



Like each heartbeat pumps life throughout its body, we are proud to celebrate the people and organizations infusing life into our community. Separately, they sustain people in their circles, but together, they are the rhythm and lifeblood of the Space Coast.

NAME:

Amy Lyon

ORGANIZATION:

New Life Mission

POSITION:

CEO

CONNECT

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heartbeat of BREVARD

ABOUT NEW LIFE MISSION

Since 2009, New Life Mission (NLM) has met homeless mothers with children where they are: living in cars, in tents, on friends' couches, in pay-by-day motels or in apartments from which they face eviction. NLM doesn't give a handout, but rather a hand up, as women are educated, empowered and equipped to achieve self-sufficiency and break the cycle of homelessness.

Through a four-phase residential program that lasts one to two years, families receive housing on one of NLM's four campuses. They are provided with one-on-one case management, counseling, parenting support, Bible studies, life skills classes, financial coaching, educational opportunities and employment assistance.

In the fall of 2022, NLM opened Kids Academy, a private child care center for children in the program, to remove the barrier many families face in finding transportation to safe, affordable child care.

This year, NLM will open its fourth campus, New Life Village, on the site of the former Hacienda Girls Ranch in Melbourne. The 24-acre campus was purchased from Children's Home Society, and will allow NLM to nearly double its capacity in 2023 and look to future expansion.

Being a "student" in the NLM program is challenging, as accountability is the organization's core tenet. Graduates of NLM work throughout Brevard County in sustainable careers like insurance agent, mortgage processor, physical therapist, LPN, medical assistant, administrative assistant and even a firefighter.

EXPERIENCE

Amy Lyon has served in multiple roles at NLM including case manager, facilities coordinator, volunteer coordinator and program director. In 2020, amid the COVID pandemic, Amy launched

NLM's social enterprise, the Transformed Shop, a sewing center where women in the program learn to cut and sew repurposed fabric and denim. Their items are sold online at www.TransformedShop.com.

When NLM Founder/CEO Stacia Glavas retired in July 2022, the board of directors chose Amy as her successor.

"My career in journalism brought me to NLM, previously Brevard Rescue Mission, in 2018 when I wrote an article about the opening of the organization's second campus," Amy said. "I knew immediately that I wanted to be involved, that a new door was being opened for me. When I look back on all of the experiences I've had in my life — personal, work-wise and volunteer — I know that God has been preparing me for such a time as this, to lead New Life Mission to serve even more families."

SPRING FUNDRAISER

To model sustainability for the families in its program, NLM does not utilize government funding. Instead, it relies solely on donations from individuals, churches, businesses, grants and fundraising events.

Nearly half of its operating budget is raised during its annual spring fundraiser called Community Care and Share. During the luncheon, more than 800 attendees come on one of the two days to learn about the impact NLM has had in the last year and hear from a mom who has successfully journeyed from dependency to self-sufficiency.

"This year's theme is 'Opening Eyes to Homelessness' and our goal is to not only shed light on the issue of homelessness in Brevard County, but also to highlight the transformative journey our families go through during our program. It's truly remarkable to witness the redemption story of a mom so overcome by addiction that she loses everything, including her children, only to find her way again in our program, be reunited with her children, complete schooling and obtain a full-time job," Amy said.

"We are actively seeking individuals and businesses to become Community Care and Share sponsors and invest in the transformation that's taking place in the lives of these brave mothers and their children."

FUTURE

NLM has capacity to serve 13 families in its residential program and eight families in transitional graduate housing. The organization is growing rapidly as it prepares to open Phase I of New Life Village with capacity for an additional 15-18 families.

"Our staff and board have a vision to serve 100 families at a time in the not-too-distant future," Amy said. "That means 300+ individuals at a time who are no longer facing a future of homelessness. We have the land to build and

the proven program to achieve lasting results, but it's quite literally going to take a village of supporters.

"We have opportunities for individual volunteers and groups to help with cleaning, painting and maintenance of our facilities, providing activities for our children, helping in an administrative capacity, and crafting and sewing with our moms in the Transformed Shop."

ADVICE

The why behind New Life Mission is what gives Amy and her team the stamina to march forward in their quest to make a difference.

"We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to go to the places where we find the least, the lost and the hurting, and provide them with the resources for generational change," Amy said.

"Five years ago, I had a vision for my future that it was time to stop writing about change and instead BE the change I wanted to see in the world. Never underestimate the power YOU possess to have a positive impact in this community. As Mother Teresa said, 'We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but the ocean wouldn't be the same without that one drop.'"

"Every volunteer hour you give and every dollar you donate makes a difference. That small thing you do today could be the difference one family needs to change the entire trajectory of their lives."