

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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30 YEARS OF HOMELESSNESS ENDED FOR ONE MAN THANKS TO INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

[San Diego, CA August 2021] - After 30 years of experiencing homelessness in Lake County, California, Michael Alan Patrick—a talented mechanic and writer—has located, reconnected with, and returned to his family in Tacoma, Washington. This reunion was made possible because of an innovative partnership between [Simtech Solutions, Inc.](#) and [Miracle Messages](#), and a few extra questions asked by a volunteer during the annual “Point In Time” homeless count.

Michael was raised in the North End of Tacoma where he attended the neighborhood schools. After high school, he left home for Montana but eventually settled in Middletown, California (Lake County). Michael called Middletown Park his home for many years. He took pride in his home and befriended the housed and unhoused that used the Park. Michael formed close ties with the park workers who bestowed on him the moniker “Mayor of Middletown Park,” which he treasures.

Although he faced many challenges during his time on the street, Michael never lost hope in himself or in humanity. Michael has a great amount of empathy for others and volunteered on a regular basis in Lake County to help others experiencing homelessness. Throughout his hard journey, his mother, Celia, was always on his mind.

The thirty-year reunion was initiated by Parth Singh, Team Leader for an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps team (AmeriCorps NCCC), during the annual homeless count in Lake County, CA. The count is required of communities by the *US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* to quantify the number of people experiencing homelessness, and to better understand their characteristics. Simtech Solutions decided to add a couple of extra questions to [the Counting Us mobile app](#) survey, with the hope that the count process could result in helping people who are homeless get back into stable housing.

When Parth asked Michael, “*Do you have any friends or loved ones that you would like to be reunited with?*” he replied with an enthusiastic, “Yes!” Michael provided what information he could remember of his mom. With Michael’s consent, the information gathered within the Counting Us app was shared with a “Digital Detective” at Miracle Messages.

Mark Askins, the Lead Detective for Miracle Messages and a licensed private investigator in Washington and California, along with other core members of the Miracle Messages Team, located and helped reunite Michael with his mom as well as other family and friends. Mark stated, “It takes a great deal of courage for someone experiencing homelessness to choose to try to reconnect with a loved one, opening themselves up to the possibility of the person declining to reconnect. I am very proud of Michael.”

After thirty years, Michael once again has a roof over his head and sleeps comfortably; as he put it, “I no longer have a concrete pillow.” Michael has immediate access to food, a bathroom, a place to wash his clothes, and other necessities that he used to lack. Just as importantly, Michael is surrounded by people who love him and value his many talents. When asked about the best part of returning home, Michael responded, “reconnecting with my family, my

blood, being able to help my mom, and no longer experiencing the profound loneliness that I faced for decades while being homeless.”

Through the collaboration between Miracle Messages and Simtech Solutions, there is renewed hope and another option for so many of those experiencing homelessness: Reconnecting with loved ones—be they family members or friends. Family reunification is a cost-effective alternative to building and maintaining shelters and housing. The opportunity to reopen lines of communication, via phone, text, email, or snail mail, is a start to addressing the “relational poverty” afflicting so many of our unhoused neighbors. It is a path for stigmas surrounding our unhoused neighbors to be shattered and relationships built between unhoused and housed individuals in a community. This partnership also offers the chance to invoke a paradigm shift in communities where individuals experiencing homelessness are not viewed and treated as nameless and faceless problems to be solved, but as uniquely talented individuals to be valued and loved.

Since returning to Tacoma, Michael has also reconnected with his daughter Katie and met his grandchildren for the first time. He has also spoken with his daughter Melissa who is disabled and lives with her mother in New York. Michael shared that his mom, Celia, is his rock, and reconnecting with her has meant everything to him. She frequently reminds him of his many skills and talents, encourages him to pursue his passions, and reassures him that, “We are in this together.”

Since Michael has moved home, a friendship has blossomed between Michael and Mark. They speak on the phone a couple of times a week and see each other on a regular basis. Michael shared that he feels comfortable talking to Mark about anything. Mark said that he values the time and his friendship with Michael and has embraced being a part of Michael’s journey home and his future. Miracle Messages has assisted Michael to secure public benefits and healthcare and has helped him get his Washington State ID card, social security card, and other documents.

Michael intends to use his vast mechanical skills to secure employment fixing cars and other equipment in Tacoma. He wants to assist those experiencing homelessness find and reconnect with their loved ones and any other assistance he can provide. **Michael wants those experiencing homelessness to realize that it is possible to go home again.**

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About Simtech Solutions, Inc.

Based in San Diego, [Simtech Solutions Inc.](#) develops innovative technical solutions focused on the issue of homelessness. Simtech’s analytical tools help regions quantify the extent of the problem, isolate the contributing factors, and evaluate the effectiveness of their response.

Simtech’s [Counting Us app](#) is the first, and most widely used, mobile technology designed specifically for the HUD Point in Time homeless count. Simtech’s [Show The Way outreach app](#) supports the coordination of care between street outreach providers. Public officials such as police and park rangers can submit “Requests for Assistance” from outreach staff to avoid more costly and traumatic interventions such as jails and emergency rooms. Both mobile apps include questions to help facilitate reunions of people experiencing homelessness with their loved ones.

About Miracle Messages

[Miracle Messages](#) is an award-winning 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, headquartered in the SF Bay Area but serving worldwide. We offer a humane and highly effective way to help end homelessness: strengthen social supports and financial security, shatter stigmas, and empower people everywhere to get involved. Miracle Messages partners with organizations such as Simtech Solutions to identify people who have lost connection with a loved one and recruits volunteers to serve as “digital detectives” to help find the person and facilitate a reunion. Miracle Messages has reunited over 450 people experiencing homelessness with their loved ones, with an average time separated of over 15 years. 80% of delivered messages have been positively received, and dozens of reunions have resulted in getting an individual off the streets, all at a fraction of the cost of other interventions.

Digital Detective Mark Askins (left) and Michael Alan Patrick in the yard of Michael's home in Tacoma.



Michael Alan Patrick, enjoying his new life in Tacoma.



Michael's New (and old) Home!

