

the MESSENGER

Serving, Reaching, Teaching — *Together*

MARCH 2024



Say Hello to Our
New Executive Director

Dr. Chris Townsend followed his heart to a life of service, and it led him to Carriage Town Ministries.

See his story inside 



Serving the Needy Since 1950

MEET OUR NEW EXECUTIVE

Dr. Chris Townsend takes on God's work at Carriage T



Dr. Chris Townsend always had a heart for helping people in difficult situations. He initially pursued a career in law enforcement, but soon found his calling lay elsewhere.

"From what God had instilled in me, I preferred helping people in a more directed, genuine and Christ-centered way," Chris says.

After serving an internship at the Detroit Rescue Mission, Chris spent more than seven years working as a Case Manager and then as Building Director. He also worked at the Salvation Army as an Emergency Shelter Program (ESP) Regional Manager, which led him to Carriage Town Ministries.

"Carriage Town Ministries was in one of the regions I covered," Chris explains. "I had to monitor programs, do some follow-up visits and provide technical assistance. Carriage Town Ministries always stayed on my radar because of the excellent work they were doing."

Caring for the poor was ingrained in Chris from his earliest days.

The youngest of seven children, Chris regularly attended First Baptist Institutional Church in Detroit with his family. He was a high school student, attending The Body of Christ Christian Center, when, he says, "I remember meeting God in a very real way. I could feel Him there. That's when He really began dealing with my heart and I accepted Christ."

Another momentous encounter happened in high school when Chris met his future wife, Nina, also a devout Christian. They married young and had two sons, Christopher and Isaac.

As Chris made his way through college and immediately after, he found himself drawn more and more toward helping the homeless. He recalls working in a laundromat, where several people would come in during his overnight shift. "I would ask Nina to pack me some extra lunch for them. I would sit down and have lunch with these guys. I didn't



THE DIRECTOR

Carriage Town Ministries

really think anything of it, because that's just how we would treat people."

When he began his internship at the Detroit Rescue Mission, he says, "I knew I was in the right place. Everything clicked. It felt really good. I still had aspirations to be in law enforcement, but in hindsight, that wasn't necessarily what God wanted me to do."

Today, Chris is right where God intended him to be.

"God seems to have a special place in His heart for the less fortunate," Chris says. "He commands us to take care of the poor, so we're really taking on His work. That could be giving someone a hot meal, helping them stay warm with a coat and gloves or helping them connect to the community, to resources or even back with their family."

Since succeeding Dr. Dallas Gatlin as Executive Director on January 1, Chris has given a lot of thought to his goals for Carriage Town Ministries. He tells us, "I hope to maintain the reputation Carriage Town has for helping people and for introducing people to Christ. I want us to be good stewards of the people we're serving. I also want to see what opportunities there are to expand what we're doing, to connect with our local churches and to get more folks in the community involved in the work we're doing here."

Please join us in welcoming Chris to Carriage Town Ministries!

Art Gets a Restart at Carriage Town Bakery

Sometimes we all need a do-over.

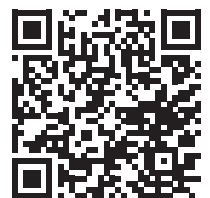
Art had some family issues and lost focus on where he was headed in life. "I was moving without thinking for a long time," he says. He thought reconnecting with an old employer would help get him back on track, but the job he'd had didn't exist anymore. That told Art he had to stop looking backward. What he needed was "a restart." And he found it at Carriage Town Ministries, through our Personal Success Plan program.



"Carriage Town Ministries is giving me time to think about where I want to land," Art says. He began working as a transitional employee at Carriage Town Bakery. "I hadn't worked in a long time," he says, "and I had a big gap in my resume, so the transitional employment helps me update my resume." Best of all, Art genuinely enjoys his job!

"I like talking to the folks from the neighborhood. They come in every day and we just chat." Art also admits that he likes the donuts! His recommendation: the buttermilk glazed. "It's like having your own little birthday cake."

If you happen to be in the neighborhood, be sure to stop in at Carriage Town Bakery and say hello to Art. In the meantime, scan the code for a video to hear Art's story in his own words.



How Much Do You Know About Carriage Town Bakery?



Think you know everything there is to know about this popular spot? Hang on to this newsletter, because throughout March and April, if you can answer the trivia question of the day at Carriage Town Bakery, you'll get a discount. All the answers are right here.

What's our most popular donut?
This one might be your favorite: **Glazed Twist**. If you've never tried it, it's about time.

What is a London Fog?
It's one of our favorite drinks, made with Earl Gray tea (from London), with milk (the fog) and brown sugar syrup. It's fabulous!

What is the origin of the Blueline name?
The Blueline name was chosen to bring together the homeless community and first responders to interact. Also, our Bakery and Mission are located on the blue line designating the route of the famous Crim Race in Flint.

What was the Carriage Town Bakery building before it was a bakery?
You would never guess that it was a dilapidated garage!

When is Carriage Town Bakery's second birthday party?
That would be **November 16**, and you're invited!

How many donuts did Carriage Town Bakery sell last year?
A whopping 39,000!

Who is our coffee distributor?
Many thanks to Foster Coffee for waking us all up in the morning!

What's the biggest-selling day at Carriage Town Bakery?
It's the day before Ash Wednesday, also known as Fat Tuesday — or, as we like to call it, **Paczki Day**. If you've never had a Paczki (pronounced *Poonch-Key*), it's a crazy-delicious, tender donut filled with cream or jelly. And frankly, Blueline Donuts makes the best Paczki in town.

When is National Donut Day?
And did you know there even was such a day? It's the **first Friday in June**. This year, it's June 7. We hope you see you then — or sooner!



Memorial & In Honor Of Gifts

Gifts received October 1 to December 31, 2023

An honor or memorial gift to Carriage Town Ministries is a special way to offer hope to the needy in the name of a friend or family member. Our deepest sympathies are with friends who have lost loved ones.

If you would like to give a gift in memory of a loved one who has passed away, or in honor of a special occasion, please mail your

gift and the name of the person(s) being remembered or honored to:

Carriage Town Ministries
P.O. Box 318 • Flint, MI 48501

We will let your honoree or the family of the deceased know of your gift with a special note.

Thank You!

MEMORIAL

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Jason Weigle

Bruce Van Vlack

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Giving that Benefits Carriage Town Ministries — and YOU



Bequests

Including Carriage Town Ministries through a gift in your will is a powerful way to provide long-term support and stability for our mission. This type of contribution costs nothing today and ensures that we can continue providing help, hope and the Good News to our community — for generations to come.

If you do not have an up-to-date will in place, you can create your legal will for free and if you wish, establish a lasting legacy with Carriage Town Ministries using a trusted resource from our partners at FreeWill. FreeWill's online platform is secure, simple to use, and most people finish their plans in 20 minutes or less.



Gifts through your IRA

If you are over 70½, giving from your IRA helps you reduce your taxable income — and for those over 72 who must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), an IRA gift is a simple way to fulfill it while supporting Carriage Town Ministries. Our new secure IRA donation tool makes it simple to give to Carriage Town Ministries directly from your IRA and receive tax benefits. It only takes a few minutes to use and will auto-complete your paperwork for you.



Stock Gifts

Transferring stocks to Carriage Town Ministries is an increasingly popular way to make an immediate impact on our neighbors in need. You benefit as well, by saving on two types of taxes. Our secure online tool makes it easy to identify the correct transfer form and fill out the necessary fields. It also provides clear instructions for submitting the form to your broker.

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Our Mission

is to provide help, hope
and the Good News
to our community through
the skills and means
of God's people
and the transforming power
of Christ's love.



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