



## **Why is Bridge of Hope Christian Faith-Based?**

### **Our context: Christian faith-based**

Bridge of Hope National and our network of Bridge of Hope locations are faith-based ministries that have been called into existence by the Church. As such, our unique role is to be a voice to the Church on behalf of families facing homeless. We call local Christian Faith Communities (churches, house-churches, Bible Study groups, etc.) from a wide variety of Christian traditions to work together to respond to homelessness in their community. Then we train and equip them in a response that is life-giving and holistic.

Bridge of Hope locations serve families facing homelessness from diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. In addition, we recognize the unique context of each world religion, and we value similar work done by nonprofits representing other faith traditions.

Bridge of Hope's work to end and prevent homelessness is done through Christian Faith Communities. This allows us to build relationships with local Christian Faith Communities and motivate them in ways that are unique to our faith context. As stated in our values statement, Bridge of Hope's unifying belief is that Jesus Christ is our example in embodying love and holding out hope to homeless and at-risk families.

### **Programmatic implications**

The context of our faith tradition has programmatic implications, especially in how we recruit, train, and support the work of Neighboring Volunteers. Groups of Neighboring Volunteers are recruited from within a Christian Faith Community. Neighboring Volunteers are encouraged to provide encouragement and emotional support, model positive relationships, and engage with the family in life and faith conversations.

Staff members regularly pray for families and Neighboring Volunteers. And Bridge of Hope Neighboring Training includes a call to prayer as a foundation for the group's primary task—building and nurturing a caring and supportive relationship with the family.

We value physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wholeness in all families, Neighboring Volunteers, board members, staff, and other volunteers involved in Bridge of Hope. Our training and other materials reflect gratitude to God, nurture of each other, compassion for those we serve, and joy in our Christian faith.

### **A way to practice unity in Christ**

Through work with local Christian Faith Communities, Bridge of Hope also fills a role in bringing together diverse streams from within the Christian faith tradition, including those who are Protestant, Catholic, mainline, social justice-oriented, evangelical, liturgical, charismatic, orthodox, post-modern, emergent, pentecostal, missional, or contemplative.

We are committed to ministry across the broad spectrum of Christianity and are grateful to play a small part in nurturing unity within the sometimes divided body of believers. On this we agree: Christian Faith Communities provide a wonderful circle of friends in which families facing homelessness can find love and wholeness. The body of Christ, the Church, can and must be a source of belonging and healing for families facing homelessness, our neighbors.