



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

Like Pamela (see story), Tara & her daughters enjoy their mentoring friends.



Then and Now — 6 years after finding Bridge of Hope

In 2010, Pamela and her six-year-old daughter had been experiencing homelessness on and off for five years (since her husband had left). Her job as a teacher's aide for autistic children did not pay enough. Temporary stays with family were less than ideal.

Pamela says, "Before we had our apartment, I remember praying with my daughter. My daughter asked, 'Why is God taking so long?' I told her, 'God must be working on something wonderful.'"

Her pastor introduced Pamela to Bridge of Hope of York County (PA) in 2010. Pamela and her daughter received temporary rental assistance, case management, and a group of trained mentoring friends from York Alliance Church.

Pamela explains, "If it wasn't for Bridge of Hope, my daughter and I would not be where we are today. Just like Joseph in the Bible, God had a plan all along. It was necessary for me to go through the suffering, heartache, and abandonment so that I could be the person I am today and to know it was God who made it all possible. I am forever grateful and blessed beyond belief."

One of her mentors, Vanessa, died of cancer in 2013. Pamela shares,

"Vanessa made it a point to call me from her hospital bed two days before she went to be with the Lord just to tell me she loved me. I am so thankful our paths crossed and that God chose her to be my friend."

Today, Pamela continues to "catch up" with her mentors at times via text, email, or a card.

Pamela and her daughter (now age 12 and starting middle school) are doing great. They love to spend time outdoors and to do arts & crafts. Taking classes at JoAnn Fabrics is a great way to spend time together and meet new people.

"I have learned to be smart when it comes to purchases," says Pamela. "When God blesses us with 'more,' then we will treat ourselves to something. I still have the same car that I had while in Bridge of Hope and make sure to keep up the maintenance."

"This year marked six years that we've lived in our apartment. There is such freedom in knowing that at the end of the day you are going home. Words can't express what it is like writing a check every month for your home. A roof over your head and a home where you and your daughter find comfort and safety...it is amazing."

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Then and Now— for the Bridge of Hope Network

I have been involved with Bridge of Hope for over twenty-five years because of the long-term impact Bridge of Hope has – in the lives of once-homeless families and their mentoring friends from a local church family.

Pamela (see story page 1) shared, “This year marked six years that I’ve lived in our apartment. There is such freedom in knowing that at the end of the day you are going home.”

And Pastor Lindsey from Iowa (see story page 3) believes that, “Homelessness and poverty come about under long-term circumstances and it takes a longer program to make a lasting impact. Bridge of Hope teaches us about not judging – but loving – our neighbors.”

As the Bridge of Hope network (a growing number of locations in 13 states & Canada) continues to seek long-term transformation for families and mentoring friends, we must address changing cultural realities.

This year, we are leading a Core 4 Innovation Strategic Conversation and Process. In addition to examining our core mission and outcomes, we are considering the impact of these 2 realities:

- What are the implications for Bridge of Hope as the Church undergoes tremendous shifts/shrinkage in average Sunday morning attendance in North America today?
- What are the implications for Bridge of Hope as we face a housing/rental crisis in the U.S. that is unprecedented?

God is nudging Bridge of Hope to think in innovative ways as the world around us changes. This year, we are asking: What does God have for us for such a time as this? I invite your prayers.

Our desire is that God’s Spirit leads us as we, with the help of national experts, discern what changes need to be made to continue to transform the lives of single mothers and children as well as Christian faith communities serving as Bridge of Hope friends.



With hope,

Edith Yoder
Executive Director

Special Thanks for Your Gifts*

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Visit bridgeofhopeinc.org/board-service-tributes to view the gifts in honor of these board members who completed their service:
Jim Lapp, Anne Redlus, & Joan Gorwals Yoder

13th annual Golf Classic to benefit Bridge of Hope National - July 26 at Foxchase Golf Club (Stevens, PA). Thank you to hosts Bomberger’s Store and Signature Custom Cabinetry!

*Tribute gifts received after March 28 will be in the fall newsletter.

A CHURCH-BASED APPROACH TO ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Loving your neighbor & ending family homelessness — in rural America

Latimer, Iowa (a town of 550) does not have a visible homeless community. But like many small Midwestern towns, the economy of Latimer is depressed. There are few affordable housing opportunities and limited resources and social services. A recent newspaper article noted the plan to expand the school meal programs to provide food for students on weekends and vacation breaks. People are becoming more aware and concerned about homelessness and poverty in the community.

A mother and her children, fleeing domestic violence, moved to the area with little more than the clothes on their backs. Bridge of Hope North Central Iowa matched this family with trained mentoring friends from Immanuel United Church of Christ in Latimer.

Pastor Lindsey Braun, a board member with Bridge of Hope North Central Iowa and a member of the Immanuel mentoring group, explains that the experience has been eye-opening. “We realize that the way our lives, homes, and faith have worked is not everyone’s experience.” This has created a deep sense of gratitude and deepens the mentors’ desire to help the family on their journey to stability. As the mentors continue to show up in consistent and reliable ways, the middle-school-age children are starting to trust and share their fears and hopes.

The experience of the mentoring group has been quietly impacting the congregation, creating a ripple effect of growth and gratitude. “Bridge of Hope asks us to be in deep relationship with each other and gives us a program to do that and do that well within the church,” said Lindsey. “The relationships being built are life-changing and are helping us fulfill the mission of the Church—to love our neighbor.”

Immanuel Church and other photos from Bridge of Hope North Central Iowa’s Facebook page ▶

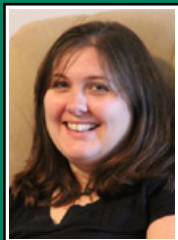


Join Bridge of Hope National in welcoming...



Emmily Longenecker
◀ *is our new Development Officer:
Relationship Steward*

Bekah Bowland, M.S.W.,
is our new Program ▶
Consultation Specialist





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Inside...

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