



Your generosity helped this engineer design a new life.

In June 2006, we introduced you to Victor, who sought comfort in alcohol when his 20-year marriage fell apart. At Christmastime in 2001, when he realized that his life was out of control, he sought help at Cherry Street, where he had once volunteered to help others. Thanks to the support of caring people like you, we helped Victor overcome his dependence on alcohol, and he left Cherry Street in 2002 to work as an engineer and property manager. Now age 46, Victor recently moved from Toledo to the Cleveland area to take a new job.

Voice of Compassion: Tell us about your new job, Victor.

Victor: I'm the lead designer on the 3-D computer modeling of a \$200 million facility being built in Topeka, Kansas. Not many people specialize in 3-D, and engineering is the hardest and most challenging thing I've ever done, but my wife believed I could do it. I saw the love of Christ in her, and she saw something in me when no one else did.

VOC: What's the most important thing you learned at Cherry Street?

V: I started out volunteering at Cherry Street years ago and ended up as a recipient [of its help]. There I was, broken. I'd lost my marriage of 20 years and pretty much everything else to alcoholism. What I really needed was what I really got: before, I couldn't see how people could end up at Cherry Street. I couldn't see how somebody could leave his family or lose a good job to alcohol or drugs. By the time life was done with me, I could see how. I now have greater compassion, wisdom, and understanding.

VOC: Did you have a relationship with the Lord before coming to Cherry Street?

V: Before I came to Cherry Street, I was one of those believers who would have stood before God and He'd have said, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity. I know you not." You see, originally, I didn't want to become a Christian because I'd look at Christians and think, "Who wants to be saved like you? You're bitter, you're angry, and on top of that, you're broke. If I have to be miserable like that, then being saved is not the way I want to go." But eventually, in order to assimilate, I became the very Christian I hated: I lacked love, compassion, and understanding, because there was no relationship with God. I thank God for my afflictions that brought me to Cherry Street. Without them, I wouldn't know God like I do today. Now that relationship is there.

VOC: Is there anything you'd like to tell our donors?

V: Some of us really need that chance. If Cherry Street had not been there, I don't know where I would be: probably dead or in jail. It saved my life.