

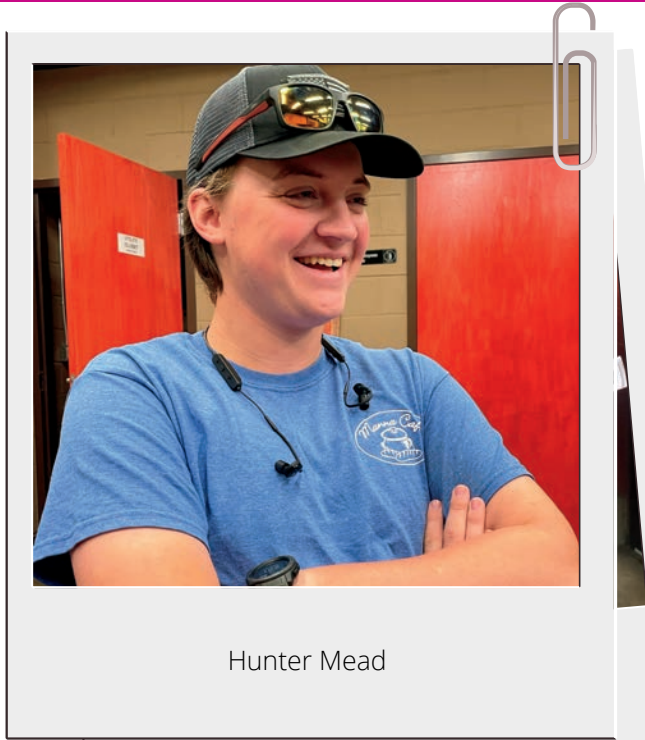


# Love, Peace, and Manna

The Manna Cafe Ministries newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2022

"Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them."  
—Isa. 58:7, NLT



Hunter Mead



Hunter at 14 with sister Marissa (L) and stepsister Briley (R).

BY VICKI YORK

## A New Beginning

Even before Hunter Mead reached adolescence, his stepfather taught him to steal. The man who should have helped guide Hunter through life showed him how to squeeze the plastic bubble holding a Hot Wheels car off its cardboard backing, leaving the bar code behind. "I'd walk out of Walmart with pockets full of whatever I wanted," says Hunter. "I stole bikes from the neighborhood too. I'd spray paint them, ride them around for a week, then ditch them when I got bored."

Hunter remembers his family being temporarily "broke and homeless. For a while, my sister and I jumped around between family and friends and grandparents, and from school to school." As he scrolls through his phone to show me photos of his siblings, his affection for his brother, sister, and mother is evident.

In 2014, Hunter's mom – who eventually parted ways with his stepfather – began volunteering for Manna Café, children in tow. "At first, it was just something to do," Hunter says, "but then it became fun. Everyone just wanted to help out. I didn't have a whole lot of positive influence at the time, so that was nice." Founder/director Kenny York quickly grew fond of the boy and offered him small painting or maintenance jobs. "Kenny would offer me however much he had in his pocket – 20 or 40 bucks – and a cheeseburger. We'd go to the Busy Bee, sit and have lunch and talk about things. He'd tell me his stories. I started trying to follow his lead."



## *A Reason to Celebrate*

Rhonda Horn had been a marine corps seamstress all her life when she decided she wanted to do something new for a change:

learn to cook and work for a restaurant. First she needed training, so she joined Manna Cafe's culinary arts internship program in October of 2021.

Rhonda says her time as an intern gave her "a lot of joy. To go in every day has been really fun." Since most of the program's creations are served at Manna's community hot meals, Rhonda's favorite dishes to prepare were kid-friendly: "mac and cheese, chili mac, taco spaghetti — things I knew the kids would like."

Rhonda graduated from the program with an array of new skills. When she applied for a prep cook position at Clarksville's new hot spot, The Mail Room, she was hired on the spot. "It was because of the culinary program," she explains. "The interviewer said she needed people with a culinary background who were already familiar with cooking methods."

"Manna hasn't just touched my life," Rhonda adds, "it's touched my heart. [The program] gave me something to look forward to, something to wake up for in the morning. It's given me hope again."

For more information or to apply to the Manna Cafe Culinary Internship program, please email [Culinary@MannaCafeMinistries.com](mailto:Culinary@MannaCafeMinistries.com).

## *Announcing Combat Hunger Day 2022*

Don't miss out on Manna Cafe's 13th annual Combat Hunger Day, in partnership with 5-Star Media Group and Clarksville area grocery stores. Be part of this exciting, city-wide food drive that enables us to stock our shelves for the winter months.

Will you lend us a hand this year by signing up for a two- or four-hour shift? Don't delay; sign up today by emailing [Kim@MannaCafeMinistries.com](mailto:Kim@MannaCafeMinistries.com). Thank you!







Save the date! Enjoy a delectable dinner, fast and furious live auction, live band, stunning desserts, and more at Golden Gala on November 4, 2022.



Manna Cafe's elegant autumn fundraiser, Golden Gala, will take place at 7 p.m. on November 4, 2022, at 225 Little Hope Church Road in Clarksville. Once again, the evening will include plenty of luscious food, a live band, fun photo ops, and gorgeous confections. Our guest speaker, Kim Molnar (Chief Operating Officer of Second Harvest Food Bank) will be followed by a live auction with auctioneer Sammy Stuard featuring whimsical, hand-painted chairs from local artists and other intriguing offerings.

Bring a friend or a group. Contact [Brandy@MannaCafeMinistries.com](mailto:Brandy@MannaCafeMinistries.com) to be an event or table sponsor, and receive publicity and exposure for your business or organization.

All funds raised during Golden Gala will go directly into assisting the hungry, homeless, and impoverished of our community through programs such as Mobile Cafe, Food Distribution, the culinary arts internship program, and the emergency warming center.

For more information, visit [mannacafeministries.com/golden-gala](http://mannacafeministries.com/golden-gala).



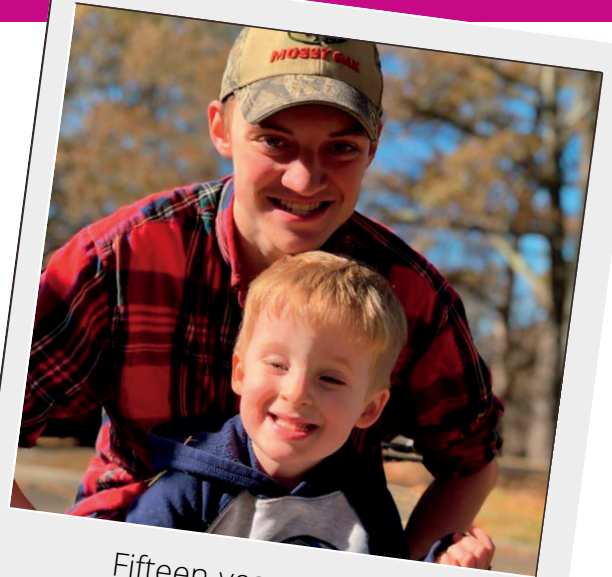
## Beginning, cont'd.

When Hunter was 16, Kenny offered him a paid summer position. Hunter worked in the warehouse, assisting with food distribution. "It was an actual, proper job. I saved enough money that summer to get a plane ticket and fly myself to Florida to visit my grandparents."

After graduating from high school, Hunter landed a construction job but wasn't entirely happy with the position. "I called Kenny and said, 'Is there an opening at Manna?'" Kenny, who was now familiar with Hunter's work ethic, hired him immediately. Initially, Hunter returned to the warehouse, where he learned skills such as forklift driving.

"I was able to get my feet planted," he says. "Now I have a place of my own." When asked to describe Hunter, his coworkers said, "He's always ready to help ... He's a great guy with a really big heart ... genuinely interested in people's lives."

In winter of 2021, Hunter shifted from the warehouse to the Refuge to assist with Manna's emergency warming center. He enjoyed the new position even more than the former because of the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with the homeless. "The thing I love most about my job is talking to people, learning their names, their background, how they ended up on the streets, hearing their stories. I wasn't ever on the streets, like sleeping on the pavement, but I know what it's like when life sucks. So in some ways I can relate to some of our clients. Sometimes I can give advice. It's nice getting to help people out, seeing them make progress, go to rehab, get housing, or get their kids back. Seeing tangible differences being made – and knowing you helped with that – is nice."



Fifteen-year-old Hunter and brother Jase.



*Oh, the joys of those who  
are kind to the poor!  
The Lord rescues them  
when they are in trouble.*

—Ps. 41:1, NLT

Just 10.5 percent of Manna Cafe's budget is spent paying employees like Hunter who spend their lives serving the hungry and homeless. Because grants typically pay for very little payroll, this is often the most difficult place to find funding without generous people like you. Our employees are special folks whose dedication is unmatched. Will you help us ensure that they always have what they need by committing to a monthly gift? If you prefer, you can even earmark your online donation by writing "Serve the servants" on the note.

**Visit [MannaCafeMinistries.com/donate](https://MannaCafeMinistries.com/donate), text to give at 931-542-4772, or follow the QR code.**



Manna Cafe is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and a proud member of United Way of the Greater Clarksville Region and the Clarksville Chamber of Commerce.

