

They've chosen a mission for life

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A Vietnam veteran, the 29-year-old Florida resident had kicked a \$250 a day cocaine habit three years ago through an army rehabilitation program.

Last year, after being discharged from the army, he got a job driving a semi-truck. While visiting his fiancée in Inlay City a couple of months ago, Blair broke off the engagement.

"I decided to hitchhike back to Florida, and the state police found me half-frozen on the road," Blair recalled. "They took me to Detroit Receiving and the social worker sent me here (to the mission)."

"When I got here, I listened to one of the ministers and rededicated my life to the Lord. I feel He has me here for a purpose."

Although he grew up in a Christian home (his stepfather was a minister), Blair turned away from religion when he was drafted into the army.

His experiences as a prisoner of war in Vietnam provide ammunition for converting street people he sees daily.

"People don't really understand what we went through," he said. "I tell them how they (the North Vietnamese) tried to beat and starve us. I still have scars on my back and chest. To survive, you had to eat seaweed soup, rice and water. I was 240 pounds when I went in and 145 when I got out."

"Once, they put me in the heat box (a 6-foot by 6-foot steel box that gets as hot as 130 degrees) for two days straight because I refused to give them any information."

"Through it all, I never knew the Lord. I regret now that I never listened to my stepfather."

By praying daily and working out his problems with friends and ministers at the mission, Blair remains optimistic about his future.

He draws his inspiration from David Wilkerson, an evangelist who ministered to street gangs in New York during the late 1960s.

"I remember a story about Nicki Cruz (leader of a New York gang) telling David Wilkerson he was going to cut him into a thousand little pieces. Wilkerson said 'Go ahead, every piece will love you like me.'"

WILLIAMS AND Blair are among the numerous residents and transients who have received help over the years from devoted staff members.

But staffers such as Bill Chapel of Birmingham, who give many hours of their time, also receive tremendous rewards.

Chapel discovered the mission two years ago after making a decision to practice what he preached.

A member of the Grace Evangelical Free Church which meets at The Community House in Birmingham, Chapel had studied Bible teachings with his pastor for years.

"I thought it was time for something more than just reading the word," said the Birmingham resident. "I wanted to be a doer of the word."

So he volunteered at the Detroit Rescue Mission in the heart of the Cass Corridor.

Chapel got hooked on the place. Last February, he sold his business interests and went to work full time at the Rescue Mission.

Formerly a salesman for a Mount Clemens company (he was vice president of Janeply, which distributes cleaning supplies to hospitals), he now solicits donations from corporations for the mission.

TRAVELING with a slide projector in hand, Chapel takes his message on the road. He tells Detroit-area executives about the mission's three ministries: a residential substance and alcohol abuse center in Cass Corridor, a halfway house for prisoners in the old Scripps mansion on Trumbull and a summer camp for inner city children in Howell.

During the slide presentation, reformed drug addicts and alcoholics and former convicts give their testimonies on tape. A touching song, "Shelter of Love," written by Chapel's wife, who is a former country music singer and songwriter, plays in the background.

It's all designed to show the mission's good work and graphically illustrate the need for continued financial support.

"We get support from foundations and churches throughout the area to help meet our \$1.2 million annual budget," Chapel explained. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture and large corporations send us food."

"But we have a lot of expenses. We pay \$140 a day just to heat the (Cass Corridor) mission. And, we serve 9,000 meals a month."

The mission also provides permanent shelter for nearly 70 vagrants and dis-

tributes clothes to needy people in the Detroit area.

Although raising money for the mission is Chapel's chief responsibility, his biggest reward comes from counseling residents of the facility.

Volunteers, employees and residents are also gearing up for the mission's 75th anniversary celebration. A banquet, featuring Col. James Irwin, an Apollo 15 astronaut, is being planned for May 3 at the Fairlane Manor, Dearborn.

Cranbrook shops offer gift ideas

Among the gifts available at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum shop is the 352 page book "Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925-1950."

The Abrams publication, featuring numerous color and black and white photographs, traces Cranbrook's influence on 20th century design and celebrates the exhibition on the Academy's founding and contributions to contemporary life which opened this week at Detroit Institute of Art.

Also available are colorful 1984 posters and a variety of art-related children's books chosen for quality illustrations.

In addition to beautiful calendars, Christmas cards, address books, wrapping paper, cookbooks and specialty items, the bookstore offers publications on art, design and architecture.

Hours for the bookstore in the art museum are 10 a.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

The Cranbrook Institute of Science shop has scientific toy kits ranging

from an amphibious penguin car to a 30-power microscope. Dinosaur buffs will enjoy related T-shirts, stickers, models, kits and atlases.

Those who would like a closer view of the world will find magnifiers, binoculars and telescopes in various sizes as well as prisms, Museum of Modern Art transscopes and octoscopes which use light to create or illuminate unusual effects.

New items for adults include Lawrence H. Walkinshaw's newly published book, "Kirtland's Warbler: The Natural History of an Endangered Species."

The Institute of Science is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, 7-10 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays and 1-5 p.m. Sundays.

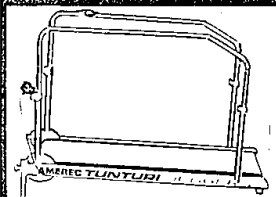
plus Institute of Science mugs, jigsaw puzzles and calendars.

Weavers of Coventry in England have come up with a new inventory of woven silk pictures of birds in frames or boxes. Also featured are science books, natural history objects and jewelry.

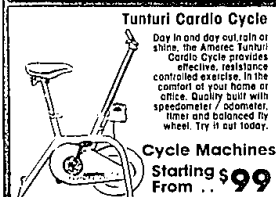
Cranbrook Institute of Science memberships are also available at gifts.

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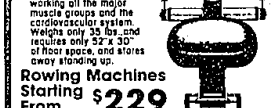
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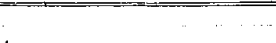
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