



Supportive friendships for lasting impact

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OUR VISION:

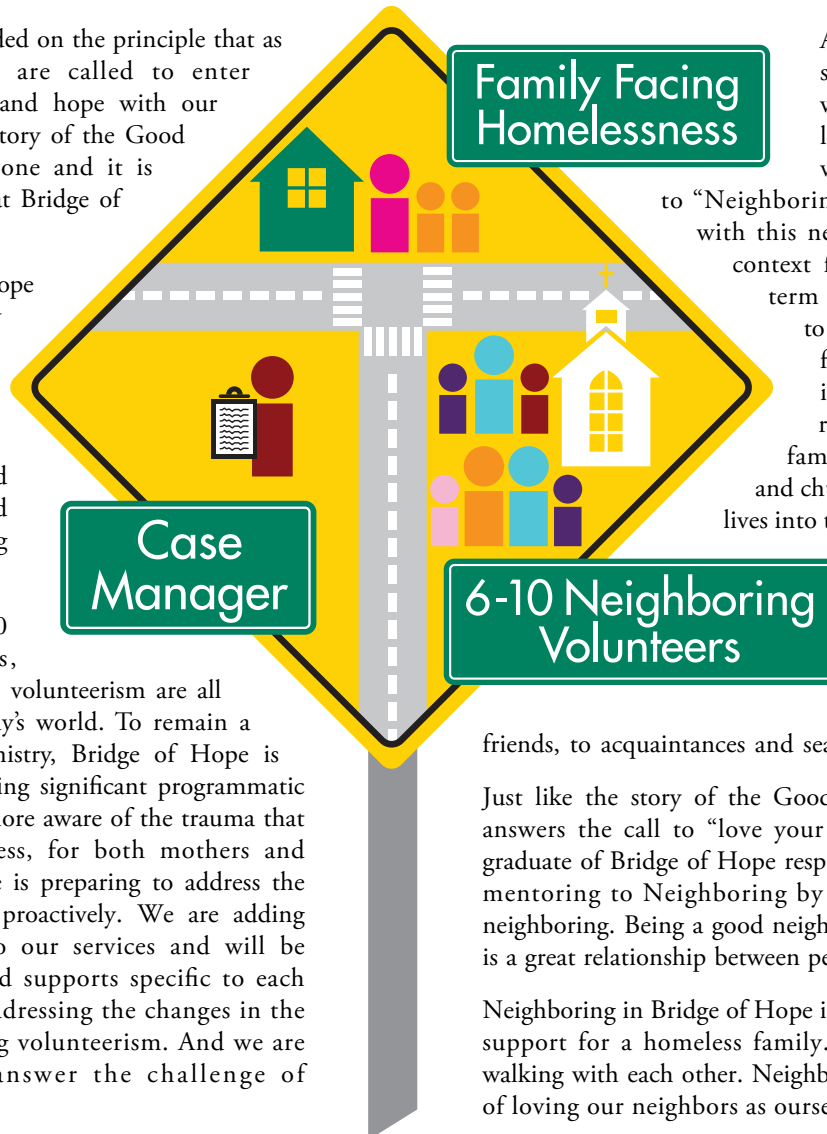
To end & prevent homelessness for women & children across the U.S. by calling churches into action

From Mentoring to Neighboring

Bridge of Hope was founded on the principle that as followers of Jesus, we are called to enter relationships of healing and hope with our homeless neighbor. The story of the Good Samaritan is a familiar one and it is taking on new meaning at Bridge of Hope this year!

For 30 years, Bridge of Hope has been successfully supporting homeless single mothers through a three-way partnership of case manager, church based mentoring group, and the family facing homelessness.

But much changes over 30 years – family needs, housing costs and church volunteerism are all changing rapidly in today’s world. To remain a vibrant and relevant ministry, Bridge of Hope is changing too and launching significant programmatic changes. As we become more aware of the trauma that accompanies homelessness, for both mothers and children, Bridge of Hope is preparing to address the needs of children more proactively. We are adding children’s assessments to our services and will be identifying resources and supports specific to each family member. We’re addressing the changes in the Church that are affecting volunteerism. And we are developing ways to answer the challenge of escalating rental costs.



Additionally, another significant change is that we are shifting our language for church volunteers from “mentors” to “Neighboring Volunteers.” Our goal with this new language is to set the context for Bridge of Hope. The term “Neighboring” continues to root us deeply in our core faith, as followers of Jesus; it embodies a more mutual relationship between families facing homelessness and church-based volunteers, and lives into the diversity of the types of relationships mentors and participants currently have in Bridge of Hope (from a sense of extended family to casual friends, to acquaintances and seasonal people in one’s life).

Just like the story of the Good Samaritan, Neighboring answers the call to “love your neighbor as yourself.” A graduate of Bridge of Hope responded to the change from mentoring to Neighboring by saying: “I love the term neighboring. Being a good neighbor to a neighbor-in-need is a great relationship between people. No longer strangers!”

Neighboring in Bridge of Hope is building a community of support for a homeless family. It is learning from and walking with each other. Neighboring is living out the call of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FROM MENTORING TO NEIGHBORING: *putting your “thumb on the scale”*

Have you read *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance? His memoir explores his traumatic childhood and growing up in a dying Appalachian industrial town in Ohio. Vance went on to graduate from Yale Law School.

Vance uses the image of putting your **“thumb on the scale” for people at the margin**. He sees this image as a way of explaining how we can have an impact by sharing social capital and connections with people on the margins of society.

In Bridge of Hope, mentors are putting their “thumb on the scale” every day for families facing homelessness – through finding housing, a job or in locating a dentist. Putting your thumb on the scale for someone is a way of being like the Good Samaritan and showing love for one’s neighbor.

I am pleased (see lead article) that Bridge of Hope is changing our language from mentoring to neighboring. A Bridge of Hope Neighborhood will now be how we describe our three-way partnership between a family facing homelessness, a case manager and 6-10 trained Neighboring Volunteers from a Christian Faith Community (church group, Bible study, etc.).

Jesus says that the two things that matter most in life are loving God and loving our neighbors. Our neighbors are those on the margins. We might pass them in the grocery store, at the drop-off circle in front of the elementary school, or at the local library. Families facing homelessness are all around us even when we are not aware of their daily struggles.

In today’s world, none of us can make it alone. At Bridge of Hope, we believe that everyone needs a neighborhood of support — people to walk with us especially when we are facing difficult times.

Neighboring Volunteers open the door to their hearts and demonstrate the love of Jesus.

Will you put your thumb on the scale and be a neighboring volunteer with a family facing homelessness? Join Bridge of Hope as we demonstrate the love of Jesus — through acts of neighboring that help stabilize the future for single mothers with children.



Edith Yoder

Edith Yoder,
Executive Director

Special Thanks for Your Gifts*

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Bob Hewitt	Unity in Christ Church
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*Tribute gifts received after March 15 will be in the Fall newsletter.

A CHURCH-BASED APPROACH TO ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

BRENDA'S STORY – *Given Hope, not Judgement*



Brenda Diosdado, a woman served by Bridge of Hope North Central Iowa, has faced tough challenges. Moving to North Central Iowa from Guanajuato, Mexico as a young girl, leaving high school before graduation, and now facing life as a single mother when her marriage ended. She felt scared and alone.

After a temporary stay with her parents, Brenda and her two children, 8-year-old Gabriel and 6-year-old Scarlett, tried to make it on their own. Brenda prayed she could become independent but as she struggled to pay bills, budget her income, and juggle life as a single parent, life began to unravel. Brenda didn't know where to turn until a coworker told her about Bridge of Hope.

Brenda liked Bridge of Hope's three-way partnership model which helped not only with budgeting and resources but also provided the emotional and spiritual support she sought. Brenda was worried that her group of Neighboring Volunteers, from St. Patrick's Catholic Church, might judge her, but she soon discovered they were there to listen, help out with the children, and encourage her along the way.

She shares, "I feel more confident making decisions and I know I still have people (my Neighboring Volunteers and case manager) I can come to if I need someone to talk with. My kids have really thrived through this experience too. They participate in activities more often and are not as shy as they used to be."

Brenda has accomplished much with the help of her family and her Bridge of Hope Neighboring Volunteers. She completed her GED and is currently attending community college to obtain her Business Administration degree. Brenda explains, "Bridge of Hope is a great program that allows a mother to see the good qualities she has. I feel capable of supporting my family now and have a strong faith in great things to come."

14TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

to benefit Bridge of Hope National - July 25
at Foxchase Golf Club (Stevens, PA).

Thank you to hosts
Bomberger's Store and
Signature Custom Cabinetry!

We are looking forward to the Annual
Bridge of Hope National Gala on May 12.

Author Jennifer Grant will be
sharing from her newest book

*When Did Everybody Else Get So
Old? Indignities, Compromises, and
the Unexpected Grace of Midlife.*





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- BRIDGE OF HOPE @ Home Sweet Home Ministries, Bloomington, IL, mburgess@hshministries.org**
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