

Formerly Homeless & Justice-Impacted Leaders Headline CCM's Thanksgiving Giveback

Turning Pain Into Power for a New Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, November 28, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- While many Thanksgiving events across Los Angeles focused on distributing meals, Christ-Centered Ministries (CCM) offered something far more rare this year: a celebration led not by outside volunteers, but by men and women who once stood in the food line themselves.

Hundreds of transformed lives: individuals once battling homelessness, addiction, justice involvement, and deep personal loss, returned this Thanksgiving to serve the very community they came from. For CCM, that is the real story.

"Our Thanksgiving table is not about a meal. It's about possibility," said Pastor Troy Vaughn, CCM's founder. "The people serving today are the ones who once had no hope. Now they're the leaders. That's the transformation we exist to prove."

A Thanksgiving Led by the Formerly Homeless, Formerly Addicted, Formerly Incarcerated

Across the two large lots at 742 N. La Brea Avenue, guests were greeted not by strangers, but by faces that reflect resilience.

At the head of this movement is Pastor Troy Vaughn, a nationally known and respected "From Skid Row to CEO" author who leads with lived experience and a proven track record. Known as former resident to president of LA Mission but behind the scenes, he has been the president and



Formerly Unhoused and Incarcerated now come back to serve where they once needed the help

CEO of CCM, providing comprehensive programs such as transitional housing, holistic recovery support, mental health services, food distribution and public health initiatives.

Among those leading the celebration...

- Sal Williams, once incarcerated and caught in drug trafficking; today he is the Director of Funding Development for CCM, 24 years under Pastor Troy's mentorship.
- Tanasa Renee Ryles, once homeless, addicted, and cycling in and out of jail; today she is the Director of CCM Pit Stop, overseeing hygiene safety across LA County.



CCM Founders Pastor Darlene Vaughn and Pastor Troy Vaughn head the serving line with other leaders and volunteers

- Dr. JayR McIntyre ("The Hood Motivator"), once a lost grieving boy on Skid Row who lost his mother to AIDS at a very young age; today, a community leader, speaker, and one of CCM's strongest advocates.

“

The need is great. There are 6 million people in metro Los Angeles, and a majority are just trying to figure out how they're going to make it from one pay to the next. It is our job to be God's hands.”

*Pastor Charles Blake II, West
Angeles Church of God in
Christ*

And over a hundred more. All with similar testimonies: “I once came here for help. Now I come back to serve.”

This reversal of roles, guests becoming leaders, recipients becoming restorers, is the heart of CCM's Thanksgiving story.

Not a Feeding Line but A Pipeline of Transformation

While CCM served nearly 1,000 guests with freshly cooked Thanksgiving meals, the organization emphasizes that the food is simply an entry point.

The real objective is to open the door for long-term transformation through relational support, community, workforce development, recovery programs, reentry housing, and spiritual restoration.

For many who showed up on Thanksgiving Day:

It's their first warm welcome after incarceration; their first invitation into a safe community; their first encounter with people who look like them, talk like them, and have overcome what they currently face.

CCM's staff and volunteers, many once on Skid Row themselves, serve as living proof that change is real and reachable.

This Isn't Enabling. This Is Empowerment.

Pastor Troy addressed volunteers before the gates opened: "Today is not just about feeding people. It's about letting them see what's possible — through your lives."

Guests didn't just receive a plate. They received:

- An introduction to people who survived addiction and now lead programs.
- A handshake from someone who once slept in a tent but now runs a citywide initiative.
- A prayer from someone who was once hopeless but is now whole.
- And they were offered services to help them get out of the cycle.

This Thanksgiving was not charity.

It was invitation into recovery, restoration, and community.

COMPARED TO TYPICAL HOLIDAY COVERAGE, THIS IS THE STORY PEOPLE WANT TO SEE ON TV

Many newsrooms see "Thanksgiving feeding" and assume "same story, different location."

But CCM's event is the opposite.

This is not about the food.

This is about the transformed lives serving the food.

That is the story.

That is what viewers rarely see:

Formerly incarcerated men directing volunteer teams;; women who once lived on the street now running major city programs. A Thanksgiving table where the "formerly hopeless" now lead a movement

No other Thanksgiving event in LA demonstrates this level of life transformation from within.

With homelessness crises worsening across California, and as LA gets ready to host the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, CCM provides a working model of human-centered transformation.

YOU CAN BE A PART OF THIS STORY

You can help carry this movement forward. Share this story so others can see that transformation is real and a different future for those in transition is possible.

Tell someone you know who is struggling that CCM is here for them. They can reach out to CCM at (310) 644-4902, email info@4ccm.org

Learn more about the programs changing lives every day at <https://4ccm.org/>

And if you feel led, support the mission through giving—because every contribution helps open the door for another restored life.

Hope grows when we share it. And together, we can help someone take their first step toward thriving.

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ABOUT CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRIES (CCM)

Founded in 1999 by Pastors Troy and Darlene Vaughn, CCM is a Los Angeles-based movement dedicated to taking people from homelessness to thriving through reentry housing, workforce development, peer-led recovery, mental health support, and spiritual restoration. Over 600 partner organizations join CCM in building long-term transformation across Southern California.

CCM's partner organizations that make "second chances" real every day include the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP), helping people returning from incarceration rebuild their lives; West Angeles Church of God in Christ, offering spiritual support, food, and community resources in the Crenshaw District; Manna Feast, providing nourishing meals to neighbors in need; Restoration Family Worship Center in Inglewood, CA where Pastor Troy serves as Senior Pastor; and The Los Angeles Tribune, amplifying voices and stories of hope across the city. Together, they form an ecosystem of faith, food, justice, and storytelling that shows how gratitude in Los Angeles is something we live, not just something we say on a holiday.

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