

# Photography Program Inspires Positive Action

**Mike Becker** *participates in Catholic Charities After Supper Visions Photography program, which gives those who come to our Tuesday Night Supper an opportunity to discover their creative talents through photography. Mike, who became paralyzed after an accident as a young man and struggled with housing, has participated in the program since 2009. Mike now helps others find their eye for photography and encourages homeless men and women he encounters to come to Catholic Charities for help.*



Before I came to Catholic Charities, I was living with my mom and bouncing around living with friends. I had gone to school but had some medical problems and couldn't finish my degree. I eventually got a room at the YMCA, which is where I met someone who told me about Catholic Charities. He kept telling me I should go to the evening suppers with him. I finally went and have been going ever since.

One night, I saw they had a photography show set up at the supper. I asked them about it, and I was interested, so they gave me a disposable camera. I took a couple pictures and people really seemed to like them. At the next photography show, I sold pictures, and now I've made enough money from selling my photos that I've been able to buy my own camera and continue taking photos.

For me, taking photos is about doing something positive with my time. The people who are involved in the program and the volunteers who lead it are very positive people, and when you're struggling, or for people who are homeless, you need an

environment to keep you moving forward. It's good for me and it gives you a warm, positive feeling and outlook. It's not even about the photos all the time, or getting money for the photos – it's that boost that you get from doing something good.

Whenever people come into the program, I tell them about my experience and show them my pictures. I try to give them pointers and remind

them to always keep their cameras with them, so if they see something, they can get that photo of it and not miss any opportunities. I know not everyone has the same photography style as me so I encourage them to develop their own.

I've met a lot of good people from being here at Catholic Charities and being a part of the program. Before coming here, I struggled with

alcohol and would hide away. Now I enjoy getting out in the city and sharing what I see with other people. I like to go down to the beach and sit by the lake and just people watch. I always make sure to bring my camera with me so I don't miss anything. You never know when the perfect picture is going to show up.

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**Mike Becker**