

bridge of hope[®] | NATIONAL

Supportive friendships for lasting impact

B U I L D I N G H O P E

VOL. 15, NO. 1

SPRING 2015

Bridge of Hope NATIONAL

OUR VISION:

To end and prevent homelessness for women and children across the United States by calling churches into action.

OUR MISSION:

To call and equip compassionate people from many Christian faith traditions to exemplify Christ's love to homeless women and children by creating and sustaining thriving Bridge of Hope locations. Bridge of Hope brings together professional staff and trained church-based mentoring groups to empower homeless and at-risk single mothers to attain:

- Permanent housing
- Financial stability through employment
- Life-changing friendships
- Increased self-esteem and growth in areas of holistic living

God listens to my prayers

Noemi firmly believes that only God truly knows her situation – her sorrows and happiness – and that God listens to her prayers. That was her thought when she met staff, Stephanie and Sherry, of Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rockingham in Virginia.

Prior to finding Bridge of Hope, Noemi's beautiful family had fallen apart. She lost her job at nearly the same time she had to get a court order to protect her daughters from her ex-boyfriend. Local shelters were full in late 2013, so her pastor helped Noemi to find temporary housing in the basement of a woman from the church.

The small room with one mattress did not have heat, windows, or a kitchen. Noemi had never heard of Bridge of Hope until receiving a referral from her daughter's counselor.

By January 2014, Bridge of Hope helped the family to move to what Noemi calls "her doll house." Her daughters, Idanys, Ahtziri, and Amexies, remembering the basement, often express gratitude for their warm and safe two bedroom home and the bunk bed in their room.

The night they moved into their home, Noemi and the girls met several of their Bridge of Hope mentors from Harrisonburg Baptist Church. Noemi lost her mom and dad when

she was young and raised herself. She explains, "I am a hard worker who is use to doing everything on my own and not asking for help." She was nervous about meeting these new mentoring friends, but also excited about having a second chance at family-like relationships. She felt overwhelmed when they arrived with food and even pots and pans needed for her kitchen.

The family's time with their mentors is limited because of Noemi's work schedule, but their mentors understand and share in Noemi's life as she has time, including at monthly Bridge of Hope nights and keeping in touch by text and phone. Mary and Ron have taken the family to a play and to the movies.



Noemi now works at the Purdue plant. She goes to bed at 7 p.m. so she can get up at 2 a.m. to make breakfast, take the girls to the babysitter, and get to work by 5:00 a.m. She recently got a lead position. Because of her promotion and budgeting, Noemi was able to buy a car.

Of Bridge of Hope staff, Noemi says she could go on and on about them. "They asked me what I needed, and I said 'a push – to help me believe it is possible.' They don't realize how they've helped my self-esteem."

Noemi shares, "God does not abandon us. Bridge of Hope is the perfect name. From the first day I met the Bridge of Hope staff, I had hope."

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

God does not abandon us

What is the most courageous thing you ever did or said?

Noemi's words (see main article) of hope and courage come out of her own faith, life and learned courage when she proclaims, "God does not abandon us!" If she were a middle-class, secure, North American, she might be able to say those words without courage. But for a once-homeless single mother struggling to raise three daughters, these words contain a boat-load of courage in the face of adversity and pain!

I recently heard the story of an encounter between Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass, shortly after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 that required runaway slaves to be brought back to their masters. Frederick felt great despair and was losing hope of ever ending slavery. Sojourner spoke words of courage to him, challenging him with these four little words: "Frederick, is God dead?"

The answer was a resounding "no" then, in the face of the horrific scourge of slavery. And the answer is still "no" today, in the face of an ever-growing number of homeless children across North America.

We must find courage! Even in the face of rising rental housing costs in both urban and rural communities, the need for more financial support, and many other obstacles, homeless single mothers and their children call out to us to be courageous. Act to end homelessness. Speak out in your agency or church. Start a Bridge of Hope program. Mentor a homeless single mother and her children.

God does not abandon us. Even in the face of increased family homelessness, God will give you courage to rise up and make a difference. Is God dead? No, indeed. And we are still called to be part of God's provision for homeless single mothers and children — evidence that God has not abandoned them.

Thanks be to God.



With hope,

Edith Yoder

Edith Yoder
Executive Director

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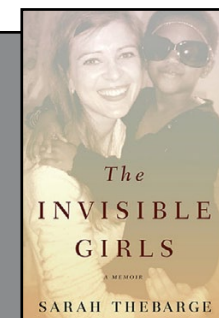
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Sarah Thebarg, author of *Invisible Girls* will speak at our May 8th Gala. Order tickets by April 24. Visit www.bridgeofhopeinc.org for details and an auction listing.

 Like our Facebook page and tell us who you are celebrating this Mother's Day.

12th annual Golf Classic to benefit Bridge of Hope National - July 28 at Foxchase Golf Club (Stevens, PA). Thank you to hosts Bomberger's Store and Signature Custom Cabinetry!

Gifts received after March 1st will be listed in our fall newsletter.

* Visit www.bridgeofhopeinc.org and click on "Make An Impact/Join Women of Hope" to view tribute gifts made by Women of Hope.

A CHURCH-BASED APPROACH TO ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS



Providing a Supportive Community is Key

Emma Maternity House in Calgary, Canada became a Bridge of Hope Program Site in September, 2014. They have already matched their first 2 families with trained Bridge of Hope mentoring groups from local churches! Their goal is to be serving 6 Bridge of Hope families by December 2015.

Emma House shares why they partner with Bridge of Hope:

*"Single mothers can stay at Emma House up to six months after their baby is born. Women at Emma House struggle to find affordable housing and to parent on their own without adequate supports. Bridge of Hope gives us the ability to help more women after they exit Emma House, by placing them directly in **rental housing**, without having to enlarge our facility.*

*There are only 15 maternity beds in the city of Calgary (population 1.2 million) for homeless pregnant women. Programs for homeless people in Calgary offer rental subsidy and a **case manager**, but they all lack the **mentor group**.*

*We believe that providing **supportive community** from Bridge of Hope **mentoring groups** is a key piece to help once-homeless mothers gain healthy, fulfilling lives. Everyone needs to feel valued and to belong."*



#SleepOut for #BridgeOfHope to #EndFamilyHomelessness!

Contact us for #SleepOut materials or create your own online fundraising page (from our website link).

Visit www.bridgeofhopeinc.org/Make-An-Impact/SleepOut to Register or Donate



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As required by the PA Solicitation of Funds Act, a copy of the official registration and financial information for Bridge of Hope may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



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