

“*Being at the Mission meant I was finally safe. And today, I still have their support.*”  
– Devondrayia

All the staff really wanted to help me. They helped me get my eviction record removed from when I was illegally evicted and helped me learn to manage my medication so my mental health could stabilize. I wouldn't have had the chance to do that without the support of the staff.

*While staying at the shelter Devondrayia chose to join our Women's New Life Recovery Program. Though her addiction hadn't caused her homelessness, she knew addressing it was vital for long-term stability.*



Having a supportive community around me made it possible to stay sober. The recovery program manager, Brenda, just wrapped her arms around me. We could talk to her about anything. Having a roof over my head was huge, and I had counselors to talk to about the root of my addiction.

Even though I graduated from the program and moved to my own apartment, I'm still able to see my counselors and go through the program curriculum with Brenda. The staff didn't just watch me go – they made sure I was good now that I'm on my own.

*Devondrayia now has true stability, a supportive community, and hope for a bright future.*

### Where is she now?

Today, Devondrayia is thriving in her own place at the the Mission's Jefferson Apartments!

She is working with our Career Services Team to gain new skills and offer all she can back to our community.

*To read more stories like this, visit [trm.org/stories](http://trm.org/stories).*

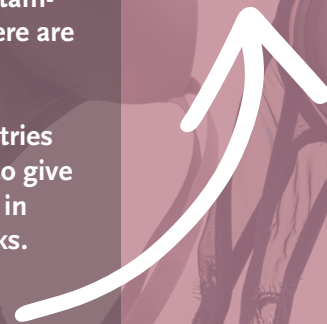
## It's Feb-BRA-ary!

Women's underwear, bras and toiletries are some of the least donated items to the Mission. But they're some of the things we need the most! Items like underwear, bras, sports bras, deodorant, tampons and socks are some of the items there are never enough of.

So this month we're doing a bra and toiletries drive so that we have enough essentials to give people like Devondrayia when they come in with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Scan the QR code to shop our wishlist!

Or shop on your own and drop off donations at:  
425 S. Tacoma Way S. Tacoma Way.



## Leave a Legacy of Love

Did you know that you can choose to remember the Tacoma Rescue Mission in your will or estate plan?

Over the years, a number of our partners have left gifts to the Mission. Their impact is continuing, and will remain as a legacy of love for years!

To learn more about planned giving options, contact Myron Bernard, Sr. Director of Community Engagement, at 253.383.4483 ext. 1140 or visit [trm.org/plannedgiving](http://trm.org/plannedgiving) to get started.

## MISSION MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Tacoma Rescue Mission

### Devondrayia's Story: More Than a Shelter

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# Devondrayia's Story: More Than a Shelter



I grew up in a rough situation. I began using marijuana because I didn't know what to do with my depression and the experiences I had been through. It was actually my mom who introduced me to crack. And then eventually I turned to meth when a boyfriend was using it.

*Despite her drug use, Devondrayia always had a stable job and housing. Unfortunately, she found out how quickly things can change.*

In 2018, the manager of my building touched me in inappropriate ways, and I was so scared to be homeless that I just went along with it. Then, he got greedy and sold the building without giving anyone notice, and the new manager raised the rent by over 20%. I couldn't afford it – so after all that, I ended up on the street anyway.

I had nowhere to go, and I couldn't

keep my job while I was homeless. I couldn't shower or prepare food, all the things I was used to doing. I would ride the bus all day just to stay warm. I looked for safety anywhere and even stayed with a man who assaulted me. I went back to him even though he spit on me and shoved me just so I could have a place off the streets. So after that, you can imagine how thankful I was to find the women's shelter.

At the Mission I didn't have to compete with the men for services. I didn't have to worry about food. . . I even started to work with employment services.

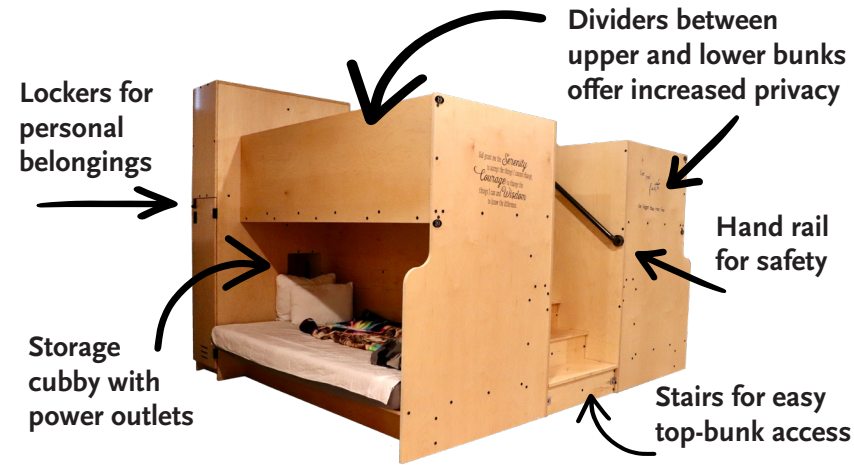
“The shelter was the best start. To have your own space with clean towels, showers. It meant a lot to have somewhere safe to work on everything I needed to work on.” – Devondrayia

## Mission Minutes

### Brand New Step-Up Bed Systems In Place

After the age of 10, no one wants to climb into a bunk bed. That's part of why we installed Step-up-Beds in our Women's Shelter. These new beds still make efficient use of space, while also offering privacy.

Step-Up-Beds offer women experiencing homelessness more dignity than bunk beds. Here's how!



These beds were designed to offer a feeling of dignity and care. Each “bunk” area is a place where a woman can sit in safety, rest and think through building a foundation for a new life.

One of our goals for 2023 is to raise funds to put these same beds in our Men's Shelter. Keep a lookout for how you can get involved.

“The new beds have definitely made the shelter more inviting. A woman recently told me she's never been in a shelter like this. She said she has no words for how great it is to have your own space. Women are staying longer, which gives them a better opportunity to connect with staff and resources they need.”

– Brenda Tu'ua, Women's Shelter Supervisor

## It's Not Fair, But It's True

Any woman knows the danger of being out alone after dark. If someone is on the street behind you, your pulse quickens, you keep looking over your shoulder, you walk a little faster. Imagine that x1000 if you're homeless and never experience the relief of getting into your car and locking the door or walking into your house and turning the bolt.

That's the type of constant fear the women who come to the shelter are living with. “Out there, women are definitely looked at as prey.” – Brenda Tu'ua, Women's Shelter Supervisor

“There were times where I made the wrong judgment, and I would be around men trying to find a place out of the cold or something and the men wanted sexual favors or I had to leave.” –Devondrayia, guest



“Women do whatever they can to not have to go out on the streets by themselves. Honestly, a lot of women just don't make it. A lot of single women just disappear. . . a woman was killed where I was camping within days of me spending the night there.” – Erica, guest



“The reason I would walk all hours of the night was because I wasn't safe. If there was a spot, it would be with a drug dealer. There was a couple of them. They weren't gonna let me stay unless I would do sexual acts for them.” –Kathleen, guest



While we can't erase the danger out there, we can make it more inviting in here at the Mission by providing more privacy, personal space and dignity. And we did—by changing our beds to the new Step-Up Bed system.