that the men continued to have Bible studies and messages out of out of God's Word. And also, their classes and their counseling sessions that never stopped. We wanted to stay as normal as possible for the men to where they didn't feel like they weren't accomplishing anything. We wanted to try to maintain that normalcy and we have, but um, but I think as far as You know, our thrift store, God willing will will continue to operate with the measures in place as long as we have to. But, but again, in spite of all this, you know, our sales have been up. I mean, it's amazing. It really is, you know, on. And I do attribute it to again, I keep saying I keep emphasizing you know, with you today, Braden, I can only attribute it It hasn't been our genius, or, or necessarily just strictly our diligence, but I think it's been God's mercy and goodness, you know, that he has kept this ministry going. Um, so And it's not just ours in the area, I think others you know, that that's take a stand on God's word and put our trust in him. You know, that he has taken care of these kind of ministries. Even here in our county and state. It's not just us, but I can I can say that, um, you know, that the Lord has stabilized us and as far as our food pantry, we continue You know, like I said, we never stopped doing that we want to continue to help our community, those that are hurting those that, um,

you know, have kids at home that need groceries, we want to continue to provide to provide food for them through our donations and even like I say some help from the Second Harvest Food Bank, we get some of our food from, we want to continue to be here for our community and to help them and we do have our foot you know, the Fall is coming up obviously after the summer, and that is the part of the Year in particular October, November, December, you know, where we have our food drives coming up. We're businesses in our schools and our churches help us with with collecting food for us and our food drive. So um, we are going to continue to help our community with holiday food boxes, Thanksgiving meal coming up and also our one Christmas meal. I'm also somebody Coming up, we have our golf tournament, which will be on September the 23rd. That'll be the fourth Wednesday in October. I'm sorry, September, so be September 23 and fourth Wednesday in September. That'll be our 14th annual golf tournament on that's the helps us to generate funds into the rescue mission. It's a it's a golf tournament. That's fundraiser for us. And then we have something interesting. We have on October the 23rd. That is the fourth Friday in October, we have our 53rd annual banquet. Now, the reason why this year's gonna be interesting and it kind of goes along with what you're asking me here. We were thinking of different options and possibilities of maybe having a virtual banquet or maybe something that's that's I guess, That's streamlined, um, that we would

Unknown Speaker 48:08

not be able to have a banquet like we normally have in a local venue where you have a lot of people together. In a way, it's disappointing that we can't have the banquet the way we're used to having it. But that probably that very well may not be an option. So while we're trying to think of alternative means, and usually the banquet is a fundraiser. So um, we are just thinking of different opportunities and options of still having the banquet, but just not having all the people together in a room. So we're just thinking and just praying about, you know, what, what the Lord might have for us. We don't want to lose the opportunity to have a fundraiser. But again, just because we were concerned about our men and our our donors, And just a lot of times we've had up to 500 people in one room, well, that's probably not going to be an option this year for us under these conditions, unless things radically changed. So, uh, so that's going to be another way that we operate differently. Braden, now our golf tournament, like I mentioned on September 23. That's at this moment work we'll plan on having and the venue that we're using says that that we that we should be able to do that with social distancing. So thankfully, we'll still have our golf tournament, like I said, the banquet in October on October 23. That's kind of up in the air at the moment. And then I'm also on September the 11th. That's our closest big event September the 11th. Usually we have that at a local church. It's called center Grove Baptist Church on Sabbath tember The 11th will be our annual graduation from our one year program. We'll have a number of our men who have finished our 90 day program. And then they'll have finished their one year program. We have a formal graduation for them at center Grove Baptist Church and be this year it's September the 11th. And now, will we be able to have it at the church? I don't know, it depends upon the social distancing that that church is practicing at that time, which at this moment, I'm not aware of, you know, but um, that's kind of up in the air of whether we're going to have to have it virtually, or just a very smaller version of graduation, like a lot of high schools have been doing that that's to be decided yet we're still



you know, thinking that through and planning and preparing and preparing and praying, you know, for how that will look. Um, but, you know, but but, you know, God willing, the rescue mission is going to continue to move forward by God's grace and God's will, and that we're going to keep doing what we what we do, you know, is essentially our main focus is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. And basically something else too I want to mention to Braden, we have a brand new mission statement and it goes like this. The Winston Salem rescue mission exists to help hurting men find healing through the gospel of Jesus Christ,

Unknown Speaker 51:20  
and hope to the new life that Christ

Unknown Speaker 51:25  
gives them. So the rescue mission exists to help hurting men find healing through the gospel of Jesus Christ and hope to the new life that he gives them. That's our mission statement. That's what we're all about. That's why we exist. So, you know, we do have help, you know, with physical needs like food, shelter, clothing, but more than that, we want to make sure that people understand the good news of Jesus Christ and the eternal life that he offers those that will place their faith and trust in Him. So that's the way we started back in 1967. And that's the way we continue on July 10.

Unknown Speaker 52:00  
2020

Unknown Speaker 52:04  
awesome. So, just a couple more things before we wrap up. Um, so through all this has it allowed you guys to explore new routes in your business? like things that you never thought you would be able to do? And has it brought you closer to the community? Do you find that all of this has kind of brought everyone in Winston Salem closer together and made us better off in that way?

Unknown Speaker 52:34  
That's that's a great question. Good question. Um, and I'm just trying to collect my thoughts here. Um,

Unknown Speaker 52:46  
as far as

Unknown Speaker 52:49  
I would say one thing

Unknown Speaker 52:50  
that comes to my mind right off the bat Braden

Unknown Speaker 52:53

is um

Unknown Speaker 52:56

we

Unknown Speaker 52:58

we a number of years ago we had a

Unknown Speaker 53:04

we had a trailer that was donated to us. It's kind of like a trailer that you might see like it like a sort of like a moving trailer that you might put, like, you know, items in. It's enclosed. And you might attach it to a vehicle. But it's like a it's kind of like a food trailer. It's really what it is because it has a window on each side of it. So um, well that food trailer was an area at a rescue mission. It was just kind of sitting there.

Unknown Speaker 53:35

And I thought, well, why is this thing just sitting there? How come we don't use it?

Unknown Speaker 53:40

Well, we get out also, I haven't mentioned this yet we get out to go meals. We used to call them brown bag lunches, but a boat or brown bag meals but what we call them currently now

Unknown Speaker 53:53

is to go meals and

Unknown Speaker 53:58

we give out up to 60 a day.

Unknown Speaker 54:01

Okay, six zero 60 Okay, um, we usually get about 20 at breakfast 20 at lunch and 20 at supper, okay? And that is primarily for our homeless community. Okay? The men in our program are fed breakfast, lunch and dinner 24 seven that are in our recovery programs. But this is for the public. This is for the community that has, you know, just the need of of receiving food help so on. But what the public would do is they would come up to our window and our building our 717 oak street address here at the the rescue mission. And they would come up to the window and we would the person inside the building would hand them a bag through the window. Well, we felt that that was not that was a little bit too close in proximity to possibly

Unknown Speaker 54:57

spread the virus.

Unknown Speaker 54:59

So What we did was is we said, You know what, why don't we take this food trailer,

Unknown Speaker 55:03  
put it out in our parking lot, and it kind of

Unknown Speaker 55:06  
just the way it's designed and will offer a greater physical distance to where you're handing back to somebody to where you're kind of like not right face to face

Unknown Speaker 55:15  
up on one another, you know, so, um,

Unknown Speaker 55:19  
we've been using that food trailer as a result of COVID

Unknown Speaker 55:23  
in our parking lot,

Unknown Speaker 55:24  
but what our vision is, what we'd like to do is to take that food trailer and to potentially at night say potentially as part of a vision to park it in different areas of our local community to hand out our to go meals from that trailer, we wouldn't be preparing meals inside the trailer, not cooking them inside it, but just handing them out. They'd all been ready be prepared, so they're pre prepared. So anyway, um, so the, the mission through donated food items that we get, again through through donations, and also our churches, our local churches that our church, our church base, are triggered that support us. Some of them have also donated some food to where we have these pre prepared lunches or breakfast meals or even you know, for supper, breakfast, lunch and supper that, um, we would go in different parts of Winston and hand these, these these bags of food out. So, um, so what we'd like to do is we want to put some markings designated, this is a rescue mission, you know, vehicle. And just to kind of, if you would, you know, just advertise, you know, that this is the rescue missions ministry, and so on. You know, this is kind of in the makings and in the planning stage, but, um, that is going to be, I think, a way to let the public know of what we do hit the rescue mission because a lot of us, you know, they might look at us that we are a shelter, we're really you're not a shelter, because we don't have any overnight stays or the mission. There are some shelters and areas but the rescue mission is not a shelter. But we are a recovery program. Again, we have a 90 day program, we have a one year program, and so on.

Unknown Speaker 57:10  
But, um,

Unknown Speaker 57:11  
but what we also want to do is we want to do some community outreach. And so this food trailer has made a way, I guess you'd say a venue to be able to not just have it maybe in the physical location, the rescue mission, we would like to take this trailer out into the community and be and be able to distribute meals,

Unknown Speaker 57:31

you know, out

Unknown Speaker 57:33

on the streets here in our local area into our community, that would probably have not have happened if it went up for COVID. That physical distancing to where we were no longer handling it, hitting up the meals through our the window of our building, but instead of using a trailer in our parking lot, and then the idea of, Hey, why don't we go out into the community, not just physically on site but outside the off campus. So that I guess you could say that would be one thing may seem like a small But to us, it's it's a big deal cuz we've never done anything like that before. So that's kind of like in Division, you know, for like a visionary type thing, but but also, um, as far as has it brought us together? Um, yeah, definitely. I believe that, really, um,

Unknown Speaker 58:19

that the Lord is showing us

Unknown Speaker 58:22

that, you know, COVID-19 is not partial to anybody, because we now see that all ages can potentially get the virus and there's a lot of ramifications, you know, this virus is affected, you know, just just the economy, obviously, you know, a physically, um, the, the economy, um, and, you know, just socially it's affected us in so many ways, even the wearing of masks, you know, all these things. Um, so I think in some ways, it just shows us that we Really how vulnerable you know, that we can we can be, but also have a really in my mind, you know just how much we do need one another, and how we also know, we all need the Lord to help us, you know, get through this. So, um

Unknown Speaker 59:19

yeah, I think that

Unknown Speaker 59:21

in a lot of ways it's brought it's brought a lot of good I think for the men I think I mentioned already as a result of the virus while they've been restricted the property but it's gonna it's given him more time to become sober and maybe even to, you know, just kind of be able to have maybe more of an isolated time to kind of think through things and just to draw closer to the Lord adorn this.

Unknown Speaker 59:47

Um, I don't know if it's,

Unknown Speaker 59:50

I wasn't really necessarily totally prepared to answer that question of Braden, but any that I may be missing anything that you wanted me to touch Besides anything they've mentioned so far?

Unknown Speaker 1:00:03

No, I think you hit it. Um, no, I one thing I really resonated with me was that you guys saw more donations and stuff like that. So I thought that was kind of a way that the community drew closer to your mission. And I thought that was neat. Um, so now unless there's anything else you want to share, um, we can wrap up the interview portion.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:24

Okay. Yeah, I can't, honestly.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:29

Unless the Lord just popped something in my head real quick here. I really can't think of anything to say beyond that, but I just thank you for the opportunity to sit down and interview with you today. Um, and yeah, I think I think my end I think that that would do it. All right. privilege.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:51

Yeah. I'm gonna stop the recording. And there's just a couple housekeeping things. I need to tell you about it real quick.

Unknown Speaker 1:00:56

Okay, thank you.

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