

THE PHYSICAL HAND OF GOD: A CCSOMO CLIENT SHARES HER STORY

This is our story of how we came to meet, cherish, love and be eternally grateful to our dear friends at Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri.

Life is wonderful, beautiful, sad, and humbling at times. We were never promised an easy road, but God promises that He will always make a way, and our experience with your organization is tangible proof of His love and graciousness in times of turmoil and agony.

My husband and I have always worked hard and taken care of our family. In 2022, my husband's health was starting to decline, so we resorted to working rideshare and delivery jobs for the flexibility it provided, allowing us to go to his doctor's appointments. One day while making a delivery, I fell and broke my shoulder.

I went to the ER, and they thought it was dislocated, so they redacted it, but in doing so, they ripped out my nerves from my neck to hand in my right arm.

This was and still is extremely painful. I have had multiple surgeries since then, and I was told that I "might" regain the use in 1-2 years. This was and still is devastating, but that was just the beginning...

In March, my husband's father's health was declining rapidly due to several battles with cancer. His mother was disabled and unable to care for him. We took the last of our money and bought him a flight to California to care for his father. He worked very hard caring for his parents and ignored his own well-being. After a month of being there, he went to the hospital in terrible pain and was diagnosed with a blood clot on the arterial vein leaving his liver. I saved for two weeks and flew out to drive him home. Two weeks after that, we were back in the ER. After many tests and scans, my husband was diagnosed with liver cancer.

In less than two months, we found ourselves in a dire situation that we never, ever expected. We were both physically unable to work. This was terrifying! I had never been out of work once in all of my life. All we now owned was a 2005 Ford truck. What were we going to do? My only source of income was \$116 a week, provided by Doordash, as compensation.

I scoured the internet trying desperately to find us housing. I couldn't even afford to pay for a campground and still be able to put gas in the car to drive to his doctor's appointments (which were in Bolivar, Springfield and St Louis). In June of 2023 we were unable to pay our rent and resorted to staying in our truck, while still searching for a place to stay. It was very hot and quickly became a horrifying state of being.

I located an organization called One Door that helps the homeless and went there to see if they could assist us. It was surreal standing in line with so many homeless individuals. How did we get to this point? In such a short period of time? It was all very humbling. While in line, I was looking online and came across your organization – Catholic Charities. While speaking with the representative at One Door, options like separate homeless shelters were discussed. I was so worried – my husband was very sick, and I couldn't leave his side. We left our situation in God's hands. There was literally nothing else we could do.



I filled out an application, and a CCSOMO staff member reached out to us the very next day and told us that we qualified for a brand new program! It was like God created a program just for us! We couldn't believe it! That very day, Michelle (CCSOMO case manager) called us with a confirmation number for a hotel. She told us to go check in and get settled. That was so very nice - to be treated with dignity - allowing us to check in, and get cleaned up before meeting. This was the beginning of a wonderful relationship that we still always treasure!

Michelle is the **literal, physical hand of God, in our lives**. She is always so very kind and caring, and we are, and forever will be, grateful to her kind and generous heart. She brings us groceries and always asks us if we need anything. We speak to her nearly every day and see her multiple times a week.

Catholic Charities has provided us shelter, food and God's love. Catholic Charities and their staff have changed our lives and we are forever grateful!

- AMY AND JAMES, CCSOMO HOUSING CLIENTS