



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

Practical support & encouragement build SELF ~ WORTH

Tabby heard about Bridge of Hope from her church and from the Women's Resource Center (in State College, PA). It was an opportunity for her and her 7-year-old daughter, Chloe, to get back on their feet after a painful divorce.

Bridge of Hope Centre County (PA) trained mentoring friends from Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church. Though her mentors were younger than her – in their 20s and early 30s and several were stay-at-home moms – Tabby found that there were many points of connection.

Tabby experienced her Bridge of Hope mentors as “full of love.” They provided a bed, help with moving, invitations to go places, cards, and frequent calls/texts to ask “do you need anything?” Tabby, who was baking pumpkin pies as she shared her story, is grateful that the mentors responded when she realized she missed the crock pot, baking utensils, and other kitchen items that she had left behind.

Several of the mentors had children who were Chloe's age or younger. Tabby explains that the play dates with the children of mentors and their time in Bridge of Hope helped Chloe with



Tabby and Chloe

the difficult transition to the “new normal” after the divorce.

Her Bridge of Hope case worker helped Tabby to learn and navigate community and government resources. “She would even go to the offices with me, which was very helpful.”

Tabby has good advice for future participants in Bridge of Hope. She would encourage them to pursue education if possible (even though it is hard to balance work, parenting, and school). Tabby is continuing to utilize CareerLink to pursue her career goals – and to discover how she might realize her dream of making music.

She also has good advice for folks considering serving in a Bridge of

Hope mentoring group. Tabby encourages tangible support – like a job lead, a car, or a computer to pursue education and career goals. And, she feels strongly that: “Mentors (and case workers) should help moms to connect with their area of passion. Life or a bad relationship can beat you down. You can help women to know their own self-worth and what they are meant to do. You can help them to know ‘I am valuable and I can do it.’”

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How are you finding ways to step toward people who are hurting?

As we enter this Christmas season, we celebrate the amazing incarnation of God with us. Jesus, who entered our world as a newborn, is “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).

Jesus walked among us, showing us how to look more like God and to be more like God. And in almost every story of Jesus in the Gospels, we see him stepping toward others in need. That tells us a lot about who God is – God steps toward the needs of others. In today’s world, when many turn their face and look (or run!) away from need, this is truly Good News!

Do you know someone who does a good job – like Tabby’s Bridge of Hope mentors (see front page story) – of stepping toward others in their time of need? My husband, Garth, is definitely one of those people! He turns toward, not away, from those who are hurting, whether it is a neighbor struggling after knee surgery or a stranger who has had too much to drink and approaches him for help while Garth is out walking our dog.

One of my greatest joys is seeing Bridge of Hope mentors step toward single mothers and children facing homelessness, just as Jesus steps toward us in the act of coming as a child into our hurting world.

I hope you too will step toward homeless women and children this Christmas. The Christmas wish list of these families includes a safe home, a good job for mom, and friends in their corner! Join us in stepping toward homeless families, with relational and financial support, as we celebrate Jesus’ birth.



With Christmas joy,

Edith Yoder

Edith Yoder,
Executive Director

Special Thanks for Your Gifts*

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BY:

**Tribute gifts received after November 3 will be in the spring newsletter.*

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!

Does your company match your charitable gifts? We invite you to ask your company to match the 2016 gifts you made to Bridge of Hope National. Email EmmilyL@bridgeofhopeinc.org for help with gift verification.

AUTHOR JENNIFER GRANT will speak at our May 12, 2017 Gala Luncheon at Doubletree Lancaster (PA). Her newest book, *When Did Everybody Else Get So Old?*, will be published by Herald Press in May 2017. Invitations will be mailed in March.



A CHURCH-BASED APPROACH TO ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Why I support Bridge of Hope National

My relationship with Bridge of Hope started when my high school friend, Edith, invited me to coffee. She patiently introduced me to Bridge of Hope, while my 4-year-old interjected with her own comments and questions. That 4-year-old is now looking at universities, so you can see that first casual coffee was the start of a long relationship.

Why Bridge of Hope? First, the mission is to end homelessness for single mothers and their children. This is the most vulnerable population of homeless individuals, and a population where a change impacts not one person but an entire family.

There is certainly a need for relief in mission to the homeless community, but Bridge of Hope's mission is to END homelessness. Bridge of Hope picks up from the point of relief efforts, and sees the mission through.

Second, it is extremely cost-effective and fiscally responsible. Bridge of Hope does not own or maintain buildings, a large staff, and so on. The investment is close to the end user, and it enables Bridge of Hope groups to function nimbly and quickly.

And third, the Christian church's involvement in this is invaluable. We say that Bridge of Hope equips the church to BE the church. The professional social worker can assist in navigating the nuts and bolts of job, education, etc.; and the church mentors can build relationships.

This leads to a high level of dignity on both sides – for the mother and for the church. A rich, beautiful relationship is able to grow.

In the end, lives are changed. Future generations of families are empowered to succeed, and churches are able to assist. Isn't that what being the hands and feet of Christ is all about?



Sheryl Holzbauer, Executive VP Community Relations at Willow Valley Associates, shared at our April 2016 Leaders of Hope Gathering. Sheryl served on the National board of directors and currently serves on our Gala Luncheon Committee.



Innovating & Expanding Hope in 2017 & beyond

After almost 30 years of ministry, the Bridge of Hope network is innovating – to expand Bridge of Hope's impact for the next 30 years and to provide hope for homeless families. In response to evidence-based research and to changing economic and faith community realities, the Bridge of Hope network is finalizing program enhancements and new language for mentoring. We look forward to sharing with you in the coming months!

You changed her life!
Your gift by December 31 will change the lives of women and children facing homelessness.



www.BridgeOfHopeInc.org



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Bridge of Hope Inc. 311 National Road Exton, PA 19341



WE WISH YOU A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS SEASON!

Inside...

- Practical support & encouragement build self-worth
- Stepping toward people who are hurting
- Why I support Bridge of Hope National

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